

Manipal Academy of Higher Education- The University of Manchester Joint Research Seed Fund 2026–27

Guidelines for MAHE Applicants

Summary of Fund

Application deadline	Tuesday, 27 October 2026, 21:30 IST
Funding available from MAHE	Up to Rs. 600000 per project
Partner institution	The University of Manchester (UoM), United Kingdom
Project start date	February 2027 onwards
Project duration	Up to 18 months
Project completion	All projects to be completed by 1 September 2028

Background

Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), in partnership with **The University of Manchester (UoM), United Kingdom**, invites applications from eligible MAHE faculty and researchers for the **MAHE–University of Manchester Joint Research Seed Fund 2026–27**.

The joint call aims to strengthen research engagement between MAHE and UoM by supporting new and emerging collaborations between researchers at the two institutions. Through this initiative, MAHE seeks to enable its researchers to develop collaborative projects with complementary research teams at UoM and establish partnerships that can lead to sustained research activity, high-quality joint research outputs and long term collaboration.

These guidelines are intended for **MAHE applicants**. UoM collaborators should follow the corresponding guidelines issued by The University of Manchester.

Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this joint seed fund is to encourage **new and emerging research collaborations between MAHE and The University of Manchester** that have the potential to develop into sustained research partnerships.

MAHE particularly encourages proposals that provide a clear pathway towards:

- joint/co-authored publications in leading journals;
- joint Ph.D./PDF;

- development of longer-term collaborative research programmes between MAHE and UoM; and
- wider research impact arising from the complementary strengths of the two institutions.

The seed funding should therefore be used to initiate or develop research activities that can provide a strong foundation for future collaboration rather than support stand-alone activities.

As this is a jointly funded initiative, proposals will be reviewed jointly by **MAHE and The University of Manchester**.

Activity and Scope

MAHE invites proposals that combine substantive research activity with appropriate partnership-building between researchers at MAHE and UoM.

Supported activities may include:

- **Joint research activities:** scoping studies, feasibility studies, pilot studies or proof-of-concept work that can form the basis of a larger collaborative research programme.
- **Building research networks:** research visits and exchanges between MAHE and UoM, or focused workshops and meetings required to develop and deliver the proposed research.
- **Access to research expertise and facilities:** use of specialised equipment, laboratories, research facilities, collections or other resources available at either institution where such access contributes directly to the proposed research outcomes.
- **Research skills and experience:** activities that enable members of the collaborative team to gain research experience or methodological expertise required to achieve the proposed research outcomes.

Projects that primarily focus on **teaching, training or stand-alone workshops** will not be eligible. MAHE encourages proposals to build focused research involving **network of researchers from both institutions**. The involvement and development of **Early Career Researchers (ECRs)** is particularly encouraged.

Strategic Research Priorities and Themes

Proposals submitted under the 2026–27 call should address at least one of the following broad research areas:

- **Creative Industries**
- **Digital Futures**
- **Healthier Futures**
- **Sustainable Futures**

MAHE applicants should clearly demonstrate the relevance of the proposed research to the strengths and strategic priorities of MAHE and explain how collaboration with UoM will add value to the proposed work.

Funding and Project Duration

MAHE will provide funding of up to **Rs 600000 per selected project** to support eligible project-related expenditure incurred by the MAHE research team.

The University of Manchester will separately provide funding of up to **£5,000 per selected project** to support the UoM research team.

Projects may run for a maximum period of **18 months**, beginning from February 2027 onwards.

Projects may commence after February 2027 where appropriate; however, all project activities must be completed by **1 September 2028**.

MAHE funds will be released and administered in accordance with applicable MAHE financial and research administration procedures. Any unspent MAHE funds at the end of the approved project period will be dealt with in accordance with MAHE regulations.

Timeline

Stage	Date
Call opens	Tuesday, 1 September 2026
Application deadline	Tuesday, 27 October 2026, 21:30 IST
Outcome communicated	Late December 2026
Projects commence	1 February 2027 onwards
Latest project completion date	1 September 2028

Eligibility and Project Team

MAHE Principal Investigator

Each proposal must identify an eligible **MAHE Principal Investigator (PI)/Institutional Lead** who will be responsible for the MAHE component of the project.

The MAHE PI must:

- be an eligible faculty/research staff member of MAHE;
- be eligible to undertake and lead funded research at MAHE;
- hold an appointment that enables them to undertake the proposed project for its duration; and
- identify an eligible UoM researcher who will serve as the UoM PI/Institutional Lead.
- Faculty on probation, contract and not under MAHE payroll are **not eligible**.

New Collaboration

The purpose of this scheme is to develop **new research collaborations between MAHE and UoM**.

Accordingly, the MAHE and UoM PIs/Institutional Leads should not have previously **jointly published or received joint research funding**.

Applicants should explain how the proposed seed-funded activities will enable the new collaboration to develop into a sustainable research partnership.

Project Team

MAHE encourages applicants to develop a broader collaborative team around the proposed research.

Each proposal should include at least **three named researchers from MAHE and three named researchers from UoM**, including the respective institutional leads.

MAHE project teams may include eligible faculty members, research staff, postdoctoral researchers and PhD scholars, in accordance with applicable MAHE requirements.

PhD scholars/PDFs may participate as members of the research team but cannot serve as the MAHE PI/Institutional Lead.

Early Career Researchers

The participation of **Early Career Researchers (ECRs)** is strongly encouraged.

Projects may include an ECR either as an eligible lead or as a member of the project team, as applicable under the respective institutional eligibility requirements.

Applicants are encouraged to demonstrate how participation in the project will benefit ECRs and/or graduate researchers and contribute to their research development.

External Collaborators

Where relevant to the proposed research, applicants may involve collaborators from other universities, industry, government, healthcare organisations or other non-academic organisations.

Such external collaborators cannot serve as the MAHE or UoM institutional lead. Their involvement should be clearly justified in terms of the value they bring to the proposed collaboration.

Funding Available to MAHE Applicants

MAHE will provide up to **Rs 600000 per project** to support eligible expenditure incurred by the MAHE team.

The corresponding UoM team will receive its funding separately from The University of Manchester.

Each institution will fund its own researchers and project-related expenditure. Funds will not be transferred between MAHE and UoM.

For example:

- International travel undertaken by MAHE researchers should be budgeted under the MAHE allocation;
- Travel undertaken by UoM researchers should be budgeted under the UoM allocation; and
- Other project expenditure should be allocated to the appropriate institutional budget according to where and by whom the expenditure will be incurred.

MAHE will administer its component of the award in accordance with its applicable financial procedures.

Costs and Budget

MAHE applicants should prepare a realistic and well-justified budget covering the activities to be supported through the MAHE allocation.

Funding should be used for costs **directly related to the proposed collaborative research project**.

Eligible Costs

Subject to applicable MAHE rules, eligible expenditure may include:

- Economy-class international travel between MAHE and UoM;

- Accommodation and subsistence associated with approved project travel;
- Research consumables;
- Data collection and analysis costs;
- Access to specialist research facilities;
- Project-specific research expenses; and
- Costs associated with organising research workshops and meetings required to deliver the proposed project.

[Please refer to MAHE SEED grant policy]

Ineligible Costs

Subject to confirmation under MAHE regulations, funding should not normally be used for:

- PI/Co-Investigator salary or faculty time;
- Institutional overheads or indirect costs;
- Major equipment;
- Scholarships;
- Tuition fees;
- Routine conference attendance;
- Honoraria;
- Membership fees; or
- Expenditure unrelated to the approved collaborative project.

All expenditure by the MAHE team will be subject to MAHE's applicable financial, travel and research administration requirements.

Need to take prior approval from Directorate of Research, MAHE, Manipal for utilization of the funds/budget heads other than approved under the proposal submitted.

Travel

International travel supported through the MAHE allocation must comply with **MAHE's applicable travel and approval procedures**.

MAHE applicants are responsible for obtaining all necessary institutional permissions prior to undertaking project-related travel.

Applicants should ensure that sufficient provision is made for airfare, accommodation, subsistence, visa costs and other eligible travel-related expenditure within the approved MAHE project budget.

How to Apply

This is a **joint MAHE–UoM call**. Therefore, the MAHE and UoM PIs must prepare **one joint application** covering the complete collaborative project.

A single application should be submitted through the online application system provided for the call.

The application may be developed collaboratively by the MAHE and UoM teams. Applicants may use the **‘save and continue’** function in the application system and share the generated link with their collaborators so that both teams can contribute to the application.

The MAHE PI is responsible for ensuring that all required MAHE institutional approvals are obtained before submission.

Applicants should not submit separate MAHE and UoM research proposals for the same project.

Supporting Documents

The following documents will be required as part of the joint application:

- **MAHE PI/Institutional Lead:** abbreviated Curriculum Vitae of no more than **two pages**, including a selected list of relevant publications.
- **UoM PI/Institutional Lead:** abbreviated Curriculum Vitae of no more than **two pages**, including a selected list of relevant publications.
- **MAHE institutional approval/support:.**

MAHE applicants are responsible for ensuring that any additional internal approvals or supporting documents required by MAHE are obtained before the application deadline.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be assessed by a **joint MAHE–UoM review panel** on academic merit and the following criteria:

1. Project Design and Rationale – 25 points

- ✚ How clearly presented and justified is the basis for and design of the proposed project?
- ✚ How appropriate are the proposed activities for achieving the research objectives?
- ✚ How will the activities contribute to establishing a new and emerging research collaboration between MAHE and UoM?

2. Collaborator Complementarity and Impact – 25 points

- ✚ What added value will be created through collaboration between the MAHE and UoM research teams?
- ✚ How do the expertise, capabilities, facilities or other strengths of the two teams complement each other?
- ✚ What are the anticipated benefits of involving Early Career Researchers and/or graduate researchers/PhD scholars?

3. Potential Impact – 20 points

- ✚ What outcomes are expected from the proposed activities?
- ✚ What are the anticipated benefits of the research to local and/or international communities?
- ✚ How does the proposed research align with relevant strategic priorities and research strengths of MAHE and UoM?

4. Capacity for Future Collaboration and Funding – 30 points

- ✚ How will the proposed project establish a basis for continued collaboration between MAHE and UoM?
- ✚ What mechanisms will be used to sustain the collaboration beyond the seed funding period?
- ✚ What is the potential for the collaboration to secure external research funding?
- ✚ Applicants should clearly identify potential follow-on activities, funding opportunities and/or research outputs that are expected to emerge from the project.

Reporting After Project Completion

MAHE awardees will be required to report on the progress and outcomes of their funded projects.

Following completion of the project, the MAHE PI will be required to contribute to a narrative project report describing:

- activities undertaken;
- research outcomes and outputs;
- development of the MAHE–UoM collaboration;
- contributions of project team members;

- involvement and development of ECRs and graduate researchers;
- publications and other research outputs arising from the project;
- external funding applications submitted or planned;
- wider impact of the project; and
- plans for continued collaboration with UoM.

The initial project completion report should be submitted within **six weeks of the project end date**.

Awardees may also be requested to provide follow-up information **one year and three years after project completion** to enable MAHE and UoM to assess the longer-term outcomes of the collaboration.

Any additional MAHE reporting requirements will be communicated to successful applicants.

Contact Information

MAHE applicants requiring clarification regarding the call, eligibility, institutional approvals, budget or application process may contact:

Manipal Academy of Higher Education

Directorate of Research

E: grants.mu@manipal.edu

The University of Manchester

International Relations

E: international.partnerships@manchester.ac.uk