

The University of Manchester and The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Joint Research Seed Fund - 2024 Call for Proposals

Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline: Monday 6 January 2025, 12 noon GMT

Overview

The University of Manchester (UoM) and The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) are pleased to announce the seventh round of their joint research fund to support collaborative research initiatives between the two institutions.

The aim of the fund is to catalyze new collaborations and in the longer term to build global teams with the capability to secure external funding to continue their research.

The Fund is open to applications from all research areas, and we welcome researchers from any discipline to submit proposals. We encourage the involvement of Early Career Researchers (ECRs) either as the principal investigators (PIs) or as members of the project team.

Proposals will be assessed and recommended for selection by a panel composed of staff from both universities.

Projects

- Proposals may include targeted research support such as joint workshops, researcher exchanges, experiments, data collection, research seminars/presentations and the formation or development of a collaborative network. Projects will commence from March 2025 for a maximum of 18 months.
- To be eligible, a proposal must include a lead PI from UoM and a lead PI from CUHK, and at least one other researcher on each team, i.e. **at least two researchers** from each partner institution. At UoM, researchers can include PhD students and post-doctoral fellows. At CUHK, there should be at least one other research staff member i.e. not PhD student.
- The funding envelope comprises up to £40,000 from UoM and HK\$400,000 from CUHK. We expect to support up to five projects in this round for a funding period of 18 months. Recipients will be awarded up to:
 - £8,000 GBP from UoM to support Manchester applicant.
 - and
 - HK\$80,000 from CUHK to support CUHK applicants.
- The fund is open to proposals across all research areas.

- Projects will be funded for a period of 18 months starting from March 2025 onwards. There is flexibility on start dates, but all projects must be underway by May 2025 at the latest.
- Proposals demonstrating strong relevance to strategic priorities¹ at the participating institutions and with the potential for sustainability beyond the initial funding period are encouraged.
- Mutual external collaborators (including researchers from other universities, or those working in non-academic contexts such as industry or government) cannot lead an application but can be involved in the proposed activities at their own expense, where the benefit of their involvement to the collaboration is justified in the proposal.

Costs and proposal

- Proposals may include workshops (face-to-face and virtual), symposia, staff exchanges, research seminars/presentations and formation, development of a collaborative network and/or practical pilot or feasibility research activities (such as experiments, surveys, etc.).
- The funding provided is intended to support expenses, including but not limited to costs of travel between the institutions, and necessary related consumables. Details of eligible and ineligible costs are detailed in the table below.
- Each partner should pay its own costs and there can be no transfer of funds between institutions. For example, travel costs for Manchester staff should be in the Manchester budget, and costs for a workshop taking place in CUHK should be allocated in the CUHK budget.
- Each institution will pay funds directly to its researchers. Approval of expenditure will be governed by each university for the portion of funding provided.
- UoM collaborators – A fEC costing is not required. Please note that only directly incurred costs are allowed and not directly allocated.

Eligible Costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel costs including flights, hotels and subsistence • Directly incurred staff, e.g. Research Assistant* (up to 20% of the budget, i.e. £1.6K) • Research costs including consumables, lab equipment or data collection (up to 20% of the budget, i.e. £1.6K) • Costs associated with organising workshops and meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement research/teaching costs • Directly allocated costs including applicants' time** • Indirect costs/estates costs • Equipment • Scholarships • Conference attendance • Costs for external speakers or workshop participants from other universities • Tuition fees • Honoraria • Society and group membership costs

¹ At CUHK, it refers to four strategic research areas identified in CUHK 2025, which are *China: Tradition and Modernity; Innovative Biomedicine; Information and Automation Technology; and Environment and Sustainability*.

Directly incurred and directly allocated costs are terms used by UK funders:

*Directly Incurred costs are project-specific (i.e. they arise as a direct consequence of the project taking place).

** Directly Allocated costs are not project-specific (i.e. they are incurred whether or not the project takes place), and are estimated at project level, e.g. Investigator time, Technician time (where not directly incurred).

Manchester: We ask that Manchester applicants take into consideration the [University Travel Policy](#) and the [Before Travelling](#) guidance, including the associated [Travel Decision Tree](#). These documents and links are designed to assist colleagues in making informed decisions about travel and where possible, reduce the university's overall carbon footprint.

CUHK: The University has introduced the [Carbon Offsetting Encouragement Policy](#) to encourage all staff members in offsetting their air travel emissions voluntarily. For more information about the policy, please visit the [webpage](#).

Eligibility

Manchester: Academic staff members from all disciplines and at all levels are welcome to apply. We encourage early career researchers² to apply. Applicants do not need to have a permanent post, but they must have an existing contract at the time of application, and that contract must cover the full period of the grant. Emeritus and honorary staff are not eligible to apply as co-PI but may be members of the project team.

CUHK: Faculty members holding full-time employment from all disciplines and at all levels are welcome to apply. Award holders are required to remain in university service for not less than a year upon completion of the activities in the proposal.

Timeline

Call for proposals opens	Monday 28 October 2024 (12 noon GMT)
Deadline for submission	Monday 6 January 2025 (12 noon GMT)
Applicants notified	By early February 2025
Project start date	March 2025

How to apply

This is a joint call and a single application should be submitted online using [SmartSurvey](#). The form can be previewed [here](#). It can be completed collaboratively and applicants should use the 'save and continue' feature to save the form and continue later (a link is sent to the applicant's email address). The link can be shared with collaborators to contribute to the application.

² **Manchester:** an individual who is within six years of their first academic appointment. This duration excludes any period of career break. **CUHK:** Academic staff members who are Assistant Professors or below.

The full proposal is comprised of the following elements:

- **Applicants' details – affiliations from each institution with contact details**
 - Principal Investigator Information
- **Research Proposal – details of the project**
 - **Title** of the Research Project
 - **Key words** that relate to the main topic of your proposal
 - **Abstract** (project design and rationale): a brief description of the project.
 - **Description of the planned activities including the timeframe** (project design and rationale)
 - **Collaborator complementarity**: A description of how the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength and the added value of these combined expertise.
 - **Potential impact**:
 - **Potential scholarly impact** - description of the expected academic gains for the project as a result of the proposed collaboration and the identification of corresponding performance indicators, e.g. a publication, blog, meeting report etc.
 - **Potential broader impact** – describe how your proposal aligns with the strategic priorities of the participating institutions and the anticipated benefits of the activities to local or international communities.
 - **Capacity for future collaboration**: A description of the potential future collaborations and outcomes that will be possible as a result of having undertaken the current collaboration. For example: joint publications, joint supervision of graduate researchers, joint teaching, joint funding applications, growth of research team size at each partner, collaborations with corporate partners. Provide an outline for potential follow up steps after funding for the project has ended.
- **Proposed budget**
 - A breakdown of the cost of the activity e.g. travel, subsistence, hotels etc.
- **Project team**
 - Provide details of the other researchers involved in the project.
- **Supporting documents**
 - Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae (not more than 2 pages) from each institution's PI (Principal Investigator) with a selected list of publications.
 - **Manchester**: A letter of support from your Head of Department/Research Domain which includes an explanation of how the project aligns with the Faculty's research strategy.
 - **CUHK**: An endorsement form to be completed by the CUHK heads of departments/units to confirm their intention to renew the applicants' contract, if applicable. To download the form, please click [here](#).
- **Communication feedback**
 - Confirmation of how you heard about this fund, this will help us to promote future funds.
- **Declaration and approval**
 - Confirmation you understand the rules and regulations of the fund.

Evaluation criteria

A joint review panel will assess each proposal according to the academic merit and the following criteria:

- **Project design and rationale (25 points)**: How clearly presented and justified is the basis for, and design of the project? How do the proposed activities assist with establishing new and emerging research collaborations?
- **Collaborator complementarity (25 points)**: What is the added value of the new or emerging collaboration? How do the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength?

- **Potential impact: (20 points)** What desired outcomes do the planned activities set out to achieve? What are the anticipated benefits of the activities to local or international communities? How does the proposal demonstrate strong relevance to strategic priorities of the partner institutions?
- **Capacity for future collaboration/funding (30 points):** What is the potential for this project to foster ongoing collaboration and through what mechanism(s)? How well does the proposed collaboration plan to access external funding? Provide an outline for potential follow up steps following the project.

Reporting after project completion

All awardees must, as a condition of receiving an award under this call, complete a narrative report that describes the outcomes, nature of collaboration, project impact, trainee involvement and opportunities for future collaboration that evolved from their project.

Once the project has been completed, the grant holders will be sent a report form to complete. The report should be submitted within three months of the project end date.

Contact information about this call

If you have additional questions that are not answered in the above document, please email the contact at your institution with your query:

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