

Aspect Innovation Fellows Programme

Deadline 25th March 2021

This is a first of its kind opportunity to encourage innovation across Social Science at the University of Manchester in the areas of research commercialisation, business engagement and entrepreneurship.

We are looking to recruit 2 Innovation Fellows to act as academic champions for innovation and help develop an inclusive, supportive culture of innovation among social sciences researchers. The Innovation Fellowship programme will run from March to June 2021.

The aim of the Innovation Fellowship Programme is to support academic-led culture change. In the current research funding climate, innovation is becoming an increasingly important component of research activity. Business engagement, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs), and research commercialisation are also growing in importance as innovative funding mechanisms.

Proposals are therefore sought from researchers to lead, support and facilitate culture change within their departments; with the aspiration that research commercialisation, business engagement and entrepreneurship become increasingly valued and recognised activities for social science researchers to undertake.

Innovation Fellows will receive an award of £5k to use for their research, impact or engagement activity which must be spent by 30th June 2021. Fellows will be expected to report briefly how the award money has been used at the end of the Fellowship.

In exchange for the award, Fellows will be expected to organise and/or lead a programme of activities, as well as participate in the 'Academic Champions' community of practice and act as ambassadors and advocates for innovation within the University and externally.

To enable this programme of activities, the Fellows will have access to an events' budget to help them run their choice of events, workshops and training to support their goal of developing the innovation ecosystem as well as administrative support from the division to assist with event management. Please note that the events budget will come from a separate pot of money to the £5K award.

This programme is funded as part of the [ASPECT network](#), a joint programme to transform society through Social Science innovation consisting of a partnership between LSE, Manchester, the University of Sheffield, Sussex University, Glasgow University and the University of Oxford.

Innovation Fellows is also being run at the University of Oxford, and successful applicants will be expected to liaise with the Oxford fellows alongside their own cohort at Manchester in organising activities related to the programme.

We are looking for Fellows to take on the following responsibilities:

- Advocate for innovation, research commercialisation, business engagement and/ or entrepreneurship at the department and school level, soliciting views and opinions from the wider research community

- Develop a curriculum of events that will stimulate greater engagement by academics with business engagement and commercialisation activities across the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Manchester
- Liaise and collaborate with Innovation Fellows at Manchester and Oxford and share resources and best practice in developing their programme of activities
- Develop material explaining the value proposition of SS business engagement, entrepreneurship and/or research commercialisation to both businesses and fellow academics.

Criteria

- Applicants must be currently employed researchers at the University of Manchester in the Faculty of Humanities who work either in the social sciences or who employ social science theories and methodologies in their research
- Previous experience of innovation through research commercialisation, business engagement or entrepreneurship, including through innovative impact and engagement work would be highly preferable
- Applicants must be able to advocate effectively for the benefits of innovation across a wide range of stakeholders (ECRs, Heads of Department, etc.)
- Applicants must be proactive in identifying ways to improve communication with research staff/postdocs around the value of SS BE and research commercialisation

Time commitment: maximum time commitment is approximately 5 full working days spread out over the period.

To apply: Please send applications to alexander.riley@manchester.ac.uk by 5pm, 25th March 2021.

This should include:

- 1) your CV
- 2) a brief outline of your proposed programme of activities, a short statement of why you are interested in applying for this role and the particular strengths and experience that you will bring to it, and a brief outline of how you plan to use the £5K award (maximum 2 pages)

If you have any queries, please contact Alexander Riley (alexander.riley@manchester.ac.uk).

Examples of strategic innovation activity

The range of possible strategic activities that can better support innovation culture change is varied and may include one or more of the following activities:

- **Showcase event** - Run a showcase event of examples of innovation in the areas of research commercialisation, business engagement and entrepreneurship in Social Sciences to raise awareness among researchers
- **Build a community** – create a network to support researchers looking to push forward innovation
- **Hackathons** - Develop a hackathon series to explore novel applications for research
- **Skills for Innovation** - Run digital skills workshop to help researchers develop entrepreneurial skills or in building and maintaining effective working relationships with partners outside academia

This list is not exhaustive and applicants are encouraged to try out new ideas for fostering a culture in which innovation can flourish.