**Researcher-Led Initiative Fund 2017-18**

**Introduction**

The Doctoral School’s 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 funding is available to support our doctoral researchers and early careers research staff to organise activities that will enhance their professional and research skills. Initiatives must be for the benefit of groups of researchers across Schools (although applications for initiatives benefitting a broad group of researchers at School level will also now be considered).

You may seek funding for activities that expand, complement or build on current provision for researchers. 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.

**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 Studies Committee. Up to £10,000 will be available for each funding round with a maximum of £1,000 available for any one project. Awarded funds must be spent by the end of the financial year (1st July).

**Guidelines for applications**

Applications are invited from doctoral and early career researchers at the University of Sussex for funding to support short-term, well-defined training and development projects. The following guidelines for applications are provided:

1. The maximum total amount available to any one submission is £1,000. If you are successful you will be required to 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 initiative. RLI funds must be spent by the end of the financial year 1st July.
2. 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.

3. The proposed initiative must clearly address one or more of the areas within the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF - See Appendix A). Initiatives may focus on one area, e.g. sharing research methods expertise via a short workshop, or several areas e.g. organizing an interdisciplinary conference.

4. Interdisciplinary initiatives benefitting researchers across Schools are encouraged. Applications for initiatives benefitting a broad group of researchers at School level will also now be considered.

5. The funding could be used to run training sessions 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 each round which are innovative, creative and non-standard approaches to skills development.

6. An application form should be completed for each request for funding. If you would like to discuss your application, please contact researcher-development@sussex.ac.uk. The funding request should be endorsed by the Director of Doctoral Studies.

7. 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.

8. Successful applicants will be required to attend an informal meeting with Helen Hampson (Researcher Development Officer) and other successful applicants to provide you with some support in organising your initiative. After your initiative you will also be invited to an informal lunch to discuss and share learning and potential next steps and may be asked to contribute to the Doctoral School’s Festival of Doctoral Research.

**Proposed budget**

- Applicants must include a detailed budget plan for funding their proposed initiative, and justification for each of these costs.

- Applicants are expected to take low cost options with regards to accommodation for external speakers (e.g. standard hotels from the University approved list).
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.

• 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.

• Successful applicants are expected to provide a final statement of expenditure after the event, and any unspent funds will be returned to the Doctoral School. 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.

Selection process

Membership of the selection panel will be drawn from the University’s Doctoral Studies Committee. 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.

Successful applications

Awards are offered subject to the following terms and conditions:

1. That promotional material for the initiative includes the words: "Supported by the Doctoral School’s Researcher-Led Initiative (RLI) Fund".
2. That the organiser(s) of the initiative submit a short evaluation report (*maximum 500 words*) on the initiative within 6 weeks of completion of the initiative or by 1\textsuperscript{st} July, whichever is sooner. It should include a summary of the initiative, the number of participants, a summary of the feedback gathered, a final expenditure statement and lessons learnt from organising the event. Organisers may also be asked to provide a short presentation on their experience of organising the initiative at a future Researcher Development Programme event. Previous reports are available [here](#) via Study Direct.

3. 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 initiative. You will receive an email confirming the amount awarded and your School’s Research and Enterprise Coordinator (REC) will be copied in. It is your responsibility to contact the REC to set up the budget code and communicate this to the Researcher Development Team in order for funds to be transferred. RLI funds must be spent by the end of the financial year (1\textsuperscript{st} July).

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

5. After the event/project has taken place, any and all unspent budget allocation reverts back to the Doctoral School and is reinvested in future Researcher-Led Initiatives.

6. 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.
Appendix A: The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF)

The Researcher Development Framework (RDF) is a tool for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers. It articulates the knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes of researchers, and encourages them to aspire to excellence through achieving higher levels of development.

Figure 1: Graphic of the Researcher Development Framework

Further information on the RDF can be obtained from the Vitae webpages: [http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/428241/Researcher-development-Framework.html](http://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers/428241/Researcher-development-Framework.html)