Research grant transcription budgeting guide

A practical guide and worksheet for academics, PhD researchers, principal investigators and university research support teams.

Plan before you record. Get a free, no-obligation indicative transcription budget from The Typing Works.

01 Estimate the recording volume

Multiply the expected number of sessions by their anticipated duration in minutes. Count a recording once, not once per participant. Include pilot recordings, follow-up interviews and repeat sessions where relevant. Separate interview, focus group and multilingual recordings into different cost lines.

02 Choose a transcription specification

Service	When to consider it
Clean (intelligent) verbatim	Most thematic analysis and qualitative interviews; retains meaning while removing unnecessary fillers.
Strict verbatim	When repetitions, hesitation and speech features matter.
Jefferson / specialist notation	Detailed interaction analysis, including pauses and overlap; obtain a specialist estimate.
Multilingual transcription / translation	Specify source and target language and whether both versions are needed.

03 Agree the handling of research data

Discuss participant information and consent, institutional ethics and governance requirements, data processing agreements, secure transfer, retention and deletion. Specify identifiers to replace or remove. Pseudonymised data can still be personal data; removing names alone may not anonymise a transcript.

The Typing Works provides 100% human transcription, UK-based English-language transcribers and secure UK-based file handling. Cyber Essentials certified. Read our confidentiality procedures.

Build a realistic cost estimate

Worked example: 30 two-speaker interviews and four focus groups (4–8 speakers including the facilitator), using published 14-day clean verbatim rates checked on 25 November 2026.

Recording type	Minutes	Rate excl. VAT	Cost excl. VAT
30 interviews × 60 min	1,800	£1.10	£1,980.00
4 groups × 90 min	360	£1.50	£540.00
Base transcription	2,160		£2,520.00
Illustrative contingency (10%)			£252.00
Planning subtotal			£2,772.00
VAT at 20%			£554.40
Total including VAT			£3,326.40

Illustration only; not a quotation. See current transcription prices.

Allow for additional requirements

The example excludes additional anonymisation, translation, specialist notation, bespoke formatting and expedited delivery. Ask for separate estimates where required and add those costs before calculating any permitted contingency and VAT.

Budgeting for a future start date

Discuss possible price changes, recruitment variations, longer interviews, repeat recordings and peak delivery periods. A 10% contingency is only an example, not a funding rule. Reconfirm rates and capacity before commissioning.

VAT and funding eligibility

Ask your research finance office whether VAT is recoverable and which costs are eligible. Do not assume every grant allows contingency. If it is not permitted, agree how to budget uncertain costs with your finance team.

Your project budgeting worksheet

Complete the worksheet using estimated volumes. No participant names, recordings or sensitive research data are required at this stage.

Project planning information	Your notes
Institution / project reference	_____
Funding deadline / start date	_____
Interviews: number × minutes / speakers	_____
Focus groups: number × minutes / speakers	_____
Languages / translation requirements	_____
Transcript style / NVivo / timestamps	_____
Anonymisation / data security requirements	_____
Delivery schedule / phased batches	_____

Provisional transcription budget

Cost line	Your estimate
Base transcription (recorded minutes × rates)	£ _____
Additional services / specialist requirements	£ _____
Permitted contingency (if applicable)	£ _____
VAT (as applicable)	£ _____
Total provisional budget	£ _____

Before submitting your application

Use this checklist with your research support or finance team.

[ ] **Recording assumptions**
Have you included interview length, group sizes, pilots, likely extra sessions and different languages?

[ ] **Research methodology**
Have you agreed transcript style, speaker identification, timestamps and any qualitative analysis formatting?

[ ] **Governance**
Have you discussed consent, ethics, institutional data processing requirements, retention, deletion and anonymisation instructions?

[ ] **Supplier and procurement**
Does your institution require supplier approval, a purchase order, written quotation or additional security documentation?

[ ] **Costs and timing**
Have you included additional services, agreed VAT treatment, checked contingency eligibility and considered the project start date?

[ ] **Cost justification**
Have you recorded the estimate date, price assumptions and any conditions? Keep a written supplier estimate where required.

Request a free indicative budget estimate

Email rebecca@thetypingworks.com or call 0208 087 4187. Tell us the planned volume, study timetable, transcript specification and any additional services. We can discuss your project before funding is confirmed, and you are not obliged to commission work.

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Free research grant transcription budgeting support

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Free to share with colleagues and research support teams. This guide is not funding, tax or legal advice.