Research Development Fund
Programme Specification – Round 10

PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME
The Research Development Fund is designed to develop activities enabling more competitive and substantive external research proposals. Normally this would take the form of a pilot study or proof of concept research. The scheme is intentionally flexible, recognising that different disciplines have different requirements for research development. Interdisciplinarity is not a requirement but interdisciplinary applications are encouraged.

For this particular round of the RDF, applications for pump-priming projects aimed at generating preliminary data for future Global Challenges Research Fund bids are particularly encouraged as the RDF panel will have access to a portion of the University’s GCRF QR allocation. In order to be funded from the GCRF QR, RDF applications must meet Official Development Assistance principles which state that only research directly and primarily of benefit to the problems of specific developing countries may be counted as ODA eligible. Please note that this is not exclusionary and pump-priming applications for any external sponsor are still welcome.

PROJECT DURATION
Projects would normally be expected to begin within 2 months of notification and normally run for a maximum of 6 months. Applicants whose projects are expected to take longer than 6 months before an external grant application can be prepared will have to explain the special circumstances which justify an extended pump-priming period. A project can take no longer than 12 months in any circumstances. All funded projects must end by 31 March 2020 at the latest.

FUNDING & ELIGIBLE COSTS
- Applicants can apply for projects ranging from £5k - £30k but projects towards the higher end of this scale would have to have an especially compelling rationale to be successful.
- Funds could be used for example to support lab based work, work related to clinical trials, archival research, scoping activities, or web based research.
- If bidding for research assistance, applicants should indicate clearly what their work would include.
- If consultancy fees are essential to the pilot study, a particularly compelling case for

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1 NERC will not accept applications to its New Investigator Grant scheme from Principal Investigators who have received any form of competitive research funding, including that from internal sources such as the University’s RDF. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ascertain whether being in receipt of RDF funding would adversely affect their eligibility to apply for the follow-on external funding stated in their RDF application.

their inclusion must be included.

- Where relevant, clinical and practitioner links should be in place prior to submission of the RDF application.
- Cost sharing with Schools is encouraged.

**INELIGIBLE COSTS**

- This initiative is not intended to underwrite conference hosting, attendance or dissemination.
- Teaching relief and equipment (including laptops) are not eligible costs under this initiative.
- Funds should not be used as a bridging fund for current staff on short-term contracts.
- The RDF will not fund costs incurred by collaborators at other institutions. If other institutions are involved there is an expectation that their institution will also contribute to the pump-priming costs.

**ELIGIBILITY**

- The RDF is open to faculty from all disciplines.
- In accordance with the University's Athena Swan objective of addressing gender equality, the RDF scheme welcomes bids from applicants returning from parental leave.
- Members of faculty on fixed-term contracts may apply if they will be employed at Sussex during the RDF funded project period and also during the proposed externally funded project(s) which would occur after the RDF pump-priming activity.
- Staff on teaching-only contracts and research students are ineligible to apply to the RDF.

**RESUBMISSIONS**

- Applicants who were unsuccessful in previous rounds cannot resubmit an application for the same, or closely related project, unless invited.
- Successful applicants from previous rounds can apply again for a different project but only if successful outcomes from their previous RDF funded activity have been achieved.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

- A single Principal Applicant should be identified.
- The application form must be used - continuation sheets will not be accepted.
- 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 Arial.

Applications are structured as follows:

Part 1: Cover sheet
Part 2: Project description and methodology. **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: ODA compliance statement (only complete if your external bid will be to the Global Challenges Research Fund).
Part 4: Anticipated outcomes
Part 5: Budget and justification of resources
Part 6: Statement from applicant’s Director of Research & Knowledge Exchange (DRKE)

Applicants should submit their completed application (including DRKE statement) to research.initiatives@sussex.ac.uk by 12.00 noon on Monday 5th November 2018.

Please note that it is the applicant’s responsibility to obtain their DRKE sign-off in section 6 and submit the completed application by the 12.00 noon deadline.

KEY COMMISSIONING DATES

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<tr>
<th>Call issued</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Panel meeting</th>
<th>Decision to applicants</th>
<th>Earliest project start date (if no staff to be recruited)</th>
<th>Latest project start date</th>
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<td>w/c Monday 17 Sept 2018</td>
<td>12.00 noon Monday 5 November 2018</td>
<td>Early December</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>1 January 2019</td>
<td>1 April 2019</td>
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REVIEW PROCEDURE
Applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research, Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Interdisciplinary Research), Director of Research Partnerships and Impact plus three Directors of Research & Knowledge Exchange from Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities. We may also call on other senior academics colleagues to assist in the review process.

Applications should address the following criteria which will be used to review the proposals:

- Project’s ability to generate innovative research resulting in a substantive external funding application.
- Importance and originality of research questions.
- Clarity of objectives and methodology.
- Viability of programme of activities.
- Plan for delivery.
- The extent to which the proposed outcomes justify the costs.

If, after being reviewed against the above criteria, two applications receive the same score, the panel will take into consideration whether the applicant has ticked the box confirming that they have recently returned from parental leave.

The panel’s decision is final. As an internal scheme, the panel tries to provide feedback on all submissions and to give the reasons for funding outcomes in as much detail as possible. Unfortunately the panel cannot engage in further discussion of outcomes once this feedback has been provided.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
Successful principal applicants will be expected to submit a brief report detailing progress and
outcomes to date plus a follow-on report 6 months after the project end date. Those funded from the GCRF QR allocation may also have to provide additional information.

FURTHER INFORMATION
If you would like to discuss your application please contact:
- Debbie Foy-Everett, D.Foy-Everett@sussex.ac.uk ext 3812
- Carly Brownbridge, C.Brownbridge@sussex.ac.uk ext 3664

All costing queries should be directed to either:
- Carly Brownbridge, C.Brownbridge@sussex.ac.uk ext 3664 OR
- Taryn Collins, research.initiatives@sussex.ac.uk ext 7447

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & TIPS FOR APPLYING TO INTERNAL FUNDING SCHEMES
A document listing frequently asked questions during previous rounds is available at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/sussexresearch/rdf/rdffaqs

We advise applicants to read ‘Tips for applying to Sussex Research Internal Funding Schemes’ which is available on the Sussex Research website.

LESSON LEARNED FROM PREVIOUS ROUNDS
Applications need to provide a convincing case:
- For the necessity of pilot work to be undertaken before an external application can be submitted.
- That specific external funding applications will be made within 12 months of the start of the RDF award (within 18 months if your RDF project is 12 months).
- If more than one external bid is targeted, please explain how the proposal will be adapted for each funder in order to meet different funder priorities and remits.
- That the timeframe of the project is realistic.
- That the funds requested are fully justified and provide value for money.

In addition:
- Applicants need to ensure that they allow sufficient time to dedicate to the planned research.
- Unrealistic recruitment timetables have delayed start dates of RDF projects. If you need to recruit staff please allow enough time for the recruitment process when selecting a project start date.
- Project budgets are profiled against financial years. It is crucial that applicants plan a realistic project start date so that expenditure is incurred according to application budget. Unspent funds resulting from project delays will be lost as we cannot roll forward and reallocate unspent funds in a new financial year.
- If the project includes Research Assistants or PhD students, their roles need to be specified, and specifically in the case of the latter, how their involvement fits in with their thesis.
- Invited resubmissions should clearly state how the application has been revised in light of the reviewers’ comments on the original bid.
- Applicants should bear in mind the need to write for a panel comprising non-specialists in their field.
You can find examples of previously funded RDF success stories on the Sussex Research website [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/sussexresearch/rdf/stories](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/sussexresearch/rdf/stories)

**EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITIES DATA**

Please note that the Sussex Research team will access equalities and diversities data held by the Human Resources Department. If you submit an application to this scheme you are agreeing to this data being accessed. Please note this data does not form any part of the review process. It is used so the Sussex Research team can produce non-identifiable statistics to effectively monitor engagement with the Universities internal funding initiatives and introduce any necessary revisions to future calls.