

Researcher-Led Initiative Fund Application

Response ID	Completion date	
156309-156303-10123352	13 Nov 2015, 00:59 (GMT)	

About you

1	Application Lead Name:	[REDACTED]
2	Lead is:	Doctoral Researcher
3	E-mail address:	[REDACTED]
4	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
5	School and Department:	School of Life science, Department for Evolution, behaviour and environment

About your application

6	Date of application:	13/11/2015
7	Other participating Schools and contacts:	School of Business, Management and Economics [REDACTED] [REDACTED] as well as interested researchers from the school of Mathematics and Physical Science, the School of Psychology and the School of Global studies
8	Title of activity:	Interdisciplinary quantitative analysis group

9	Type of activity (e.g. workshop, career development forum, networking event, seminar, conference, journal club etc.):	Meetings between doctoral and early career researchers at the University of Sussex, who are interested in exchanging ideas, skills and knowledge about data manipulation, analysis and visualization. The proposed activity will be cross-disciplinary, aimed at anyone who has an interest in quantitative research methods and applying them using command line and openly accessible programming languages.
10	Proposed start date:	01/12/2015
11	Total funding requested (£):	1000

Section A: About the activity

12	Please describe your proposed initiative (including aims and objectives; how the activity will be organised, who will be involved and how the initiative will be managed, the target audience and expected uptake, the training and development focus of the activity, and how the activity will be promoted):	<p>The aim of the activity is to establish a support network of researchers that help each other with quantitative analysis and its implementation via command line programming languages. Main objectives are to establish a forum for exchange through regular meetings for researchers at the doctoral and early career researcher level, to exchange ideas and skills regarding quantitative data analysis, and to share best practices across disciplines. It is evident that there is demand for this activity, as every user struggling with quantitative methods might find that specific problems, approaches and ideas would be better discussed in a live-atmosphere with other users rather consulting for instance the wider internet. Our hope is that through providing a common forum for exchange ultimately all researchers involved will gain new skills and knowledge.</p> <p>The activity will be organized as at least monthly meetings, which will be set up by individual participants who wish to either share their knowledge about a specific data analytical method, show and discuss its implementation in a programming language, or who would like to discuss a more general topic relating to data analysis and programming (for instance how to produce visualizations, or how to</p>
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manipulate particular data structures). These sessions may also serve as a study group in which researchers who are struggling with particular aspects of their work may be offered guidance from peers. Quantitative analysis being a wide subject, the user group's content and direction will ultimately adapt to participants needs as they are responsible for keeping the group alive and responsive. Simultaneously to the group meetings, an online forum and meeting space will be set up to guide and determine future meetings through requests and offers for topics, sharing files, and offering a space to continue discussions.

The activity is targeted at researchers using quantitative methods for general empirical research and implementing them in the usual command line programming languages, such as R or Python. An initial email elicited affirmative responses from 19 researchers, and it is expected that once the activity has started, the number of online forum members may grow considerably, with individual meetings attended by a fraction of them depending on personal interest and availability. External speakers are expected to attract larger audiences which may subsequently sign up to the group.

The activity will be promoted via mailing lists as well as publicly available events on the university and participating doctoral school homepages. An initial round of poster-based advertising may be considered to overcome some initial inertia. Additional poster advertising may be considered if external speakers are invited.

<p>13 Set out how the activity will address the Vitae Researcher Development Framework (refer to the guidance notes).</p>	<p>The proposed group meetings will have multiple benefits for doctoral researchers at the school, which are primarily located in Domains A and D of the vitae researcher development framework. Participating researchers will develop their "Knowledge base (A1)", particularly in "Research methods: Practical application", "theoretical knowledge" and "Academic literacy and numeracy". All skills under the "Cognitive abilities (A2)" are also addressed, such as how to analyse data and solve problems. These skills will be developed very naturally, given the empirical content of the sessions as well as a focus both on specific methods and more general data analysis concepts. Further skills expected to be developed include those which relate to "Working with others (D1)". The emphasis on the individually organised sessions will promote strong elements of communication methods and dissemination of their research methods (D2). This naturally entails working with others (D1) and collegiality (D1), which will in turn bring about networking opportunities (B3).</p>
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<p>14 Describe how your initiative has broad appeal - e.g. to researchers in other Schools and departments; to a broad group of researchers in your School:</p>	<p>Since its inception, a defining aspect of this activity has been its cross-disciplinarity, with advertisement having been directed towards researchers from all schools of the University. An initial survey resulted in already 19 researchers (14 at PhD level, the rest Post-docs) at 5 different schools. Data handling, manipulation, analysis and visualization are at the core of almost every scientific discipline.</p>
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15	Set out the project outcomes and benefits (including learning outcomes, and how all those involved will benefit - including project team members):	This project aims to establish a self-sustaining user group at the University of Sussex that hopefully continues to exist beyond the funding period. The granted funding would be used to kickstart and facilitate future meetings, and involve external expertise. By providing a common meeting space and opportunity for exchanging ideas and skills we hope to facilitate the exchange of knowledge which will help participants in advancing their doctoral studies. Ultimately, we hope to improve the capabilities and raise understanding of everyone involved including the project lead.
16	Describe how the success and impact of the activity will be evaluated:	The success of the meetings will be evaluated by mid-term questionnaires among users.

Section B: Budget and timeline

17	Provide an indicative budget, including a breakdown of costs e.g. external speakers; facilitators; travel; catering; support materials.	
17.1	1	
17.1.a	Item	Potential external speakers
17.1.b	£	500
17.2	2	
17.2.a	Item	Catering
17.2.b	£	250
17.3	3	
17.3.a	Item	Technical equipment
17.3.b	£	150
17.4	4	
17.4.a	Item	IT-related costs (Webspace, Domain)
17.4.b	£	75
17.5	5	
17.5.a	Item	Advertisement & printing costs
17.5.b	£	25

17.6	6	
17.6.a	Item	
17.6.b	£	
17.7	7	
17.7.a	Item	
17.7.b	£	
17.8	8	
17.8.a	Item	
17.8.b	£	
17.9	9	
17.9.a	Item	
17.9.b	£	
17.10	10	
17.10.a	Item	
17.10.b	£	

18	Total cost of initiative (£):	1000
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19	Total amount requested from the RLI fund (£):	1000
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20	Outline any other funds or resources committed to the activity by your School and elsewhere. Please indicate the type of commitment (e.g. funding, expertise, catering, physical space etc.):	No other funds or resources, except for the time commitment and data science expertise of the project lead and other group members. Physical space will be organised in collaboration with various schools of the University through members of the group.
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21	Include a timeline for the activity (including project start and end date, and key milestones):	The meetings will commence once funding and space have been secured. Meetings are planned to take place on a monthly basis (which may be modified depending on general interest) until the end of the academic year (31th August 2016). Milestones are 1) to set up and get started with the regular meetings, 2) and online forum for planning future meetings, 3) invitation of external speaker (to be determined), 4) evaluation and plans for a new round in the academic year 2016-17.
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Section C: Supporting statement

22 Please paste a supporting statement from your Director of Doctoral Studies below:

Supporting statement from the [REDACTED]

Dear Laura,

I am writing to lend my full support to the application of the group of doctoral students at the School of Life Sciences and beyond, who plan to establish an interdisciplinary user group for quantitative analysis at the University of Sussex. The proposed quantitative analysis group would bring together scholars from various schools to exchange ideas and skills about how to handle, manipulate, analyse and visualize data.

An initial survey for expression of interest already registered over 19 early career researchers across 5 different schools at the University of Sussex. The initial feedback indicated that many doctoral students were very keen on having meetings like this, which currently don't exist at the University or even school level.

The proposed meeting group would be organized collaboratively by all its members at least once per month and hopefully becomes a long-term establishment even beyond this study term. It offers the opportunity to form important professional and personal bonds between members and build up capacity in using quantitative analysis methods.

In order to kick-start such a meeting group the students have drafted up a budget, which they would like to use to both enhance content and interaction between members and promote the meeting group even further. They request a total amount of 1000£ to be spend until the end of next term.

I very much hope that the Researcher Led Initiative Fund will be able to finance this excellent idea.

Yours sincerely,
[REDACTED]

