

Routing and approval in the Faculty of Science (version 25/9/2020)

Purpose of this memo

In indirect and commercial funding projects, you will come across a wide variety of documents throughout the process from application to completion. Nowhere within VU Amsterdam is it clearly defined who should do what with which document. This memo should provide insight into this for all interested parties involved in a research project. In this way, efficient cooperation can be achieved, financial risks can be minimized and the legal obligations that these documents carry with them can be satisfied.

1. Procuration scheme

This scheme (see appendix) defines which employees within VU Amsterdam are authorized to act on behalf of VU Amsterdam, i.e. who may sign which document and for what amount. The scheme and persons are laid down by law at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce. When a document is signed by an employee who is not authorized to do so in accordance with the procuration scheme, it loses its legal affiliation with external parties. The amounts referred to in the procuration scheme will apply to the total amount for the entire duration of the contract or agreement to be concluded, including VAT and any additional costs such as indexations.

Paragraph 2 of the scheme is particularly important in the context of research projects:

For contracting, Service Department Directors, Deans and Directors of Operations have the power to bind VU Amsterdam, taking into account the following:

- These powers have the limit of €350,000 per transaction.*
- The Executive Board has granted a different competence to: - 2800/2900 Faculty of Science: Dean, Vice-Dean and Managing Director: contracts relating to 2nd and 3rd budget projects up to € 2.000.000, other 2nd and 3rd budget projects up to €500,000.*

Note that all external grant applications are also covered by this procuration scheme. This is preferably the PPM format of the external budget, but can also be a format chosen by the grantor. When a grant application can only be made in a portal, the PPM format of the external budget must first be seen and agreed by all persons as mentioned the routing matrix. The exception is the pre-proposals, as they occur at the Dutch Research Council for example.

2. Routing documents indirect and commercial funding projects

To provide insight into all documents and data subjects, an Excel file has been created (routing matrix; see appendix). This makes it easy to check whether the right employees are involved in the right document. In this way, the department manager can quickly determine which routing to follow.

The following points of attention are important when submitting documents to be signed:

- The department manager submits the documents for signature to the secretary (Quirien Bedaux) via the corresponding email address (q.m.bedaux@vu.nl). Quirien checks that all necessary information is included and forwards the email to the Director of Operations (Esther van den Hengel). In the absence of Quirien, a replacement is appointed and communicated.
- The documents to be signed must be complete, because after the signature is added, a secure PDF of the document is created and therefore the text can no longer be modified.
- For a project, the urgent advice is to submit all documents to be signed at the same time (i.e. internal budget, project proposal and any other documents) and not all documents at different times in separate emails.
- The documents to be signed must be provided with a written agreement of the persons, as indicated in the routing matrix (see appendix). This agreement can be given by email or on the signed document if there is room there, such as with an internal budget. By email, please highlight the approval.

- To sign legal documents (e.g. contracts, MTAs, LoC, etc.) there must be an agreement from IXA or the Grants Desk.
- Excluded for verification by lawyer of IXA/Grants Desk are:
 - o Grant agreements/determinations between the Dutch Research Council and VU Amsterdam
 - o Grant agreements/determinations between the EU and VU Amsterdam
 - o Grant agreements/determinations between VU Amsterdam and for example foundations, charities etc., if it is generally known to lawyers / Director of Operations that VU University Amsterdam cannot influence the content of the award and associated conditions. If in doubt, consult the IXA / Subsidiodesk.

Other relevant details

If there are other relevant details regarding the project, please mention them in the offer email. For example, varying conditions, whether it is an amendment to something that has been signed before, a follow-up contract, a party with which we have been doing business very often, etc.

3. Mandate

An important focus is the mandate. The Director of Operations of the Faculty of Science has been mandated to enter into external obligations totalling 500,000 euros. Please note that this is always the total amount of the entire subsidy for VU Amsterdam or the total project budget (in cases of budget holder status). The amount per year is not considered, but always the total. This means that for a project with a total grant/contract sum > 500,000 euros, all outgoing documentation must be signed by the Executive Board. This includes not only the contract, but also LoRs, Grant Agreements, etc. pertaining to that project.

Project proposals/contracts with a budget > 500,000 euros where only one document needs to be signed can be submitted to the Executive Board by the Director of Operations for signature. For projects where more documents have to be signed (e.g. EU projects), it is recommended to apply for a power of attorney for the project. This can also be done through the Director of Operations. The procedure and required information to provide for this is set out in the memo.

Please note that as project leader you are responsible for having the power of attorney requested in a timely manner. Applying to the Executive Board for a power of attorney generally takes longer than a signature of the Director of Operations.

4. European Union subsidies

- Director of Operations is both Financial signatory (F-sign) and Legal signatory (L-sign).
- Director of Operations receives automatic emails from the EU portal. If documents need to be signed as a matter of urgency, the recommendation is to have the project controller email a signature request (e.g. submitting reporting) to the Director of Operations, so that it is clear which emails are urgent and include a request for action.

5. Holidays

When the Director of Operations is on holiday, a mandated substitute (Dean/Vice-Dean: Guus Schreiber and/or Jacqueline Muijlwijk) will be appointed to take over the signing of documents. These replacements have already been added to the EU portal.

When a replacement has to sign a document in the portal, it is up to the project controller to add him/her as F-sign and L-sign for the project in question. After this action, the routing will not be different from that described with the Director of Operations.

Finally

If the aforementioned is followed, then in 90% of cases the document will return signed the same day (or no later than the next day). Please bear in mind for signing that both Quirien and Esther are

free on Wednesdays. If you have any questions or comments, do not hesitate to let us know.

Kind regards,
Esther, Agnes, Christel and Barry

Appendix - Draft request to Executive Board for power of attorney

Dear Executive Board,

Please find below a request for a power of attorney for Esther van den Hengel (Director of Operations of the Faculty of Science) to sign for the project '[project name]' of the [department name] department of the Faculty of Science.

The project aims to [short description]. The client is [name client].

[In case of a consortium add:] *The consortium consists of [consortium names] and the budget holder is [name of budget holder].*

The total budget of this contract is [budget] with a duration of [number of] years (start date: [end date]).

[Any details]

*Kind regards,
Esther*