Worktribe.™

Worktribe Research

Service Definition G-Cloud 14

For any enquiries please contact:
0870 020 1760
info@worktribe.com

Contents

1 Introduction

Worktribe is a UK-based company with a proven Research Management solution in live use within the UK higher education sector.

Founded in 2002 in Nottingham, we’ve established a reputation amongst universities for being reliable, innovative, and friendly. We currently supply our software to institutions of all sizes, including over half of the Russell Group.

Worktribe’s primary office is in Bristol, with a distributed implementation team that covers the whole of the UK.

This document highlights the key features of the Worktribe Research system, with a summary of our approach to onboarding, support, maintenance, and technical matters.

2 Worktribe Research – Key Features

Worktribe Research is a modular, scalable system that helps academics and university administrators to manage research projects and the resulting outputs.

It covers the full lifecycle of a project, including:

- discovering research opportunities
- costing, approving and submitting project proposals
- managing ethical approval
- accepting awards and tracking project spending and timesheets
- negotiating and recording contracts
- publishing and harvesting outputs
- presenting outputs in a public-facing Open Access repository
- managing arising intellectual property
- capturing impact and researcher recognition/esteem
- managing REF submissions

The system has been specifically designed to fit neatly into a typical University's existing IT provision and provide proper support for managing all stages of a research project.

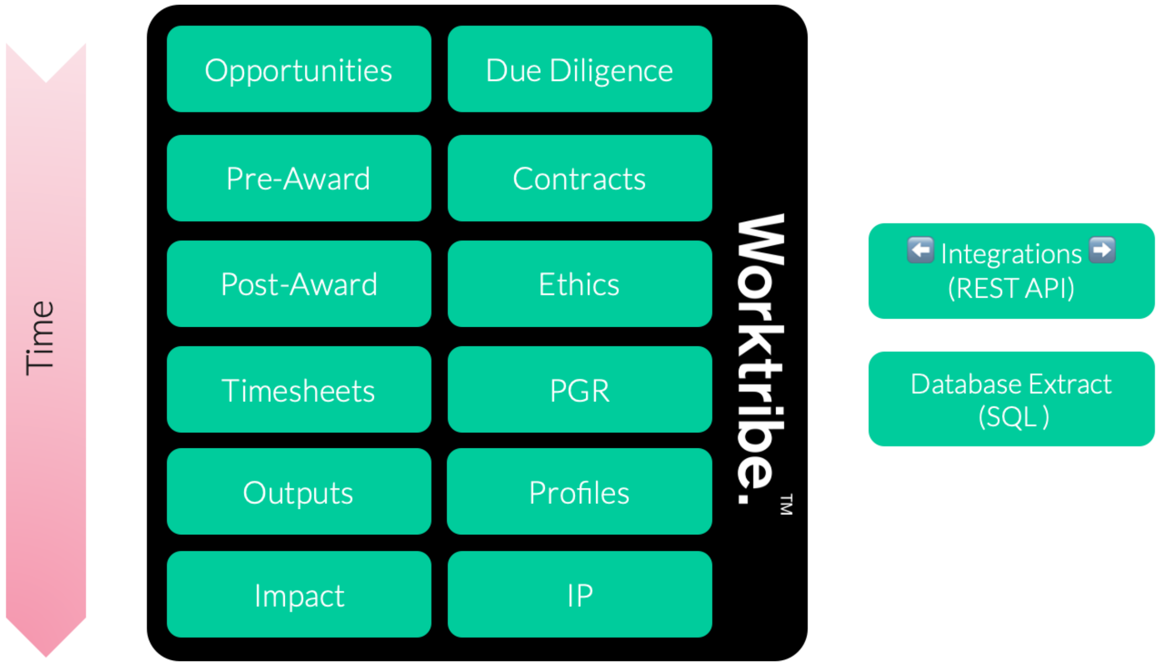
Most clients prefer to start with addressing an immediate need, then address other needs as and when they arise. For this reason, Worktribe Research is provided as a set of products which can be implemented to meet client needs in stages as required.

The mapping of these products to the various stages of a research project is shown in Figure 1 on the next page.

One of the benefits of this extensible approach is that, as and when you add products, staff continue to work with one familiar interface – rather than with disparate systems which appear different and operate differently. As far as we know, Worktribe is the only UK supplier with an end-to-end research suite which supports this possibility.

The system is designed to be comprehensive, yet easy to use. This means that academic and research staff can focus on the research rather than its administration, while the University can easily collect the factual base for holistic management information, and an effective REF submission.

Figure 1



2.1 Infrastructure

Each of the functional areas described on the following pages is supported by the Worktribe system infrastructure, which provides:

- User-friendly and secure web-based access for staff across the institution. The web-based user access requires only an Internet browser. This removes geographical constraints on system access and avoids IT complications.
- Permission-based access control for users, groups, and systems, often authenticated via third-party systems, such as Shibboleth or AzureAD. This means that the system works well within the 'Single Sign-On' (SSO) environment you may have in your institution.
- Context sensitive help for users, with functionality to upload further supporting documentation (e.g. your own internal procedure guides). Thus, users have any help they need, according to their own best practices.
- Automatic version control with fully accessible history and audit trail, so you can see who has done what and when. This can be especially useful when managing approval procedures and multiple budget scenarios.
- Open standard web services for third-party data exchange, so that Worktribe Research synchronises seamlessly with your existing finance, HR, website content management system, and other systems.

2.2 Brief Summary of Functionality

2.2.1 Opportunities

- Searchable, filterable database of funding opportunities.
- Matching of possible opportunities, based on user's profile.
- Support for identifying potential collaborators.
- Automatic transfer of details to project proposal.
- Integrations with Research Connect and Pivot RP.

2.2.2 Pre-Award

- Costing and Pricing
    - fEC/TRAC compliant costing of projects.
    - Support of subprojects for multiple intra/inter-departmental collaborations, plus external partners.
    - Support for multiple funders per project, or sub-project.
    - Provision for costing multiple scenarios.
    - Provision for multiple currencies.
    - Funder database, with in-built pricing rules for major funders.
    - Client-configurable funder templates for other funders.
    - HR Integration for staff costing.
- Approvals
    - Configurable proposal approval paths with simple, intuitive workflow, including escalation.
    - Parallel workflow for Peer Review.
- Risk Assessment Checklist
    - Configurable set of questions to capture the risks important to your institution.
    - Allowing risks to be considered, planned for, and managed, rather than emerging as unexpected problems.

- Benefits Register
  - Allowing potential benefits and impact to be considered and recorded right from project conception.
- Submission
  - Funder-specific budget Submission Reports for Je-S, The Funding Service, Horizon Europe, NIHR, and more.
  - Generic exports for Project/Academic/Calendar/Tax year, 18-month, and monthly budget breakdowns.
- Project document storage
  - A document repository for each project, separate from the research outputs, contracts, and other documents.
  - Unlimited file formats stored.
  - Document categorisation with your own defined tags.
  - Archived versions of documents retained for reference.
- Award Acceptance
  - Award set-up based on the submitted budget.
  - Configurable award approval paths with simple, intuitive workflow.
  - Interfacing with your finance system for budget/code set-up.

2.2.3 Ethics

- Multiple parallel Ethics reviews for the same application.
- Dynamic forms with conditional branching logic.
- Configurable ethics question sets.
- Configurable automatic Risk allocation rules.
- Configurable Committee allocation rules.
- Workflow-enabled triage, review, and response stages.
- Highlighting of Application changes/amendments for easier reviews.
- Administration of Research Ethics Committees and other meetings, including a default pool of reviewers specific to your committees.
- Production of committee papers in your format.

2.2.4 Post-Award

- Spend Tracking
  - Linking with your finance system to keep both systems aligned.
  - Expenditure transaction information from your finance summarised in user-friendly way.
  - Reporting ‘actual’ and ‘committed’ spend against awarded budget, so you can see when a project is diverting from the ‘expected’ spend.
- Project Management
  - Scheduled Tasks with reminders for specific actions, such as when reports to funders are due.
  - Tasks assigned to individuals or groups.
  - Cross-institutional reporting for super-user governance.
- Adjustments, No Cost Extensions, Supplements and Virements
  - Because no budget survives its first contact with real life, and amendments to awarded budgets can be required.
  - Configurable approval paths allow budgets to be controlled.

2.2.5 Contracts

- Records contracts of all types, including for each contract the parties, documents, notes etc.
- Configurable Contract assessment checklist to obtain pertinent information at contract initiation.
- Workflow-managed contract development process.
- Automated production of external documents using Word Templates and contract metadata.

2.2.6 Outputs

- Direct recording of research outputs and metadata.
- Automated harvesting of outputs and metadata from external systems.
- Workflow to support proper supervision by the Library team.
- Controllable public visibility of outputs (Private, Discoverable or Embargoed to X date).
- Removal/flagging of duplicate outputs and authors.
- Management of Open Access compliance.

- Optional public-facing searchable repository displays staff and their outputs, awards, esteem, and other profile metadata.

2.2.7 Profiles

- Recording of personal profile (qualifications, biography, research interests and areas, ORCID, etc.)
- Automatic linking of each researcher to their:
  - Awards
  - Contracts
  - Outputs
  - Impact case studies
  - and other Worktribe records
- Ability to record other engagement activities regarding:
  - Esteem
  - Recognition
  - Events
  - News items
- Integration features to support showcasing via your website, to foster collaboration, or harvest other data such as student supervisions.

2.2.8 Impact

- Capture of impact activities and evidence separately as delivered.
- Tagging and linkage of impact to evidence and underpinning research when convenient.
- Workflow management of Case Study review process.
- Controllable public visibility (Private, Discoverable, or Embargoed to X date).
- Exportable in pre-defined document formats.

2.2.9 REF

- Designed around the initial REF2029 rules and updated as required; eligibility of outputs; and eligibility of staff based on HESA data.
- Review and Submission Decision workflow is enabled for both staff and outputs, allowing additional REF-specific metadata to be curated.

- Outputs can be scored by authors, other institutional groups/individuals, and external scorers.
- Authors can nominate which Outputs to be considered for REF.
- The 'Auto-allocate' facility proposes a distribution of outputs to staff by Unit of Assessment, based on quality scores.

2.2.10 Timesheets

- Manage timesheets, approvals and exceptions using electronic workflow.
- Automated and manual creation of timesheets.
- Clear visibility of workflow including signatories and date stamps.
- Use role-based permission groups to apply the correct expertise at the correct time, e.g. through Timesheet Officers, Timesheet Support Teams.
- Use Reporting Periods and their associated dashboards to provide an overview of your timesheets and their status, enabling swift analysis and action.
- View timesheets, timesheet statuses and Reporting Periods within your user profiles.
- Configurable reminders and automated escalations for timesheet approvals.
- Apply configurable Funder Rules to your timesheets for consistent management of funder requirements, e.g. for European Commission and UKRI projects.
- Manage your project timesheets using discrete work packages.
- Seamless links between your timesheets, research projects and user profiles in the Worktribe Research single platform.

2.2.11 IP

- Dedicated IP permission groups for users, including IP Create, IP Configuration, IP Superusers, and IP Officers.
- Log your intellectual property through ‘Invention’ records, and manage linked patents (including claims), licensing, IP assignments and spinouts all in one place.
- Workflow to control, manage, and track IP activities - plus workflow status visualisation pathways.
- Targeted notifications, reminders and alerts to prompt academics, researchers and IP specialists when action is required.
- Configurable questionnaires.

- Allocation rules for the automated assignment of IP Officers to specific records.
- ‘Tasks’ functionality for the *ad hoc* independent and collaborative management of tasks linked to patents.
- Sector-specific IP reports, e.g. for expiring patents, expiring licences, spinouts, and more.
- Link your ‘Invention’ records seamlessly to research projects, outputs and contracts (where the respective Worktribe products have been activated).

2.2.12 PGR

- Dedicated PGR permission groups for users, including Students, PGR Supervisors, and Research Student Administrators.
- Configurable Degree Regulation templates, allow you to define the engagement and progression points vital to your students’ success.
- Thesis topic and submission management.
- Management of students’ annual leave, absence, interruptions and extensions, including recalculations of their candidacy term.
- Workflow to control, manage and record an audit trail of PGR activities including student progression, reviews and thesis submissions.
- Targeted notifications and alerts prompting students and staff to continue to engage in upcoming assessments, assessment documentation uploads, review points, results communications and more.
- Intuitive PGR management dashboards for Research Supervisors and Research Student Administrators.
- Skills Frameworks and competency records: training needs assessments with in-system collaboration tools for creating and monitoring action plans and training activities.
- Record supervisors and PGR funding data.
- Automated allocation options to assign PGR managers and administrators to research student records.
- Reporting tools, e.g. for monitoring engagement, completion of review and informal reviews, etc.

2.2.13 Inbuilt Reporting

- Flexible user-defined data search and reporting facilities built into the system, with report content exportable in Excel, PDF, CSV and XML formats.
- Ability to create bespoke templates in Microsoft Word format to present and export data in your desired style.
- Regular SQL data extract available for use by your Business Intelligence solution and other systems.

2.2.14 Reporting

- The Reporting product provides a reporting server. This is an optional priced upgrade whereby the production of the SQL extract runs on a dedicated server, allowing it to be created at a greater frequency without risking latency within your live system.

2.2.15 Integration with Other Systems

- Flexible REST API with HATEOAS features.
- All data exposed via the API for full CRUD access.
- Other integration options include:
    - Event-triggered exports of data
    - Bulk import/export of data sets in CSV, Excel format

3 Onboarding

As with any SaaS system, it is easy and quick for us to make Worktribe Research available to new clients. However, your staff will need training on how to use and administer the system, and it needs to be configured to meet your needs. Any integrations with your existing systems will have to be created and tested, and legacy data imported if you decide to do that.

These onboarding activities constitute the implementation project. We have considerable experience of such implementation projects, so it has become a standardised process.

3.1 Implementation

Worktribe has extensive experience in managing system implementations in HEIs, and, consequently, we have developed a reliable, repeatable implementation process. This means that implementation of the Worktribe system is safe, predictable, and smooth.

- We assign a named project account manager, implementation consultant and technical liaison for each project. These are consistent throughout the project. Worktribe has very low staff turnover, and as a result we maintain those personal relationships throughout the implementation project and beyond.
- We have an established process for dealing with any issues that may arise. Our commitment to a strong ongoing working relationship ensures that any issues that arise are taken seriously.
- We provide realistic costs and timescales for delivery, and consistently deliver within time and budget.

3.2 Training

Our preferred approach to training is to provide dedicated training to top-level system administrators and the project team as part of the implementation project. We use example case scenarios to make it highly relevant to the training delegates.

Worktribe Research is extremely user-friendly, so our experience has been that end users become familiar with the system quickly, and do not require significant training. However, institutions have found benefit in performing their own internal training sessions as part of their communications strategy.

3.3 Documentation

Full documentation is provided, including:

- User and Administrator Guides
- API documentation
- Guidance on bulk data imports
- Guidance on use of the Templates facility

4 Ongoing Support and Maintenance

4.1 Support

We provide remote support during normal office hours, via our online support portal. The support is governed by a Service Level Agreement.

Typical support arrangements for ongoing support and maintenance are that the client provides first-line support in-house, with Worktribe providing second- and third-line support via our UK-based helpdesk.

Each support request results in a ticket being created on our portal to track the request through to resolution. The portal also manages the prioritisation of the item and tracks all correspondence relating to the request. Clients can use the portal to track support requests.

Our support team have continual access to the system developers. We have found that this not only makes our support highly effective, but it also provides a valuable feedback loop which influences future development of the product.

4.2 Client Partnership

Once a client is live with Worktribe products, you will have a dedicated client partner, who will arrange regular meetings with client representatives to ensure that Worktribe is meeting your expectations. It is also another opportunity for clients to discover, and feedback into, the development of our products.

4.3 Software Updates

We typically release a major upgrade every 6 months. For major upgrades we book a maintenance window outside normal business hours by mutual agreement.

Patches, typically for security patching and bug fixes, are released automatically in fortnightly cycles.

4.4 User Group

Worktribe is committed to the ongoing development and rollout of our products, and our User Group influences the product development roadmap. This ensures that our products keep developing to accommodate changes in our clients' requirements.

We provide an online portal for clients to discuss proposed developments and client change requests for our Products.

Special Interest Groups

As part of our User Group activities, we also hold Special Interest Group meetings (SIGs) to gather requirements for specific functionality additions and changes. These are an excellent forum for focusing on the features which our clients consider to be most valuable. Clients are invited to join the User Group and to attend any SIGs in which they might have a particular interest.

Annual Conference

Once a year, our clients gather together for our Connect conference, which gives an opportunity for users to engage face to face with our staff. This helps to build close relationships and allow clients to see future development plans for both existing and planned products.

5 Technical Matters

5.1 Hosting, Availability, Backups, Disaster Recovery

Worktribe is ISO27001 certified, and the Worktribe system is provided as a SaaS cloud hosted solution, using secure hosting facilities in the UK.

Worktribe is accessible entirely via web browsers, using the secure HTTPS communications protocol. We never send any unencrypted data over public networks. All data-at-rest is encrypted and kept within the UK for data protection purposes.

Our standard availability is 99.8% uptime. Uptime is monitored and reported for SLA conformance using our own in-house tools.

We mirror our systems in near-real-time to a second secure data centre (also within the UK) for disaster recovery purposes. This means that if ever the primary site becomes unavailable for any reason, the switchover to the disaster recovery site is as quick as possible, with the most up-to-date data possible.

We also take hourly encrypted backups to local backup systems at our primary secure site. For 'defence in depth' these encrypted backups are themselves immediately backed up to a third secure hosting site, as a precaution against failure of the backup at the primary host site, and against failure of both the primary and disaster recovery data centres.

We use automated provisioning software that enables us to rebuild systems speedily at this third secure site. Thus, if a major disaster meant that all network connections to both the primary and disaster recovery site were severed, with a predicted downtime of hours or days, the system can still be up and running very quickly at the third site.

The presence of the hourly backups already backed up to this third site mean that any data loss would be limited to a maximum of 1 hour's work. And our 4-hour Recovery Time Objective (RTO) means that – even in such an unlikely and extreme disaster situation – you would still be up and running again within 4 hours.

5.2 System Environments

We provide three environments as standard - Training, Test and Live.

The Training and Test environments are initially set up with generic data, i.e. dummy organisation structure, funders, and users with different permission levels in the system, and we provide a training script to your team to help them become familiar with the system.

5.3 Secure Access Controls

The system provides a set of user groups and roles which govern access to the various parts of the system. Each user is identified by a unique account (typically via Azure AD or Shibboleth SSO), which is assigned to these groups/roles via integrations with third party systems, or manually by authorised administrators. Permissions are typically configured to organisational units, to map onto existing authorisation procedures within the Institution.

The system also manages permissions on an individual basis. This ensures that only users with the relevant access can view, create, edit, or delete data at any given point. Permissions are enforced at the lowest level of database access, and all actions taken are recorded in an audit trail.

Worktribe Ltd | Incorporated and registered in England and Wales | Registered number: 04576074
Registered Office: Engineers House, The Promenade, Clifton Down, Bristol BS8 3NB