

Systems use to support research contracts management

Johnson, R., King, D., Palmer, F., Roberts, A., Hochman, M., Morgan, T. (2024)

Research contract management is a critical function for all research-active universities...

In 2023, 24 universities from the UK (19 institutions) and Australia (5 institutions), with research incomes ranging from under €2m to over €500m, participated in a benchmarking project on research contracts. They completed a survey in mid-2023, leading to a report published in February 2024.

...and effective systems have a crucial role to play in supporting efficient delivery.

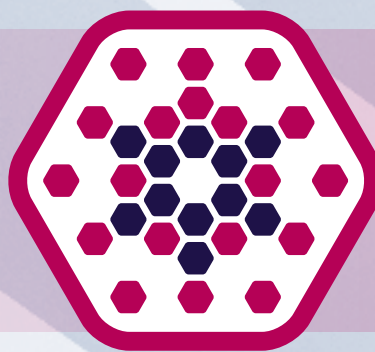
Compared to a similar 2018 study involving 19 UK and 11 Australian universities, the project revealed a significant increase in the adoption of Research Information Management Systems (RIMS), Current Research Information Systems (CRIS), and dedicated contract management software.

These systems can streamline the contracting journey for Principal Investigators and research managers, enhance document storage, improve management information and transparency, and support record-keeping during the negotiation process.

2018

30 universities

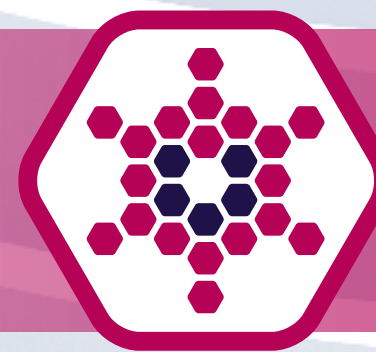
11 Australia
19 UK



2023

24 universities

5 Australia
19 UK



The future...

Dedicated systems for contracts were largely absent:

- The majority of UK institutions had no dedicated software for research contracts.
- Australia institutions showed emerging use of CRIS systems for this purpose.
- Only one metric was regularly reported by more than 50% of the participants (total contract throughput).
- Very low use of e-signature technology.

Significant progress in systems adoption:

- 50% use CRIS systems for contracts management.
- 80% now use e-signatures.
- 58% use structured contract request workflows.
- 50% report use of visualisation tools for management information.
- In the UK, Worktribe is reported as the most common provider of such software solutions.
- In the five Australian institutions the systems used are more varied.

Most institutions are aware of newer innovations, including:

- AI review of third-party contracts.
- Automated or AI-assisted drafting of new agreements.
- Word add-ins for contract drafting and review.

CRIS / RIMS can further support efficiencies in contracts management by:

- Facilitating streamlined processes to minimise cost and time of in-country, university to university negotiations.
- Promoting increased use of templates.
- Harmonising data and measures of contract services including relating to quality.

Areas for future consideration and opportunities include:

- Raising awareness of practical benefits to support the use and adoption of technologies (including AI) which can assist in contracts work.
- Opportunities for follow up analysis on this topic with European countries and institutions.



For further information visit:

<https://www.growkudos.com/projects/enhancing-practice-in-research-contracts>

Discussion question:

How frequently are Current Research Information Systems (CRIS) used to manage research contracts in other countries

