

Policy for External Research Funding

Background

Following a meeting with current project leaders at ISV and discussions in the Department's leadership (AU) a small committee comprising of Professors Elin Lerum Boasson, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan Kumlin and Research Adviser Linda Gulli was set to work on a policy-note outlining current rules and principles for external research funding at ISV. As such, this document does not contain new proposals for policy nor the policy preferences of the committee members, and it should be considered a living document that hopefully will facilitate rather than restrict future discussions around external research funding.

Introduction

As stated in our annual plan for 2022-2024, the Department of Political Science at UiO (ISV) aims to be one of the best and most attractive research communities within political science in Europe. External funding strengthens the quality of research and improves links to other excellent research communities, within Norway and abroad.

Since 2015, ISV has had increasing success in acquiring external funding, both competitive grants from major research funding agencies, as well as funding from collaboration projects and public authorities. The two main sources for externally funded research at the Department are Norwegian Research Council (RCN) and EUs Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe. In August 2022, the Department (numbers incl. C-REX in brackets) will have approximately 20 [double check] post docs and 12 [double check] PhDs with external funding and 5,6 of the full-time equivalents (årsverk) executed by the permanent staff was externally funded (frikjøp).

Ambitions and long-term goals

Permanently employed staff at ISV may themselves decide when and how much they will engage in developing externally funded research projects. Still the department as whole has some overarching ambitions and long-term goals for research (see also [Årsplan for Institutt for statsvitenskap 2022 - 2024 - Institutt for statsvitenskap \(ISV\) \(uio.no\)](#))

ISV aims at:

- Seeking external funding that strengthens research and facilitates high quality teaching.
- Achieving a high level of externally funded research activity for the coming decade.
- Always having at least two projects financed by the ERC.
- Ensuring that teaching at the department is research based, and thus that employees at externally funded projects shall as a main rule contribute to the departments' teaching.

At outset, when external funding is not considered, all associate and full professors have a 50/50 split between teaching and research time. Thus, the permanently employed staff have significant research time even without receiving external funding. Hence, employees should only apply for external funding if they want to do so, and especially when this helps them to further their research ideas and ambitions, and they have the capacity to do so.

The application processes

The Department shall contribute to the development of high-quality applications. As early as possible in the project development process, the Head of Department shall be informed about application plans. This gives the administration and the leadership crucial information about the application activity among the staff, and thus enables them to facilitate the employees' efforts. As external projects will almost always involve costs for the Department in addition to research time, it is important to assess the project plans early on.

Project developers have leeway to develop research projects as they see fit. The department will ensure that developers are offered feedback from peers as well as skilled research project administrators. Project developers are however free to also receive advice from people in their own networks, from inside or outside the department.

Rules of thumb:

- Project developers should inform the research administration and Head of department about the project development as early as possible in the project development period.
- The research administration at ISV and at the SV faculty can help project developers, early on, to identify which calls are best suited for them.
- Project developers should develop a timetable for the project development process in dialogue with the research administration, ensuring ample time for feedback along the way.
- Most of the money that is applied for shall go to UiO, but adjustments can be made in dialogue with the ISV administration and leadership, depending on the needs of the project.
- NFR projects should ideally include at least one recruitment position to UiO, be it PhD or post doc.
- ISV staff should not lead project applications from other organizations than ISV
- ISV staff can join projects led by others and should aim to get monetary compensation for the effort they invest in these projects. The administration and Head of department need be informed of such plans.
- ISV staff that display a track-record of applying for funds from ISV, may in some instances join external projects from other institutions without monetary compensation to ISV (e.g., in the form of a 10% or 20% secondary position at the other institution), insofar as this is clarified with the ISV leadership.

Securing research-based teaching

The teaching offered at ISV shall be research-based, and the department expects all its scientific staff to conduct both research and teaching. As such, ISV aims to limit the non-permanent employees to PhDs and postdocs, to avoid establishing a large pool of non-tenured researchers. With this as a background, there is little room for hiring people in research positions in relation to projects and PhDs and postdocs cannot lead project applications.

Project development ought to occur in line with these principles:

- As a main rule, the Department does not hire researchers.
- PhDs and postdocs can only to a limited extent be included in project development.
- ISV led projects can include funding of PhDs, postdoc's and researcher positions at other research organizations in and outside Norway
- For permanent employees, buy-out ("frikjøp") is capped at 50 per cent (leaving 25 per cent teaching time and 25 per cent own research/or ("internt frikjøp"), and most project positions

are extended to include teaching obligations. can be bought out (“eksternt frikjøp”) up to 50 per cent from their position (25 per cent teaching and 25 per cent research time).

- All employees that are ‘bought out’ have to seek endorsement for this in due time before the application is submitted
- Projects may include research assistants, who may perform both scientific and some administrative tasks, and these positions can be both very short term and medium-to-short term (up to 2 years regardless of percentage employed)
- Directors of Centres of Excellence can apply for 100% ‘frikjøp’

When funding is secured

The ISV leadership has the human resource responsibility (“personalansvar”) for PhDs and postdocs employed on research projects. ISV hosts a broad variety of research projects and aims to facilitate project leaders in their efforts to create vibrant and healthy research communities. The ISV leadership and administrative staff will support ISV project leaders in a way that enable them to professionally steer and develop their projects.

To facilitate good project leadership, the department:

- Offers at least 2 annual meetings/short seminars where key project related leadership challenges are discussed and where external experienced project leaders are invited to share from their experience. [NEW]
- Develop a webpage on the ISV site that links to relevant resources for project leaders, and this site is regularly updated [NEW]
- Support project leaders that want to take part in UiO leadership training courses.
- All project based employees should have a dialogue with the ISV leadership about all issues related to human resource management, working conditions, well-being, sick leaves and similar.

Project management

Project leaders are, among other things, responsible for:

- Scientific leadership of their projects.
- Mentorship for postdocs on their projects (unless other solutions are agreed upon)
- Supervising for PhDs on the project, often together with one or two other supervisors (unless other solutions are agreed upon).
- Organize the reporting to funders.

The project leaders will get administrative assistance, for instance with respect to:

- The application processes
- Hiring staff on projects
- Develop and agree on contracts with research partners and employees
- Reporting to research funders
- Changes to original budget and project plan when situations arise during the project period
- Data management and protection
- Ethics
- Procurement, etc.

Special requirements for specific project categories

When ISV hosts large centres, such as Centres of Excellence and large inter-disciplinary projects, these should be governed by a special set of rules developed for the specific initiatives. These rules should be revised every 5 years, for as long the centre is operating.