

Institutional NERC allocation: Discipline Hopping for Discovery Science

Internal call for applications

BACKGROUND

The University has received an allocation of £100K from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) to fund activities that will support academics and researchers to build expertise and agility to work across disciplinary boundaries within Discovery Science.

PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME

Through this initiative, NERC seeks to facilitate exciting new collaborations that will build momentum towards true discipline integration and enable adventurous and ambitious curiosity-driven, high-risk and high-reward projects that push the boundaries of Discovery Science. The initiative will support HEIs to initiate activities that will help the academic community to develop an understanding of different cross-disciplinary research perspectives and methodologies that could be used to enable discoveries that unlock new knowledge within the environmental sciences.

NERC is encouraging HEIs to think beyond the more common disciplinary alliances and to consider areas where the value of different, and less explored, insights can be understood and exploited. Therefore, this funding will support Environmental Science in its broadest sense, encompassing Life Sciences and Global Studies, and collaborations across subjects such as economics, law, sociology, and the humanities generally.

TYPES OF ACTIVITY

The funding can be used to support cross-disciplinary activities within Sussex, or in partnership with other UK research organisations and/or end users, for example:

- Collaborative research projects;
- Collaborative visits to other Universities to acquire new skills or expertise or initiate and develop collaborations;
- Organising meetings or sandpits to build interdisciplinary understanding and capacity, and share learning, understanding of key terms, concepts, language and tools to tackle problems;
- Embedding researchers, for a period of time, in departments outside of their own discipline area (within the same organisation, or in other [eligible](#) UK research organisations);
- External engagement with businesses, the third sector, NGOs or other end users to understand how their needs could be addressed through interdisciplinary approaches.

PROJECT DURATION

Funding must be spent by 31 March 2023. Funds are not available past this date and unspent funds cannot be rolled forward. We recognize that this is a challenging timescale but it is one set by NERC. Please be mindful of the time needed to recruit staff and/or draft contracts when planning your activity.

FUNDING & ELIGIBLE COSTS

The total funding available for this call is £100k. Applications should be between £10,000 and £25,000 and are funded on a 100% FEC basis. The following standard NERC cost categories are eligible:

- Directly Allocated staff costs, plus associated indirect and estates costs
- Directly Incurred staff costs, plus associated indirect and estates costs
- Directly Incurred T&S
- Directly Incurred Other costs (to cover other expenses, workshops, consumables etc.)
- Other Directly Allocated costs

Costs incurred by non-Sussex collaborators may be included if their involvement is fully justified.

Please contact resdevadmin@sussex.ac.uk for salary costs and associated overheads.

INELIGIBLE COSTS

Equipment (over £10k) is not eligible under this initiative.

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- This scheme is open to Sussex academics and researchers from all disciplines.
- Applications from the widest possible group of eligible staff are encouraged, including Post-Doctoral Researchers and other Early Career Researchers. Applications are expected to include at least one Early Career Researcher.
- Colleagues on Teaching and Scholarship contracts are not eligible to apply as Principal Investigator but can be involved in a project team.
- PhD students are not eligible to apply.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- A single Principal Investigator should be identified.
- The application form must be used and maximum page limits must not be exceeded. Any material beyond these page limits will not be considered.
- Single line spacing can be used and font should be no smaller than 11pt Ariel.

Applications are structured as follows:

Part 1: Cover sheet

Part 2: Project description, delivery plan and anticipated outcomes. **This should be written so as to be accessible to the entire panel, not all of whom will be experts in your field.**

Applicants do not need to include full references.

Part 3: Budget requested

Part 4: Justification of resources

Applicants should submit their completed application to research.initiatives@sussex.ac.uk by 12 noon on 14th December 2022

KEY COMMISSIONING DATES

Call issued	Deadline	Panel meeting	Decision to applicants
17 th November 2022	12noon 14 th December 2022	By 22 nd December 2022	22 nd December 2022

REVIEW PROCEDURE

Applications will be reviewed by an interdisciplinary panel which will aim to include individuals drawn from a diverse range of backgrounds and career stages, as well as being representative of all relevant disciplines. It will also include an Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion lead.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Relevance to the NERC Discovery Science scheme, e.g. addressing an important environmental challenge and likelihood that the activity will enhance working across interdisciplinary boundaries;
2. Clarity of objectives and methodology;
3. Viability of the project activities in the 3 month funding period;
4. Likelihood of funding delivering anticipated outcomes;
5. Degree of inclusivity in the project team and/or those involved in the proposed activity;
6. Value for money.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Successful applicants will be expected to submit a *brief* report detailing completed activities and outcomes. This will feed into the University's report to NERC which will be submitted no later than 30 June 2023.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like to discuss your application please contact: Debbie Foy
D.Foy@sussex.ac.uk

Requests for salary costings should be directed to: resdevadmin@sussex.ac.uk