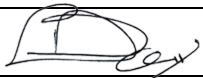


Joint Research Management Office Standard Operating Procedure for:

Research Projects Clearing and Closure Process

SOP Number:	103	Version Number:	1.01
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Background:

The research project close-out process requires close coordination between Research Finance, Faculties, and Finance teams. Each group is responsible for different stages of the project lifecycle, including award setup, budget management, reconciliations, reporting, and project closure.

Historically, unclear roles and responsibilities have caused delays in final claims, resolving under- or overspend, and have contributed to a growing backlog of legacy projects requiring review.

This SOP defines the agreed processes and establishes a 'no-legacy' policy within Research Finance to minimise financial risk to QMUL and ensure timely and efficient project closure.

Purpose:

This document outlines the process for closing research projects in compliance with financial, contractual, and system requirements. It ensures that all expenditures are accounted for on the project, commitments are cleared, and system records are accurately updated.

Scope:

This procedure applies to all research projects funded by grants, contracts, or collaborations, and is followed by staff responsible for project financials and system closures.

The process is supported by Research Finance, Finance, and Faculty teams, and managed and closed out according to both funder rules and university procedures.

Abbreviations:

PI	Principal Investigator
FES	Financial Statement of Expenditure
JRMO	Joint Research Management Office
PASTSTUS	Pre-Award Status
PMF	Project Master File

Definitions:

Research Project:

A research project that is supported and financially sponsored by an external funding organisation. These organisations, often called research funders, provide money for a specific piece of research under agreed terms and conditions. The funder sets rules on how the money must be spent, what reporting is required, and what outputs must be delivered.

Award Set-Up:

Creation of a record on the financial system in accordance with the funding agreement or contract, which sets out defined budgets and timelines.

Budget Management:

Ensuring that funds are limited to the awarded amount, used within a specified period, and for approved purposes only.

Compliance:

The project must follow the tripod of responsibility; i.e., funder's terms, institutional policies, and relevant regulations.

Legacy Projects:

A legacy project (in a research finance context) refers to a completed or ended research project that has not been fully closed out and still requires financial or administrative actions. Why do these matter?

- ☐ Increase financial risk to the university
- ☐ Risk non-compliance with funder requirements
- ☐ Delay recovery of costs or residual balances
- ☐ Create an administrative backlog for Research Finance and Faculties

Commitments:

In a research finance context, a commitment refers to funds that the university has agreed to spend but that have not yet been fully paid or invoiced.

Worktribe (WT):

The university's internal system for costing, contracts, and grant applications is used to manage research projects during the pre-award stage.

Agresso/UNIT4 (UNIT4):

The University's financial management system is used to oversee and manage research projects once funding has been awarded.

Relevant SOPs:

- | | |
|-------|-----|
| • SOP | N/A |
| • SOP | N/A |
| • SOP | N/A |

SOP Text:

	Responsibility	Activity
1.	Research Finance	Project Closure Step-by-Step Guide following the Project Closure Checklist <u>Part A</u> - Record the Project Code. - Review and verify details on the contract/award letter and confirm with the PI that the project has ended. Once confirmed, place the project in a "parked" status to prevent any further expenditure, unless expressly authorised. - Ensure all expenditure is posted. - Clear all commitments – refer to the Commitment Check by Project-WO report on the Web - Verify all invoices and payments have been made. - By funder - By collaborators/partners - Mark as not applicable if irrelevant. - Confirm reconciliation is up to date, and that total claims match the reconciliation checklist and Final Expenditure Statement (FES). - Check that a copy of the signed FES and Project Closure Checklist has been saved to Worktribe. - Ensure all Workorders are at ZERO (0) and change the grant status to P (Parked). - Run the following 'Checks and Balances' reports: - Left to Spend report - JRMO - Project I&E Check - RGA → RSBO Claim (Historical & Current details) - JRMO Balance Sheet Check (after month-end updates and period close) - Ensure final reconciliation accounts for balance sheet updates and period closure. <u>Part B</u> - Open Work order(s) and change PASTATUS to PE (Project End) in the Relation Group tab. - In the Work order tab, change Status to C (Closed). - Save Work order changes. - If multiple Work orders exist, repeat steps 11 to 13 for each.

		15. Open Project Master File (PMF) and change PMF status to C (Closed), then save. 16. In Worktribe, conduct the 2-Stage Closure Process: - Mark as Project Complete - Mark as Project Closed <u>Part C</u> 17. Upload a signed copy of the completed checklist to the UNIT4 Project Record via Document Archive. 18. Upload a signed copy of the completed checklist to the Worktribe Project Record via Document Archive. <u>Part D</u> 19. Upload a signed copy of the completed checklist to the UNIT4 Project Record via Document Archive. 20. Upload a signed copy of the completed checklist to the Worktribe Project Record via Document Archive.
2.	Faculty	Faculties are responsible for the day-to-day operational management of research projects to ensure they are delivered on time, within budget, and in line with funder and institutional requirements. Key requirements are; <u>Communication and Coordination</u> ☐ Acting as the primary administrative contact for Research Finance and other support teams. ☐ Providing timely information needed for financial reporting, audits, and reconciliations <u>Close-Out Responsibilities</u> ☐ Confirming all final transactions, commitments, and project deliverables before closure. ☐ Assisting Research Finance by reviewing final balances and ensuring all necessary documentation is completed. ☐ Helping to resolve any outstanding issues to prevent the creation of legacy projects.
3.	Finance	The Finance team is responsible for ensuring that all financial activity recorded against a research project is accurate, compliant, and properly finalised before the project is closed in the University's financial systems. Key responsibilities include; <u>Financial Reconciliation</u> ☐ Verifying that all income, expenditure, and internal transfers have been correctly recorded. ☐ Ensuring any adjustments, corrections, or journal entries are processed before closure.
4.	Research Finance	Project Lifecycle Closure Timelines (No Legacy Policy) Actions within: • 1 month: Project parked following confirmation of period close, in line with the project end date as per the agreement/contract.

		• 2–4 months: All appropriate costs posted, invoices paid, payments received, and final invoices raised. • 5–9 months: Final payment received, and project formally closed. It is recognised that for some projects, these timelines may fluctuate depending on the funder and ad-hoc enquiries. Such cases are considered special circumstances, and management should be advised about accounts that may take longer than 9 months to close. Also, supporting comments <u>must</u> be recorded in both Worktribe and UNIT4 systems for the closeout delay.
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Change control

This section outlines changes from version **NA** to version **NA**

Section changed	Summary and description of changes
N/A	This is the initial finalised version of this SOP. No earlier versions exist. This document has been created to formalise the research project close-out process and responsibilities.

Supporting Documents List of associated documents

Document ref.	Document name

List of templates

Template ref.	Template name
TBC	Project Closure Checklist
TBC	Commitment Check by Project-WO - Unit4 ERP

List of appendices

Appendix ref.	Appendix name

EDGE Database Update
