



The University of Manchester and Heidelberg University Joint Research Seed Fund - 2024 Call for Proposals

Guidelines for Applicants
Deadline: Monday 10 June 2024

Overview

The University of Manchester (UoM) and Heidelberg University (HU) are pleased to announce the launch of a new 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 encourage applicants from any discipline to submit proposals. If you are looking for collaborators, please get in touch with us (contact details at the end of the document) and we will help identify researchers with similar interests.

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

- To be eligible, a proposal must include a lead Co-PI from UoM and a lead Co-PI from HU, and at least one other researcher on each team, i.e. **at least two researchers** from each partner institution. Researchers can include PhD students and post-doctoral staff.
- The funding envelope comprises up to £25,000 from UoM and €25,000 from HU. We expect to support up to 5 projects in this round for a funding period of 18 months. Recipients will be awarded up to:
 - 5k GBP from UoM to support Manchester applicants.
 - and
 - 5K EUR from HU to support Heidelberg applicants.

- The fund is open to proposals across all research areas.
- Projects will be funded for a period of 18 months starting from August 2024 onwards. There is flexibility on start dates, but all projects must be underway by December 2024 at the latest.
- Proposals demonstrating strong relevance to strategic priorities 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 internationally, 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, costs for a workshop taking place in Heidelberg should be allocated in the HU 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 a maximum of 20% of the budget (i.e. £1K and €1K) • Research costs including consumables • 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

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).

Eligibility

UoM: Academic staff members from all disciplines and at all levels are welcome to apply. We encourage early career researchers¹ 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.

Timeline

Call for proposals opens	Monday 8 April (12:00 noon British Summer Time, 13:00 Central European Summer Time)
Deadline for submission	Monday 10 June (12:00 noon British Summer Time, 13:00 Central European Summer Time)
Applicants notified	Early July
Project start date	August – December 2024

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.

The full proposal is comprised of the following elements:

- **Applicants' details – affiliations from each institution with contact details**
 - **Co-Investigator information**
 - **Project team 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.
 - **Proposed Timeframe** (project design and rationale): project dates, a project timeline and a description of the planned activities.

¹ **Manchester:** an individual who is within six years of their first academic appointment. This duration excludes any period of career break;

- **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.
- **Proposed budget**
 - A breakdown of the cost of the activity e.g. flights, travel, hotels etc.
- **Supporting documents**
 - Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae (not more than 2 pages) from each institution's PI (Principal Investigator) with a selected list of publications.
 - 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.
- **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:

The University of Manchester

Helen Lusty, International Relations, International Development

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Heidelberg University

Nicole Dorn, International Relations Office

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