

## Technician Time Costing Policy (proposed)

### 1. Policy intent

This policy outlines the University's strategic approach, key principles and priorities that apply to the costing of technician time for research grants, industrial research grants and other commercial work.

The aims of the policy are to:

- i. Establish and recognise the full economic cost of research in respect of technical staff time.
- ii. Outline the principles that staff should take into consideration when making decisions about the costing of technician time for projects.
- iii. Ensure staff are aware of their obligations to take a responsible approach to costing projects and in properly recognising the contributions of technical staff.

The University is committed to taking a sustainable approach to research and innovation practice, both environmentally and financially. It is imperative that we recover as much of our costs as possible to ensure that research is both financially viable and financially sustainable. Equally, the University is committed to improving the visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability of technical staff across the University, having signed the Technician Commitment in 2017.

This policy is intended to support the principle of properly costing research with a view to delivering improved cost recovery and financial sustainability, ensuring that projects are properly resourced and commitments to funders can be met. Additionally, the policy is supportive of improved reporting and enhanced recognition and visibility of the technician contribution to research and innovation both within and beyond the University. The policy demonstrates the University's commitment to technicians and to integrating sustainability into everyday practice and decision-making.

The policy is approved by RSOE owned by the DIRECTOR OF ERO.

### 2. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the terms used have the following meaning:

| Term                            | Definition                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CRedit                          | Contributor Role Taxonomy. <a href="https://credit.niso.org/">https://credit.niso.org/</a>                                                                                                                                              |
| Directly Allocated              | Costs that are paid for centrally that are charged to the funder using an estimated cost model (i.e., not actual amounts of time spent on the project).                                                                                 |
| Directly Incurred               | Costs that are directly attributable to the project that would not exist otherwise. There may be funder requirements for tracking via timesheets to be submitted by project team members, where they are funded <1.0FTE on the project. |
| Estates and indirects           | Sometimes referred to as "overheads" these are costs set by TRAC and are a calculated cost based on staff time attributed to the project.                                                                                               |
| fEC                             | Full Economic Costs. Typically calculated using TRAC methodology. (for UKRI)                                                                                                                                                            |
| FTE                             | Full Time Equivalent.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Infrastructure Technician Costs | These are costs charged to the project which some schools provide for all experimental projects. This technical support is non-project-specific support for the research infrastructure. Examples of this include glass                 |

|                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                       | wash up, maintenance of shared equipment, general health and safety. Whether these costs are applied or not are generally set at School-level (see <a href="#">Appendix 1</a> ).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| "Project co-lead" role                                | Co-investigator from our or another UK institution (UK) or an international institution (international). Technicians may be assigned as Project co-lead where funder rules permit.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| "Project lead" role                                   | Principal Investigator – responsible for the intellectual leadership and overall management of the project. Technicians may be a Project lead where funder rules allow. Check call guidelines for eligibility.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Research and Innovation Associate                     | A researcher employed to work on the project, typically a Post Doctoral Research Associate (PDRA) or Research Associate (RA). Technicians should not be assigned this role, with the equivalent/most appropriate alternative being "Specialist".                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| "Researcher co-lead" role                             | A research and innovation associate who is not eligible to be a project lead or project co-lead but has made a substantial contribution to the formulation and development of the application and will be closely involved with the project. Technicians should not be assigned this role, with the equivalent/most appropriate alternative being "Project co-lead".                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| "Specialist" role                                     | <p>A member of staff providing specialist skills and intellectual input to a project</p> <p>It is anticipated that Specialists will contribute to the project through some or all of the following roles: Conceptualisation; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Software; Validation; Visualisation. Additionally, they may also be expected to contribute to the project through the following roles: Writing (original draft and/or reviewing &amp; editing); and Resources. (see detailed definitions in <a href="#">Appendix 2</a>)</p>                                                                                                                                                    |
| Technician/technical staff (institutional definition) | The University takes an inclusive approach to the definition of technician or technical staff. This will include members of staff who are in the technical job family, those who have technician or technical in their job title and those who have a significant proportion of technical work in their job description.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| "Technician" role                                     | <p>A member of staff providing general technical support to a project, as required, but not including those tasks covered by infrastructure technician tasks (if these are budgeted for (School-specific see <a href="#">Appendix 1</a>)). This would include what might have previously been referred to as "pool" or "group" or "core" technician time.</p> <p>It is anticipated that Technicians will contribute to the project through one or both of the following roles: Investigation; Resources. Additionally, Technicians may also be expected to contribute to the project through the following roles: Data curation; Methodology; and Software (see detailed definitions in <a href="#">Appendix 2</a>)</p> |
| TRAC                                                  | Transparent Approach to costing.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

### 3. Scope

#### 3.1 In scope

This policy applies to all instances of costing of technician time on research grants, industrial research grants and other commercial projects at the time at which funding is applied for/contract is

drafted. It should also be considered should any changes be made to the costing should the project be funded and should there be any proposed virements between budget headings.

The policy applies to all business areas in the University, including Colleges, Professional Services Groups and Edinburgh Innovations Ltd.

The policy sets out all approved methods for costing of technician time at the University and outlines when it is appropriate to use them.

### 3.2 Out of scope

- Where staff time is an ineligible cost.
- Technician time which is embedded within facility TRAC costing/charges/rates. There may be instances where additional technician time is required to support delivery of a project, over and above that provided by a facility's technical staff. Where this happens, this policy applies.
- Guidance for specific funders/calls (a basic summary is provided in [Appendix 3](#)).

## 4. Key principles

This policy and its supporting procedures are underpinned by the following principles:

- The highest levels of integrity are applied at all times.
- The University's reputation as a world class organisation is protected.
- There is an appropriate level of transparency of processes and decision making.
- Appropriate consideration of relevant social and/or economic factors.
- Costing is aligned with any relevant University policies and procedures, as well as any applicable funder requirements and rules.
- Costing technician time should be compliant with the University's approach to Research Cultures.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

|                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Budget holder (e.g., College Dean of Research, Head of School) | Written approval of any reduction in costs that are expected to be included, technician time or overheads (see <a href="#">Section 7</a> ). This should include liaising with the relevant technical or facility manager. |
| College Deans of Research                                      | Disseminating the policy and working with ERO to ensure compliance with the policy and that it lives within the College.                                                                                                  |
| Edinburgh Research Office                                      | Working with Project Leads to ensure technicians are appropriately costed on projects                                                                                                                                     |
| Project Leads                                                  | To request roles be costed as appropriate for the proposal. This may involve consulting with the relevant technical or facility manager.                                                                                  |
| Research Strategy Group                                        | Final approval of the policy and subsequent approval of any changes.                                                                                                                                                      |
| Research Support Operational Executive                         | RSOE is the policy owner and is responsible for leading regular policy review, ensuring it aligns to other associated policies and remains relevant, taking into consideration any sector or funder level changes.        |

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| School Directors of Research  | Ensuring that the policy is complied with in business area.                                                                                                                            |
| School Research Offices       | Working with Project Leads to ensure technicians are appropriately costed in on projects.                                                                                              |
| Technical/Facility Managers   | Supporting research administrative staff and Project Leads in ensuring appropriate costing of technician time, particularly in relation to decision making about FTE, grade and DA/DI. |
| Technician Steering Committee | Feedback on the policy with regards to recommendations.                                                                                                                                |

## 6. Key operating practices and general rules of thumb

Technical roles are to be costed in accordance with the role type for the project. This will determine whether overheads should be included and where they sit within the budget (DI vs DA). It is important to note that roles less than 100 % and that are DI will require timesheets. This will enable a higher cost recovery and audit trail for each project.

It is required for overheads to be included where roles are expected to provide intellectual input to the project.

Naming a specific technician can provide increased support for a grant, particularly if specialist skills are required. Typically (dependant on funder requirements) named individuals provide a CV with the application documents.

| Technical Role                          | Costed within DI or DA | Expected FTE              | Name technician | Include overheads?                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| "Technician"                            | DI/DA                  | 10 – 40 %                 | Typically, no   | No                                                                   |
| "Specialist"                            | DI                     | Dependant on requirements | Typically, yes  | Yes                                                                  |
| Technician (hired for one project only) | DI                     | 50 – 100 %                | Typically, no   | Dependent on role assigned in Worktribe "Technician" or "Specialist" |
| "Project Lead"                          | DI                     | 5-20%                     | Yes             | Yes                                                                  |
| "Project co-lead"                       | DI                     | 5-20 %                    | Yes             | Yes                                                                  |

### 6.1 Decision making

There is a flow chart in [Appendix 4](#) which can be used to support decision-making.

### 6.2 Facilities

How to cost facilities is out of scope for this policy. However, there will be occasions when staff within the facility will be providing support that is above and beyond their normal scope of work. In these scenarios the time for the staff member(s) should be costed appropriately for the needs of the research project, as outlined above.

## 6.3 Commercial

Commercial costings should be costed at a minimum 100 % fEC. Priced projects should be given straight to EI and not the funder to maintain commercial confidence and negotiation position. This allows EI to make the project/consultancy fEC+.

Edinburgh Innovations Ltd will carry out all pricing negotiations with the client. Early involvement of EI Ltd is recommended to ensure that the fees to be charged reflect the market value of the services to be provided.

## 7. Costing approvals

### 7.1 Research projects and contract research

Projects that are to be recorded on the Research Finance Ledger and therefore are recorded on Worktribe should follow the normal approval process associated with these records. Any reduction in staff or indirect costs which keeps the time allocation but reduces the amount being charged must be approved by the budget holder. This might be the Dean of Research for the College, the Head of School for Schools, or their designate.

### 7.2 Consultancy and "fee for service" work

Consultancy should follow the normal approval process. Early involvement of the EI Ltd Consultancy & Commercial Services team is recommended to ensure that the fees to be charged reflect the market value of the services to be provided.

In addition to line manager approval, proponents should liaise with the relevant technical or facility manager if the project/work requires technician time. Formal approval for service work and facility access must be obtained in advance from the relevant Head of School, Head of College, Professional Services Group or the Principal, as appropriate. This involves an approval form sent to the relevant authority by EI Ltd and includes agreement of:

- The nature of the proposed task
- The proposed timetable for the activity
- The details of University resource to be consumed to perform the service, including any technician time
- The project fee to be charged
- Costs of the service work and facilities access

## 8. Proposal/grant management

### 8.1 Timesheets requirements

Where roles that are funded as DI and are less than 100% monthly timesheets will be required to be completed, enabling a higher cost recovery and audit trail for each project.

Once it is known which member of technical staff will be contributing to a project, a Form 13 should be submitted and staff given relevant access to the Research Timesheets system.

## 9. Related policies, procedures and guidance

### 9.1 Related policies – found in the Policy Directory

[Policy Directory | The University of Edinburgh](#)

- Consultancy Policy
- Research Ethics Policy
- Research Misconduct Policy

- Research Publications & Copyright Policy

## 9.2 Other useful links

- [fEC | Bioresearch & Veterinary Services | Bioresearch and Veterinary services](#)
- [FAQs | Bioresearch & Veterinary Services | Bioresearch and Veterinary services](#)
- <https://credit.niso.org/>
- <https://www.trac.ac.uk/tracguidance/>
- [UoE Fair Authorship Guidance](#)
- [Grants and Contracts for Research, Commercial and Other Activities | Finance | Finance](#)
- [UKRI roles in funding applications](#)
- [Contributor Role Taxonomy](#)
- [UoE Full Economic Costing](#)

## 10. Version History

Only details of first and most recent versions are required here. Further details on Version History can be found by contacting **[INFO: Insert appropriate email address for specific area]**

| Version | Date     | Description                                                                 | Approved By |
|---------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 0.1     | 15/04/25 | Drafted by Sally Morgan, Natasha Dorling and Jenny Loukes                   |             |
| 1.0     | TBC      | [ <b>INFO:</b> Use this when initial version first published]               |             |
| 1.1     | TBC      | [ <b>INFO:</b> Use this for subsequent versions briefly noting key changes] |             |

## 11. Reviewers & Approvers

| Name | Role | Peer Review/<br>SME Endorse/<br>Governance<br>Approval | Date<br>Reviewed/<br>Endorsed/<br>Approved | Comments |
|------|------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------|
|      |      |                                                        |                                            |          |
|      |      |                                                        |                                            |          |

## 12. Alternative format

If you require this document in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background, please contact [policygovernance@ed.ac.uk](mailto:policygovernance@ed.ac.uk).

## Appendix 1: Infrastructure Technician Costs

In Worktribe the settings are currently set to either apply Infrastructure Technician Costs (Clinical/Laboratory) or not (Office/Classroom). This is determined at a School-level, as detailed in the table below. However, this can be manually altered on a project-by-project basis, depending on the specific project needs with agreement/approval from the relevant authority in that organisational unit.

| College | School                                                                        | Automatic setting for Infrastructure Technician Costs |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| CAHSS   | Business School                                                               | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | Edinburgh College of Art                                                      | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | Edinburgh Futures Institute office                                            | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | Moray House School of Education & Sport                                       | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | School of Divinity                                                            | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | School of Economics                                                           | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | School of Health in Social Science                                            | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | School of History, Classics & Archaeology                                     | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | School of Law                                                                 | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | School of Literatures, Languages & Cultures                                   | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CAHSS   | School of Philosophy, Psychology & Language Sciences                          | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CSE     | Bayes Centre                                                                  | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CSE     | Data Lab Innovation Centre                                                    | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CSE     | Edinburgh Parallel Computing Centre                                           | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CSE     | School of Biological Sciences                                                 | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CSE     | School of Chemistry                                                           | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CSE     | School of Engineering                                                         | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CSE     | School of GeoSciences                                                         | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CSE     | School of Physics & Astronomy                                                 | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CSE     | School of Informatics                                                         | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CSE     | School of Mathematics                                                         | Office/Classroom                                      |
| CMVM    | Centre for Inflammation Research (School of Regeneration and Repair)          | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CMVM    | Centre for Regenerative Medicine (School of Regeneration and Repair)          | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CMVM    | Centre for Reproductive Health (School of Regeneration and Repair)            | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CMVM    | Centre for Biomedicine, Self & Society (School of Population Health Sciences) | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CMVM    | Centre for Global Health (School of Population Health Sciences)               | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CMVM    | Centre for Medical Informatics (School of Population Health Sciences)         | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CMVM    | Centre for Population Health Sciences (School of Population Health Sciences)  | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |
| CMVM    | Edinburgh Clinical Trials Unit (School of Population Health Sciences)         | Clinical/Laboratory                                   |

|                |                                                                                           |                                                              |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| CMVM           | Centre for Cardiovascular Science (School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences)    | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| <b>College</b> | <b>School</b>                                                                             | <b>Automatic setting for Infrastructure Technician Costs</b> |
| CMVM           | Centre for Clinical Brain Sciences (School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences)   | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| CMVM           | Centre for Discovery Brain Sciences (School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences)  | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| CMVM           | Edinburgh Clinical Research Facility (School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences) | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| CMVM           | Edinburgh Imaging (School of Neurological and Cardiovascular Sciences)                    | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| CMVM           | Centre for Cancer Research (SGC)                                                          | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| CMVM           | Centre for Genomic & Experimental Medicine (SGC)                                          | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| CMVM           | MRC University Unit for Human Genetics (SGC)                                              | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| CMVM           | The Roslin Institute                                                                      | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| CMVM           | Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies                                                 | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |
| CMVM           | Edinburgh Medical School                                                                  | Clinical/Laboratory                                          |

## Appendix 2: CRediT definitions

| <b>Role #</b> | <b>Contributor Role</b>      | <b>Definition</b>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1             | Conceptualisation            | ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims                                                                                                                                         |
| 2             | Data Curation                | management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later re-use |
| 3             | Formal Analysis              | application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyse or synthesise study data                                                                                        |
| 4             | Funding Acquisition          | acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication                                                                                                                               |
| 5             | Investigation                | conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection                                                                                          |
| 6             | Methodology                  | development or design of methodology; creation of models                                                                                                                                                       |
| 7             | Project Administration       | management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution                                                                                                                    |
| 8             | Resources                    | provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools                                                        |
| 9             | Software                     | programming, software development; designing computer programmes; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components                                           |
| 10            | Supervision                  | oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team                                                                       |
| 11            | Validation                   | verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs                                                      |
| 12            | Visualisation                | preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualisation/data presentation                                                                                                  |
| 13            | Writing - original draft     | preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation)                                                                    |
| 14            | Writing - review and editing | preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision - including pre- or post-publication stages    |

### Appendix 3: Pricing policy by funder type

All funders allow DI costs, however not all allow DA costs.

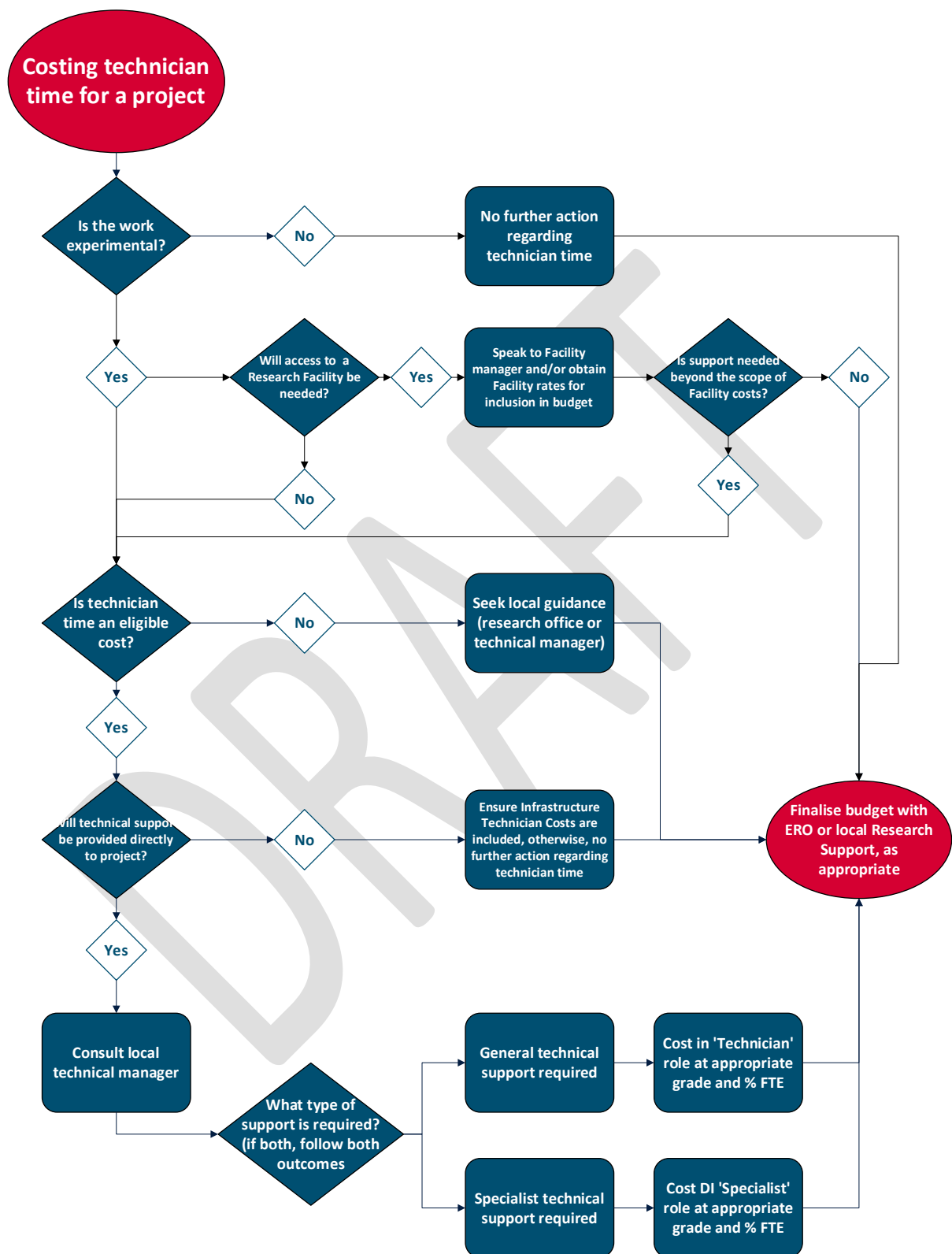
| Funder/research sponsor types                                            | UoE pricing policy summary                                                                 | <sup>1</sup> Flexibility | Technician Time eligibility |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Institution own-funded research                                          |                                                                                            |                          |                             |
| Research Councils                                                        | Typically, 80% fEC                                                                         | No                       | Yes. DA or DI               |
| Other UK Government Departments (OGDs)                                   | Minimum 100% fEC                                                                           | No                       | Funder/call dependent       |
| EU government bodies, including EC                                       | Overheads apply on direct costs, as scheme rules allow                                     | No                       | Funder/call dependent       |
| UK charities                                                             | Minimum 100% fEC for DI costs<br><br>DA and estates to be included when funder rules allow | Funder dependent         | Funder/call dependent       |
| Industrial, commercial, EU other and other overseas grants and contracts | Costs should be charged at a commercial rate >100% fEC                                     | Yes                      | Yes. DI                     |

There may be instances where the funding body changes the eligibility of costs per funding call. Call guidance dictates how staff and non-staff items are costed.

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<sup>1</sup> Where there is flexibility, this will be subject to approval by local leadership (typically Director of Research and relevant technical manager)

## Appendix 4: Flow Chart



## Appendix 5: Worked examples

Coming soon...

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