

# Research and Commercial Services

WHO ARE WE?  
What can we offer you?

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## INTRODUCTION

### Who are we?

Research and Commercial Services (RCS) is the core service supporting the University of Birmingham in meeting two aspects of its Mission, to "maintain the international reputation for the highest quality of scholarship and research...." and to "serve Birmingham and the West Midlands region using our skills and knowledge and drawing on our international reputation to promote social and cultural well-being and to aid economic growth and regeneration".



RCS helps to shape research and enterprise strategies together with operational policies and procedures; provides assistance to all academic staff engaged in research and engineering activities; forges and maintains relationships with external sponsors and partners and provides a gateway to the University's knowledge and expertise.

Since its creation in 1989, the service offered to the University community has increased and diversified enormously over the years. Indeed in the last two years we have reshaped ourselves in order to boost support for, and visibility of, research and of regional and business engagement in the University. RCS staff responsibilities have been modified to improve clarity and access to the services we provide. In particular specialist advisors for European, Regional, and Industry funding are available, together with advisors for each of the Colleges and a Research Development Officer providing general funding advice across the board.



## Spreading the word

## University Research and Knowledge Strategy

The University's new Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy provides the foundation for further strengthening the Universities international research profile. It reflects the University's 2005-2010 Strategic Framework, and responds to the opportunities arising from restructuring, the developing expectations of our staff and students and the interests and demands of our research sponsors and users. The Strategy can be found [here](#)

# Research and Commercial Services

## RESEARCH AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As a researcher you need access to a whole range of advice and information on funding, project development and partnerships which is where we can help. The following list of services are those which Research and Commercial Services (RCS) offers either via its website or its specialist staff (which we hope will help to satisfy some of your needs as a researcher here at the University):

### Research News

RCS produce a three weekly newsletter called *Research News* which is circulated, via the campus wide email list, to all academic staff. The Newsletter provides a range of UK, European and International funding opportunities and news items which are presented in summary format with a link back to the funding body for more detailed information. It is important you ensure that you are included on your departmental email list which is used to form the University's campus wide email list. In addition, an email providing a bulleted list of articles is provided to those who belong to the research fora (see below). You can find Research Services News at <http://www.rcs.bham.ac.uk/staff/res/news.shtml>.

### Research Fortnight

RCS, on behalf of the University, subscribes to Research Fortnight, an external funding database offering a complete funding opportunities alert service for researchers, together with a comprehensive list of funding opportunities in all disciplines. In addition, there are daily news items from around the world, plus in-depth analysis from their team of expert reporters and comments from leading figures in the research community. The database can be used with or without a username/passwords, although having a username gives access to more advanced features such as email alerts and advanced database searches. Anyone with a Birmingham University IP

address can access the database which is available at [www.researchresearch.com](http://www.researchresearch.com) where information on how to subscribe is provided.

### Research Fora

The University has research fora representing the academic communities served by the Research Councils. These fora mainly operate electronically, although occasional open meetings are organised. The fora were established to facilitate information flow on research councils, and other relevant research funding sources. This includes seeking responses to consultations and discussing emerging issues. The fora also provide the means for members to communicate with each other and to seek mutual support, e.g., looking for partners for proposals or help on specific issues. To join a list please visit: <http://www.rcs.bham.ac.uk/staff/fora.shtml>

### Funding Fact Sheets

A number of fact sheets are available via the RCS website to assist staff in identifying suitable schemes to apply for funding. Current Fact Sheets exist for UK Research Councils and for the European Seventh Framework Programme, together with coverage of some of the Charities – others will be added as time goes by. The Fact Sheets can be found at <http://www.rcs.bham.ac.uk/staff/funding/res.shtml>

### Funding Advice

RCS has a number of dedicated staff who can provide specialist advice to academic staff on more complex funding sources. Each College also has an assigned member of RCS who work with the College Research Office in supporting research activities. Details of these staff are listed right.

## RESEARCH FUNDING ADVISORS



### College Advisors

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# Research and Commercial Services

## Training

RCS is working in tandem with the Staff Development Unit to deliver training to the research community. We have recently identified that researchers require training in how to write a successful grant application and to this end an on-line training guide has been produced and is available via the RCS web pages under "Training" at [www.res.bham.ac.uk](http://www.res.bham.ac.uk)

We are keen to hear of ideas which researchers have for how training can assist them in carrying out their jobs and would encourage any ideas to be forwarded to Sally Wiley ([s.a.wiley@bham.ac.uk](mailto:s.a.wiley@bham.ac.uk)) who can consider them for further application.

## BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AND ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

Collaboration with business, industry and the community helps us to increase and transfer our knowledge – and, in line with the University's mission statement, helps to "... promote social and cultural well-being and to aid economic growth and regeneration ...."

The following list of services are those which RCS offers and co-ordinates to help the academic community collaborate and engage with Business and the West Midlands Region.

## Business and Industry Team

The business and industry team work specifically to promote and support relationships with external sponsors and partners. Details of who's within the team can be found at <http://www.industry.bham.ac.uk/team/> Please contact any member of the team who would be happy to explore your needs and who can introduce you to others who can help. Keep up-to-date with some of the activities the Business and Industry team are involved in by viewing their newsletter, 'Thinking Business' at <http://www.industry.bham.ac.uk/working/newsletter/>

## Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP)

If you are interested in working with Businesses, Industry, NHS Trusts or LEAs, then you might want to consider the DTI's Knowledge Transfer Partnership scheme which provides grant funding for universities to apply their knowledge and expertise to business problems. Matthew Wasley is the Business and Industry Team's KTP Manager and industrial funding advisor and can provide assistance and further information. Contact Matthew at <http://www.industry.bham.ac.uk/collaborative/ktp.shtml> for further information.

## Midlands Medici

Is an innovative training and personal development programme which aims to improve the awareness of, and support for, commercial development of research within a partnership of Midlands Universities. For further information <http://www.medici.bham.ac.uk/>

## CONTRACTS

RCS is responsible for the negotiation of terms and conditions of all research contracts that the University enters into with the Public and Private Sectors in order to ensure that such terms satisfactorily represent the University's interests, and to this end have a dedicated contracts team. The RCS website contains a number of proformas of the more usual contracts which can be found at <http://www.rcs.bham.ac.uk/staff/contracting/>.

## GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

RCS assists staff and students to comply with all applicable statutory requirements and University policies with the aim of promoting excellence and continuous improvements in the conduct of research. Research governance and compliance areas include human participant research whether clinical or non-clinical, projects involving human tissue or data, and clinical trials. Information is given on policies and procedures, funding

conditions, and monitoring arrangements as required by the University Code of Conduct or by external funders such as Research Councils, the Department of Health, or the US NIH.

Practical advice is given on obtaining approvals, registering projects and obtaining indemnity or insurance for research involving NHS or private patients, their tissue or data or involving animal research. RCS also provides administrative support for the University's research governance and ethical review committees. For further information visit <http://www.rcs.bham.ac.uk/staff/researchers/>

## Alta Innovations Ltd

The Business and Industry Team and the Contracts teams in RCS work alongside Alta Innovations Ltd who are the University's Technology Transfer Company. Further details at <http://www.alta.bham.ac.uk/>

# Research and Commercial Services

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