**Researcher-Led Initiative Fund 2018-19**

**Introduction**

The Researcher Development Programme’s (RDP) Researcher-Led Initiative Fund gives our researchers greater input into the ways they are supported and developed. The fund aims to complement the training and development opportunities provided through the Researcher Development Programme and within Schools.

The fund is available to support our doctoral researchers and early career researchers (i.e. members of research staff whose role is primarily focused on conducting research) to organise activities that will enhance their professional and research skills. Initiatives must be for the benefit of groups of researchers across Schools.

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**Given the success of the 2017-18 Public Engagement Funding Pilot- these two funds have been consolidated, researchers interested in public engagement activity can now apply to the Researcher-Led Initiative Fund for support.**

If you wish to apply for support for a public engagement activity, please ensure you read the guidance for these applications below (Guidelines for applicants – Public engagement activity)

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**Calls for applications**

There are two rounds of funding each year in autumn and spring and proposals will be judged by members of the Doctoral School. Up to £7,500 will be available for each funding round with a maximum of £750 available for any one project. This will allow the Researcher Development Programme to support 20 projects across the year. Awarded funds must be spent by the end of the financial year (31st July).

**Guidelines for applications**

**Training and development activities for researchers**

Applications are invited from doctoral and early career researchers (i.e. members of research staff whose role is primarily focused on conducting research) at the University of Sussex for funding to support short-term, well-defined training and development projects. The following guidelines for applications are provided:

- You may seek funding for activities that expand, complement or build on current training provision for researchers.
• There must be a clear training and development focus to the activity proposed. The activity should enhance and complement the training and development activity available for researchers at School level and through our Researcher Development Programme.

• Interdisciplinary initiatives benefitting researchers across Schools are encouraged.

• The funding could be used to develop initiatives addressing a development need not already offered at Sussex, for example writing retreats, career development forums, networking events, journal clubs, or doctoral/early career researcher conferences. We encourage the development of new initiatives which are innovative, creative and use non-standard approaches to skills development.

• Funding will not be given for travel, course or conference attendance, or staffing costs. Similarly, research projects are outside the scope of this funding stream.

• Funding will not be granted retrospectively to cover initiatives occurring before application deadlines. All applications will be reviewed after the closing date unless your proposed event will take place before the deadline. If this is the case, please ensure you apply to the Fund at least 4 weeks before the date of your initiative.

• The Researcher Development Team (Researcher-development@sussex.ac.uk) would be pleased to have informal discussions with researchers in the development of their applications.

Public engagement activities

Following a successful pilot scheme to support doctoral and early career researchers interested in delivering public engagement activity, applications can now be made to the researcher-Led initiative fund to support this activity.

Applications are invited from doctoral and early career researchers at the University of Sussex for funding to support short –term, well defined public engagement activities. Applicants are encouraged to consider:

• The purpose of the activity, is this to:
  
  o Inform and inspire the public: These projects will have a dissemination function, inspiring, informing, educating and making your research more accessible. Possible activities might include participation in festivals, interactive talks and shows, films and animations.

  o Consult and listen to public views: These projects will involve listening to the public’s views and concerns about your research, and provide an opportunity
to gain fresh perspectives and insights into your work. Possible activities might include public debates, online consultations, panels and user-groups.

- Collaborate with the public: Here researchers and the public work together on projects. The public help to define your future research directions, policy or the implementation of your research outcomes. Possible activities might include citizen sciences, co-production of knowledge.

- Or some combination of the above

- An important part of any public engagement is to think about the people who you want to engage with. Who are the public and how can you ensure you engage with them effectively? To find out more about understanding your target audience see: https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/plan-it/understanding-your-audience

- Applicants are encouraged to consider how you will evaluate your activity. Evaluation is an important part of any engagement activity, and most funders require it. Tools to help you are available at: https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/plan-it/evaluation/evaluation-resources

- Applicants are encouraged to refer to the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement and draw upon their resources in developing their application. The University has recently signed up to the NCCPE’s Manifesto for Public Engagement.

- The Public Engagement Fund is intended to develop the skills of our researchers, outsourcing of public engagement activity will not be supported. Neither are we able to support projects which form a core requirement of your qualification e.g. the practice component of a practice-based doctorate.

- The Researcher Development Team (Researcher-development@sussex.ac.uk) and Dr Katy Petherick (Public Engagement Coordinator, Life Sciences) would be pleased to have informal discussions with researchers in the development of their applications.

**Application and budget**

- The maximum total amount available to any one submission is £750. If you are successful you will be required to identify an existing School/department budget code to which the funds will be transferred. RLI funds must be spent by the end of the financial year 31st July

- An application form should be completed for each request for funding. The funding request should be endorsed by the Director of Doctoral Studies for training and development activities, or PI/Supervisor for public engagement activities
• A **clear budget** is required in your application and any unspent fund should be returned to the Researcher Development Programme. Funds cannot be used to cover applicant’s time or conference attendance. Projects are expected to deliver value for money, and funds can only be used for items that are required for the activity.

• Successful applicants are expected to provide a final statement of expenditure after the event, and any unspent funds will be returned to the Researcher Development Programme. The deadline for the final statement of expenditure is 6 weeks after your initiative has taken place, or by the 1st July, whichever is sooner.

• Award recipients should make themselves familiar with the [University’s supply agreements](#), particularly for purchasing stationary, and laboratory supplies.

• Costs for catering an event should be reasonable, and where an external caterer are used, in line with hospitality provided by Sussex Food. We are unable to fund evening wine receptions.

### Additional guidelines for applicants organising training and development initiatives for researchers

• Applicants are expected to take low cost options with regards to accommodation for external speakers (e.g. standard hotels from the [University approved list](#)). In most cases the University have negotiated special rates to stay in these hotels/guest houses. When making a booking it is essential that you quote that you wish to make a booking at the University of Sussex rate.

• To obtain value for money, the University has appointed a preferred travel management company- [Key Travel](#). Key Travel should be used for booking all air travel for external speakers, except where the use of an alternative supplier is substantially cheaper, low risk and outweighs the other benefits of using the preferred provider. The RLI can only support travel by means of public transport.

• If you are intending to pay an individual for work carried out in relation to your initiative (e.g. if you wish to pay a speaker for their time), you will need to ensure that you obtain evidence of their right-to-work in the UK before the work commences. Please refer to the University’s [guidance notes on the provision of temporary staff](#). If you have any questions about this process please contact your School Office, or the HR Compliance team: [HRCompliance@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:HRCompliance@sussex.ac.uk).

### Selection process

• Membership of the selection panel will be drawn from the Doctoral School.
Additionally Dr. Kathy Petherick (Public Engagement Coordinator, Life Sciences) will review applications for public engagement activity.

- The panel will evaluate the applications, judging them against the criteria listed in this document.

- The panel reserves the right to consider the distribution of Researcher-Led Initiative Fund allocation across the University. The panel reserve the right to offer partial funding for applications, and may seek expert advice on any aspect of the application. Applicants may be asked for further information, or to amend their application.

- We aim to inform you of the decision within four weeks of the closing date of the RLI funding round in which your application falls. The decision of the panel is final and there is no appeals procedure. We encourage you to seek feedback on your application.

- Unsuccessful applications may be re-submitted however, due to the competitive nature of this fund, projects which have previously been funded will not be considered. We encourage building sustainable activities into your initiatives, to avoid repeat applications to the Researcher-Led Fund.

Terms and conditions

Awards are offered subject to the following terms and conditions:

- That promotional materials for the activities include the words “Supported by the Researcher Development Programme”

- That the award recipient submit a short evaluation report within 6 weeks of delivery of the activity which should include a final statement of expenditure. Award recipients may also be asked to contribute to the Doctoral School’s Festival of Doctoral Research (June 2019), or a Researcher Development Programme event to share their experiences of developing the initiatives.

- Where projects involve collaborating with the public (as per the definition above) award recipients must adhere to University ethics and governance requirements

- That the organisers identify an existing School/department budget code to which the funds will be transferred, or to work with your School/department to set up a new budget code for your activity

- That Researcher Development should be informed of any proposed changes to the budget agreed by the awarding panel in advance of the activity taking place.

- After the activity has taken place, any and all unspent budget allocation reverts back to the Researcher Development Programme to allow reinvestment in future public
engagement activities

- The University is committed to providing an environment that advances equality of opportunity. We are all responsible for ensuring that staff, students and visitors to the University of Sussex or involved in our events are treated with fairness, dignity and respect. For more information see the [Equality and Diversity](#) webpages.

- A library of successful applications will be made available to new applicants for assistance in putting together their application. Your application may be included in this Study Direct library.