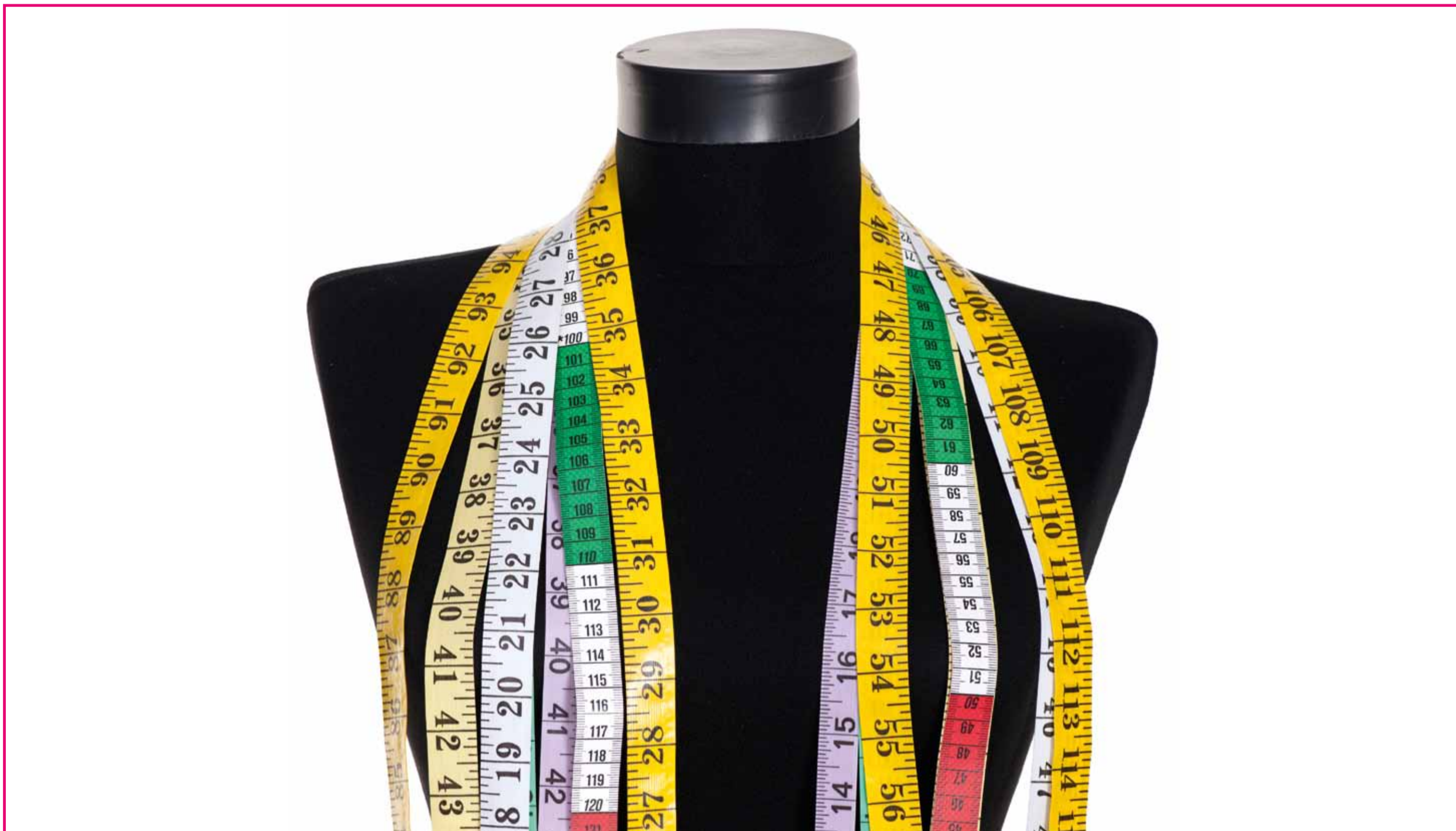


BU Research Development Unit: Tailoring the Pre-Award Process for Academics

Tailoring support for academics underpins the Research Development Unit's (RDU) philosophy around service provision, with the fabric of the University's pre-award processes recently having undergone the following alterations:



Customised Funding Alerts

High Street: Feedback from academics about the funding opportunities e-newsletter was that it did not fit – it was too lengthy and generic, and therefore often went unread.

Tailoring: RDU consulted with Research Professional to create automated searches based on keywords related to the University's Research Centres. All academics now receive a regular email from Research Professional, listing only funding opportunities tailored to their areas of expertise.

Finished Garment: This has saved approximately three days of RDU staff time per week and we are already starting to see an increase in bidding, especially from academics new to research.

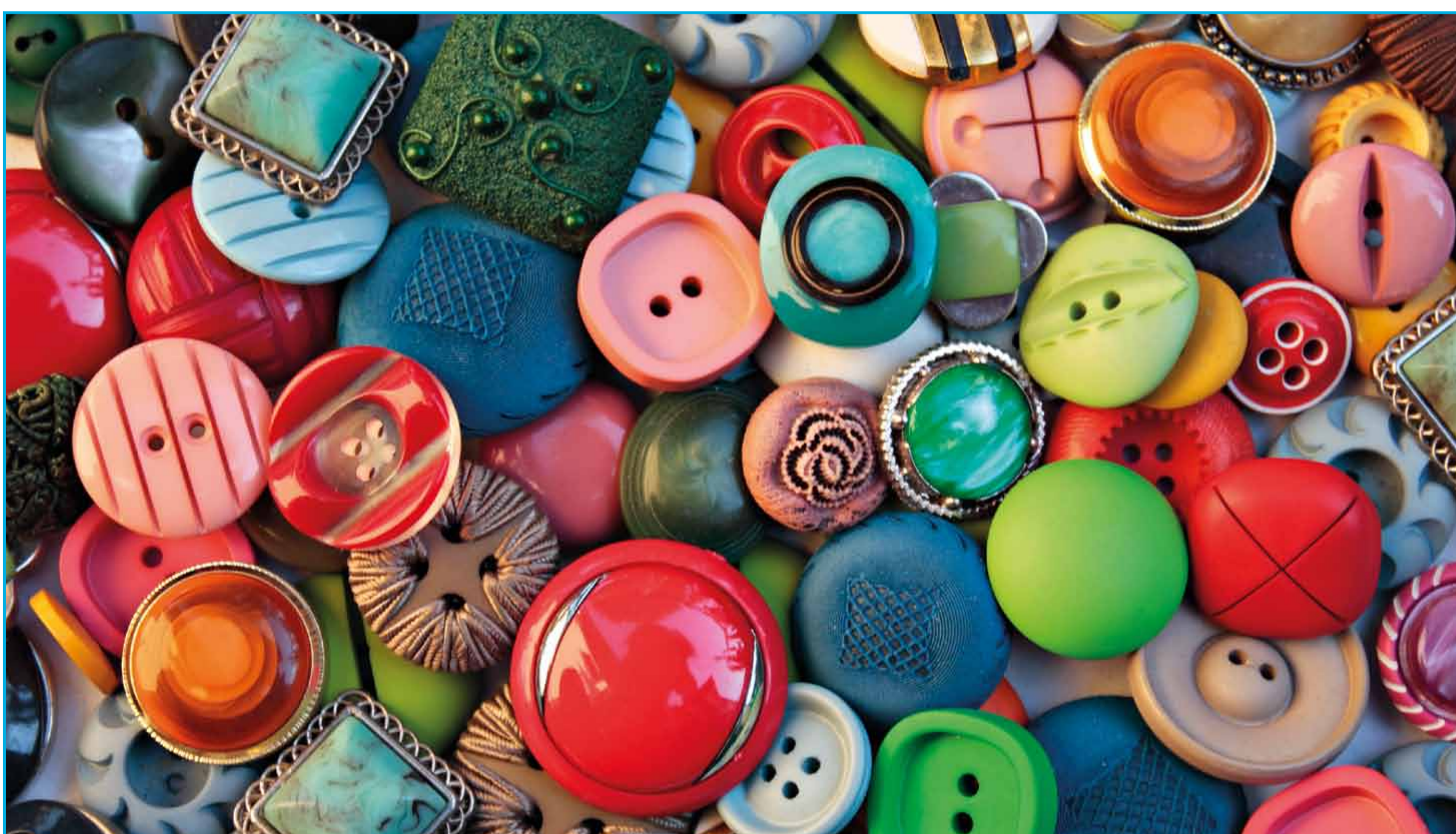


Internal Peer Review

High Street: Although praised, uptake of the RDU's previous internal peer review process was limited due to the rigid procedural structure and the length of time taken to complete a review.

Tailoring: RDU worked with academic staff to redesign the process to create a more flexible, tailored, on-demand e-service, resulting in faster turnaround times.

Finished Garment: The uptake of academics using this process has trebled and praise has been received for the quality – "I had thought this application was already quite polished, but each reviewer had a number of points to make which gave us food for thought and some of which will improve the actual submission" – and for the speed – "quicker than I expected it to be" – of feedback given.

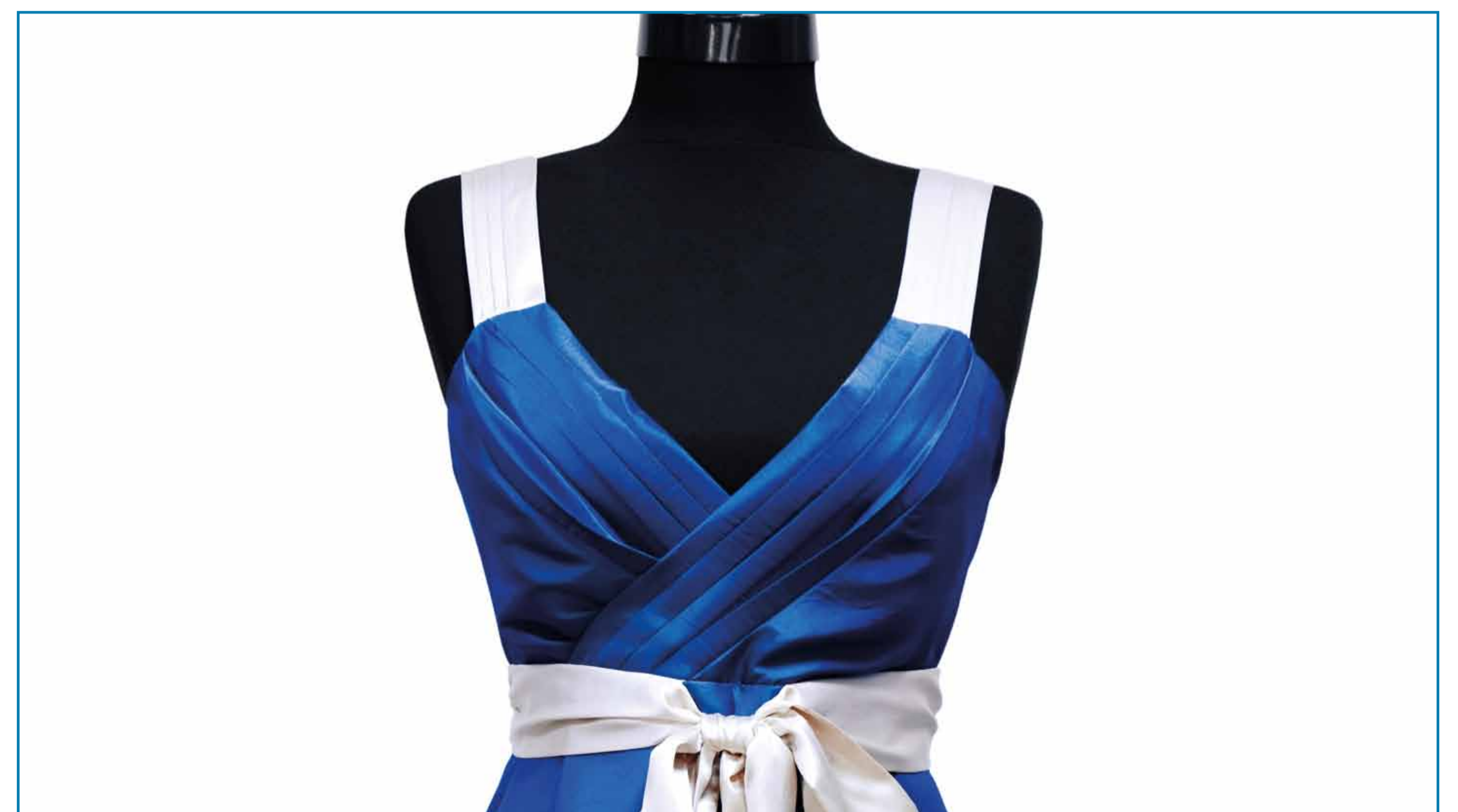


Je-S Approvals

High Street: When reviewing Je-S proposals prior to submission, the RDU found errors in most of them due to inadequate checking prior to submission to the RDU. This meant returning documents to the principal investigator (PI) to request amendments before the proposal could be submitted, placing pressure on all involved.

Tailoring: An additional approval layer was added to Je-S to place responsibility for submission quality back onto the pre-award administration staff who now check the bid prior to submission to the RDU.

Finished Garment: Significantly fewer errors now occur. Through making this alteration, the RDU also identified skills and knowledge gaps so now offers tailored training for pre-award administration staff.



Personalised Recognition

High Street: The RDU acknowledged that some academics felt undervalued in their struggle for research funding and needed motivation. BU is in the early stages of developing a research culture and acknowledging and rewarding positive engagement with research and this has been highly praised by the academic body.

Tailoring: The RDU and PVC (Research) now acknowledge all bid submissions and awards with a personal email to the PI and a weekly post added to the BU Research Blog, our primary means of disseminating research information at BU.

Finished Garment: This has been extremely well received by academics and has increased the morale of academic staff. It has also helped to encourage academics new to research to submit bids for funding.