



Undergraduate Research Assistantships Programme

Criteria for selecting staff applications for funding

**Bournemouth
University**

Version 2 – semester based 2016 positions

Introduction

The Undergraduate Research Assistantship (URA) programme at BU was launched in autumn 2014, funded by the Fusion Investment Fund.¹ It provides on-campus employment opportunities for undergraduate (UG) students to work in clusters, centres and institutes, alongside academics, supporting research that is directly related to their career path and/or academic discipline. This enables the student to assist academic staff with their research whilst also gaining research experience.

URA programme objectives:

- Increase co-creation between staff and students (particularly for outputs)
- Increase student satisfaction and NSS scores
- Promote careers in academia and research to students
- Increase progression from UG to PG
- Provide support to academic staff with their research

Approximately 50 URA positions will be funded each year – c. 50% will run as eight week part-time positions in semester 2 and c. 50% will run as six week full-time positions in the summer.

Application process

There are two stages to the application process: 1) staff application stage whereby BU academic staff can apply for funding for URA positions, and 2) student selection stage whereby Faculty staff recruit to the funded positions. Due to the limited number of positions, staff can only have one active URA application in operation at any one time.

Staff apply for funding for URA positions by completing an online application form. Applications received are reviewed by a panel² using the criteria presented in this paper. Decisions are confirmed with staff applicants within one week of being made by the panel.

Criteria and decision-making process

In assessing staff applications for funded URA positions, the panel use the following criteria to prioritise funding for positions that will provide an excellent student and staff experience and support the achievement of the programme objectives. Applications are assessed against the following six criteria:

¹ The BU-wide scheme has grown out of the Research Assistantship Scheme operated in the Department of Psychology in 2012-13 and 2013-14 and the pilot in the Media School in 2013-14, all of which has been funded via the Fusion Investment Fund.

² Two Deputy Deans (Research and Professional Practice) and the Head of RKE

1. Student-centred – the position is designed with the student in mind and will provide the student with transferable skills and enhanced opportunities for further study, a career in research/academia and/or future employability.
2. Co-creation and co-production – the position will provide the student and staff member with clear opportunities for co-creating/co-producing outputs, such as journal papers and conference presentations.
3. Fusion – the position meets the BU Fusion agenda of linking research with education and/or professional practice.
4. External engagement – the position provides the student and/or staff member with the opportunity for external engagement that wouldn't otherwise take place, for example a public engagement event.
5. Impact – the position supports the acceleration and delivery of a potential impact case study for the next REF assessment or the position supports the submission of a research proposal.
6. Cross-Faculty – the position supports research activity to take place outside of a single Faculty.

The panel will assess each application against these six criteria, giving a score out of four for each. The scores will be totalled to give each application a score out of a maximum of 24.

Score	Definition
4	Provides an outstanding opportunity for achievement of the criteria
3	Provides a good opportunity for achievement of the criteria
2	Provides a limited opportunity for achievement of the criteria
1	Does not provide an opportunity for achievement of the criteria

Table 1: Definitions of scores

To be eligible for funding applications must achieve a panel consensus score above 15, including a score of at least 2 for criteria 1 and 2. Eligible applications will be ranked with funding awarded to those scoring the highest.

The panel reserves the right to be flexible with the number of positions awarded in each round.

The panel aims to meet within one week of the closing date and for decisions to be confirmed with applicants within one week of the panel meeting.

Appeals

Appeals can be made to the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation. Applicants wishing to appeal should contact the Head of RKE in the first instance.