Academic Timesheets - A Digital Solution

This new digital solution for timesheet submission was introduced by the Research Lifecycle Programme and Research Finance during the 23/24 academic year. It is designed to be used by colleagues who are currently required to submit timesheets, as part of their research funder's terms and conditions.

The new system takes project details from ResourceLink and Oracle and presents researchers with a single screen showing all of their projects and work packages requiring timesheet completion. The system will then route timesheets to the relevant approver and send reminders at agreed points to encourage timely completion.

Importantly, the new system meets funder requirements, is acceptable to EU and UKRI auditors, and will reduce the risk of research funding having to be returned because of non-completion of timesheets.

A User Perspective

Can you tell us a little bit about your work?

Dr Kate Vaughan

Dr Kate Vaughan is a Senior Research Programme Manager in the Division of Cancer Sciences supporting research projects focussed on adolescent oncology. She is based at The Christie NHS Foundation Trust.

In this role, Kate supports Principal Investigators and researchers across a number of areas, including ethics, recruitment, study logistics, finance, and ultimately the delivery of the research. One of the projects in the research portfolio that Kate manages is funded by UKRI which requires the completion and submission of timesheets to comply with funder auditing.

Since 2023, Kate has been utilising the new Academic Timesheet System to support researchers and academics with the submission of their timesheets, as well as completing her own timesheets on this project within the system.

How has the system helped you?

The system has ensured we can submit timesheets in a much more efficient manner. The old spreadsheet format was clunky and required too much administration - a lot of time was spent contacting people for signatures and approval, which was often hard to manage and monitor.

Now, it takes us a matter of minutes to complete and review timesheets, and it's great knowing they are automatically sent to the approver for me once they are submitted – it's all done for me!

I am a real champion of this system, and I would recommend it to anyone.

What other benefits has the system provided you and your colleagues?

The proxy access feature has been useful, allowing me to fill out timesheets on behalf of the team – all they have to do is review and submit in their own account, which saves them time.

It offers an early indication of the accuracy of our forecasted allocations, and if required, it allows us to say "we may have underestimated" early in the project. This enables us to have the right discussions about funding, and ensures we can find extra resources if required.

The system ensures we are able reflect on time allocated and spent, and justify the time accordingly, so that if auditors have any questions, we know the answers to their questions and can explain why time was spent on certain activities.

The system is a really good tool to help you consider the time you've spent and what you've achieved over a week and allows us to stop and think "is this looking about right, or are we missing something?" so that we can focus on our research as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Further Information

To access the new timesheet system, find training resources and FAQs you can visit the project's SharePoint site using the QR code.

Alternatively, you can email your Research Finance Officer, or Central Research Finance at **CentralResearchFinance@manchester.ac.uk**