University of Sussex
Research and Services including Consultancy

(*consultancy is a subset of Services)

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/proposals/consultancy

This document explains the differences between Research, Consultancy and Other Services at the University of Sussex.

Research

The University uses the definition of Research Activity derived from the Frascati Manual*:

"Research is to be understood as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce and industry, as well as to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances and artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction. *It excludes routine testing and analysis of materials, components and processes, e.g. for the maintenance of national standards, as distinct from the development of new analytical techniques*."

Examples:

- The determination of the amino-acid sequence of an anti-body molecule
- Theoretical investigation of the factors determining regional variations in economic growth.

Consultancy

Consultancy is normally characterised as an activity where an individual is required to provide the benefit of their personal knowledge, experience, or skills in a particular field, usually on a sole basis. It will typically be a small number of days, and make limited or no use of University facilities (the cost of which must be recovered in full). Consultancy generally makes use of University intellectual property or know-how, and generates information or data specific to the customer. It would not normally generate results equivalent to those from a research project and would not normally lead to an academic publication. The results of consultancy would normally belong to the customer.

Examples:

- Advice to a company on its research, product development, or manufacturing process
- Member of a steering or advisory group of a commercial project or trial
- Member of an advisory group for a public sector body for a specific project or activity
- Interpretation of the results of analysis
- Acting as an expert witness or undertaking assessments.

Key attributes of consultancy

- Short time span
- Undertaken by University academic or academic-related staff
- One individual/consultant (or possibly two)
- Use of specific individual's expertise to solve a particular problem / provide analysis
- Does not make extensive use of University facilities or other staff (or makes very limited use and cost is added to price).

Example: Engineering Design Senior Lecturer (Grade 9) – five days over six weeks to undertake diagnostic work to discover how to provide efficiency of cooling system for a manufacturer.

Services

Services include trading and accommodation, conference services, consultancy, intellectual property, facilities and equipment access, training and continuing professional development, experimental and analysis services, prototype production, supply of goods, material transfers, and course validation.

Examples include:

- Use of a standard process to provide an analysis of materials provided by the customer
- Undertaking of a number of experiments to test a product or process (that does not amount to research)

* http://www.oecd.org/document/6/0,3343,en_2649_34451_33828550_1_1_1_1,00.html

- Use of a standard process to provide one-off or limited number of products (e.g. wafer manufacture, supply of specialist reagents)
- Delivery of training or continuing professional development courses
- Access to facilities, space or equipment (supported or not).

Key attributes

- Medium/ long-term
- Academic or academic-related lead with support of the Head of School
- More than one researcher, possibly external resource and often involving staff in supervised roles
- Transfer of collective expertise to provide a series of interventions / solutions to provide analysis or solve problems
- Makes use, often extensively, of University facilities.

Example: Engineering Design Team – 30 days to design and develop new module to fit within cooling system for a manufacturer to make it more efficient.

For more information contact your Research Development Officer