

The University of Manchester- The University of Osaka 2025 Call for Joint Research Proposals

The University of Manchester and The University of Osaka are pleased to announce the 2025 seed-corn fund to support collaborative research projects and to build on the existing partnerships between the two institutions. The aim of the fund is to establish new collaborations, facilitate work on proof-of concept ideas, and in the longer term to build international teams who are well positioned to apply for external research funding.

Projects

Proposals may include targeted research support such as joint workshops, researcher exchanges, and the formation or development of a collaborative network. To be eligible, a proposal must include a PI from The University of Manchester and The University of Osaka, and at least one other researcher on each team. We encourage early career researchers to apply.

To complement mobility between institutions we would expect projects to make full use of the available technology for online workshops/meetings in order to maximise the benefit of the collaboration. University of Manchester researchers are encouraged to review and consider the University's [guidance on staff travel](#) when planning the details of their project.

The funding commitment comprises up to £15,000 from The University of Manchester and 3m JPY from The University of Osaka. It's anticipated that three projects will be funded via this call depending on the quality and value of applications received.

The fund is open to proposals across all research areas, but proposals aligned with the 2025 EXPO Osaka Kansai theme of *"Designing Future Society for Our Lives"* are particularly encouraged. Projects are expected to start on 1 July 2025. The funding period is different between the two institutions due to their own fiscal year. Details are outlined in the "funding" section on page two.

Proposals with the potential for sustainability beyond the initial funding period are encouraged.

Costs and proposal

Proposals may include workshops (face-to-face and virtual), symposia, staff exchanges, research seminars/presentations and formation or development of a collaborative network.

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.

Eligible Costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel costs including flights, hotels and subsistence • Research costs including consumables • Costs associated with networking events, 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 • Tuition fees • Honoraria

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 at The University of Osaka should be allocated in the Osaka budget.

The way of spending funds including more detailed eligibility of costs should observe the regulations of each institution.

Eligibility

The University of Manchester: Academic staff members from all disciplines and at all levels are welcome to apply. We encourage early career researchers to apply. Post-doctoral staff are eligible to apply on the condition that the end of their post-doctoral contract is after the end of the proposed project. Emeritus and honorary staff are not eligible to apply as PI but may be members of the project team.

The University of Osaka: Proposals can be submitted by all faculty members including contract-based full-time faculty members ("Specially Appointed academic staff"), and we encourage early career researchers to apply including Post-docs in faculty positions. Any applicant on a contract must have sufficient tenure on their contract to complete the project with the University of Manchester team (i.e. 18 months from the start date). The University of Osaka also encourages PhD students to be included in the projects as participants if their expected date of completion is not shorter than 18 months.

Funding

We expect to support up to three projects in this round for a funding period indicated below for respective institutions. Recipients will be awarded:

- Up to 5k GBP from Manchester to support Manchester applicants for the period

- of up to 18 months starting on 1 July 2025 and
- Up to 1m JPY from Osaka to support Osaka applicants for the period from 1 July 2025 to 31 March 2026 per project

Each institution will pay funds directly to its researchers. Approval of expenditure will be governed by each university for the portion of funding provided.

Timeline

Call for proposals opens	Friday 11 April
Deadline for submission	Thursday 22 May
Applicants notified	By 9 June
Project start date	1 July

How to Apply

This is a joint call and a single application should be submitted online using the University of Manchester's Qualtrics system. The form can be previewed here <https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=75718>. Applicants from both institutions should agree the content for the submission before the University of Manchester/Osaka academic applies using the online form https://www.qualtrics.manchester.ac.uk/jfe/form/SV_5C2VlhztSx6c4aq

The full proposal is comprised of the following elements:

- i. Administrative Details - includes the lead faculty members and affiliations from each institution with contact details.
- ii. Project Proposal which includes the following information:
 - Abstract that describes the project (150 words)
 - Description of the planned activities including timeline (200 words).
 - Collaborator complementarity (250 words) – a description of how the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength and the added value of these combined expertise.
 - Impact (2x 250 words)
 - Project Impact - Description of the expected academic gains and benefits of establishing research links between Manchester and Osaka in the proposed research field, and the identification of corresponding performance indicators e.g. a publication, blog, meeting report etc.
 - Early career and graduate researcher involvement: Any opportunities for their engagement and anticipated benefits to the project and the early career and graduate researchers themselves, as applicable.
 - Capacity for Future Collaboration (250 words) - 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 policy documents, and joint funding applications.

- **Budget** - A breakdown of the cost of the activity e.g. flights, local travel, accommodation etc.
- **Project Team** - Abbreviated Curriculum Vitae of the team members with a selected list of publications (please link up to five publications)

Evaluation Criteria

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

- **Project design and rationale:** How clearly presented and justified is the basis for, and design of, the Project? How do the proposed activities assist with establishing new and growing emerging research collaborations? What are the anticipated benefits of involving ECRs and/or graduate researchers? (20%)
- **Collaborator complementarity:** What is the added value of the new or emerging collaboration? How do the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength? (30%)
- **Potential impact:** What desired outcomes do the planned activities set out to achieve? What are the anticipated benefits of the activities to the respective research groups, institutions, and wider research community? (20%)
- **Capacity for future collaboration/funding:** What is the potential for this project to foster new or ongoing collaboration, and through what mechanism(s)? How well does the proposed collaboration plan to access external funding? (30%)

University of Manchester applicants should note that a fEC costing is not required. The budget section of the application is straightforward and should not require input from Research Services teams. However, if you feel you need support then please follow local School procedures for submitting grant applications. We would expect you to provide evidence that your line manager supports the application.

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.

Information about this Call

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