White Rose Collaboration Fund: Information for Applicants 2020 – Autumn Round

Background

The White Rose University Consortium invites applications for projects to support and encourage emerging research collaborations across the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York. The objective of the Fund is to support research projects which have the potential to develop national and international linkages with the aim of these leading to larger more strategic initiatives.

The White Rose Executive Board regularly reviews the Funds progress and has recognised the value of these collaborations in supporting emerging activities by funding two calls per year. Applications are encouraged from staff in areas where there are no existing collaborations between the White Rose Universities. However this does not exclude existing areas of collaboration between the universities where support might lead to enhanced activity and significant funding opportunities. It is anticipated that 4 projects will be supported in this round. A summary of previously funded projects can be found on the White Rose website (http://www.whiterose.ac.uk/collaboration-fund/).

The Collaboration Fund is currently being reviewed and from 2021 the intention is to have a refreshed approach. More detail will follow in the Spring Round 2021.

Project support and reporting

- Successful projects will be allocated a Collaboration Development Manager from the White Rose team who will work with the collaboration to help achieve the project goals and to offer support in securing further funding.
- The collaboration will be given a project page on the White Rose website which can be used to highlight the activity being undertaken by the group.
- The project lead will be asked to provide short progress updates by email plus a final narrative report at 12 months (project end).
- A final expenditure report is submitted to White Rose at the close of the project.
- The award is made to the lead university and that institution is responsible for administering the project costs.
- The White Rose University Consortium should be acknowledged as the funder on project materials and the White Rose logo used, as appropriate.

Application criteria

The eligibility criteria are set out below:

- Applications **must** include participants from all three Universities.
- Each application **must** include a minimum of two members of staff (post doctoral researchers are eligible) per institution, with a lead member of academic staff identified at each University. The partners need to identify an agreed lead academic/University as having overall responsibility for the project.
- Each project should have a value of between £8-11k but applications up to a maximum of £15k will be accepted where the project activity demands this higher level of expenditure. Reasons for this higher budget must be set out clearly in the application: some examples could include equipment costs; technical testing; high level of consumables.

Assessment Criteria

Your Application will be assessed against the following:

Primary: 50% of total marks
Q2) The likely impact and outcomes of the project, including the potential to lead to a strategic research initiative and sustainability of the collaboration

Secondary: 50% of total marks
Q1) The clarity and relevance of the pr12oject aims and objectives, (including appropriateness of the budget)
Q3) Demonstrable added value of working collaboratively.
Q4) Opportunity for staff in their early career

Covid-19
We continue to accept applications and understand that Covid-19 will have an impact on project activities. Please plan your project within the current context of active Covid restrictions. We want to support researchers winning our grants in this challenging time and we are happy to discuss your application with you before submission. For this Round, we anticipate that projects will start between March and July 2021. We advise that you plan for face to face workshops and events from June 2021 and we will work with you as the situation changes. This includes treating the 12 month project timeline with flexibility to ensure that project activities and outputs can be delivered.

Guidance Criteria

- All applications must be either in an area of demonstrable research funding opportunity which applicants should evidence in their submission (eg by reference to the strategic priorities of research funders and any upcoming calls), or should be in an emerging area of research which applicants can demonstrate will be strategically important in the near future. Reference to your institution's strategic priorities should also be highlighted, where appropriate.
- Applications that have a strong focus on teaching and learning, outreach or engagement activities are not appropriate for this funding stream unless there is a clear outcome pathway to external funding opportunities or further research-based collaborative activity.
- Set out clearly the Aim of your project. Provide Objectives that the project intends to achieve. Describe all the project activities that will be undertaken, bearing in mind the need for collaborative activities.
- The project budget should be aligned to the project activities as described in Q1.
- The project proposals should include information on how the success of the project will be measured and what will be the short, medium and long term outputs.
- Describe the potential impact of the project and include how the outputs will be used to secure sustainability for the project, and what outcomes they may lead to.
- Applicants will be required to demonstrate how working collaboratively across the three Universities will add significant value. Be clear how this seed funding will be used to encourage and promote research collaboration.
- Applications are particularly encouraged from projects which include Early Career Researchers (ECRs). You should provide a clear case as to how the ECRs will benefit from participation in the project.
- Applications **exceeding the word count** limits will be **rejected**.

- Do not attach any additional documentation as this will not form part of the assessment process. **If references or footnotes are included they will form part of the overall wordcount of that section**. Using too many references will impact on the quality of your answer due to the strict wordcount.

Budget criteria

- Each application should describe the allocation of funds for their project with a total value of between £8-11k and up to £15k where this additional expenditure is justified.
- Collaboration Fund projects should use the funding within a 12 month period following award.
- A project inception event at the start of the project is often a good way to kickstart the activity. You may use up to £2K of the funds to cover the costs of this event (eg accommodation, facilitation, travel, external expert involvement etc).
- In principle, the budget should be spent within the 3 White Rose institutions in order to support the collaborative activities. However, participation by partners beyond the 3 White Rose institutions is eligible and should be justified within the bid. External partners can have their travel and subsistence costs paid for, as set out in the project costs.
- International travel by project participants is ineligible.
- Travel and subsistence for overseas partners or speakers to join seminars and workshops is an acceptable cost provided their contribution is qualified in the bid proposal and quantified in the project costs.
- Eligible costs are those directly incurred on project activities. Indirect costs are ineligible.
- All costs should be proportionate and justified within the application.
- No payment will be made for academic staff time as the Collaboration Fund is internal pump priming money and not external funding. All those named in the staff section of the application form will be considered 'academic staff'. This includes those working on research funded projects and time limited research contracts eg Fellows, Post-Docs, Research Assistants etc. Please check with Claire Pickerden or Karen Tsui if you have queries about eligibility.
- Administrative and technical support may be included but should be at an appropriate budget percentage for the achievement of the project activities. If your project requires high support costs (more than 30% of your budget), then you should make a strong and clear case for this level of expenditure eg large scale data analysis. It is **strongly advised** that you speak to Claire Pickerden or Karen Tsui if this is the case for your project.
- Equipment or consumable costs are eligible but should be appropriate to support the collaborative activities. If your project requires high equipment or consumable costs (more than 30% of your budget), then you should make a strong and clear case for this level of expenditure. For projects bidding up to £15k, this guideline may well be exceeded but the level of expenditure must remain appropriate to achieve the project aims. It is **strongly advised** that you speak to Claire Pickerden or Karen Tsui if this is the case for your project.
- Dissemination costs are eligible but should be proportionate and justified within the application, and not just included as a figure in the budget section.
- Contingency costs cannot be included.
- When presenting your budget, provide sub-totals to aid understanding, as required.
- Travel and subsistence costs should abide by the institutional guidelines at the three White Rose institutions.

Application process

Applicants should complete the application form, available from the White Rose [website](#) and submit electronically to Claire Pickerden by **1200** on **Thursday 28 January 2021**.

Support for Developing White Rose Collaborations

The White Rose Team are here to support new collaborations across the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York, across all Faculties and subject areas.

We are happy to discuss any of the following:

1) draft applications before submission; this includes discussion on how to incorporate the potential impact of Covid-19;
2) new ideas and emerging projects that may not be ready for this current round eg finding contacts to create the project team, scoping out your project idea etc;
3) potential for collaboration beyond the scope of this Fund eg developing large scale collaborative funding bids;
4) other collaborative ideas that may not have a specific research focus but involve collaboration in other areas such as teaching and learning, outreach, public engagement, knowledge exchange etc.

If you have any enquiries regarding this scheme please contact Claire Pickerden (who runs the Collaboration Fund scheme) at c.pickerden@whiterose.ac.uk Tel: 07780 905748

or Karen Tsui, k.tsui@whiterose.ac.uk Tel: 07880 182777.

FAQs

Do you need all 3 universities for a bid?
Yes, it is essential that all three partner universities are in the bid.

Do you need 2 people from each university?
Yes, this is a minimum requirement. It is OK to include more than this.

Can additional partner organisations be part of a project? For example, could a 4th university be part of a project?
You may add additional partner organisations if this strengthens the project. One condition is that the project money is specifically for the Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York, and so the additional partner organisation(s) should not receive money from the project. Travel costs to project meetings and events are eligible. You are also welcome to include industry partners along the same lines.

Can I use the award for a teaching and learning or outreach project?
The Fund is based on building research capacity and promoting collaborative research activities. As such, it is unlikely that teaching activities or outreach projects would fulfil these criteria. However, if the activity leads to an opportunity to secure research funding or is of strategic interest to research funders, then it could be eligible. In these circumstances, please contact either Claire Pickerden or Karen Tsui, White Rose Collaboration Development Managers, to discuss. (Also see: Support for Developing White Rose Collaborations, above).

How is the award made?
The award is made to the lead university who then administers the award. This is done between the universities. We at White Rose do not organise or manage these transfers, but do ask that a record is kept which can then be submitted with the final report.

In terms of outputs, what is meant by short, medium and long term?
Your intended outputs will be those used to measure the success of your project. In terms of timelines, we use the following definitions:
Short – during the project
Medium – towards the end of the project
Long – following completion

Can I pay for academic staff time?
Academic staff time is **not** an eligible cost. Anyone named in the Lead Academic(s) or Other Staff sections on the Application Form will be considered as academic staff. This includes those staff who are on funded research projects or time limited research contracts eg Fellows, Post-Docs, Research Assistants etc.

Technical or administrative expenditure may be considered but must be justified in terms of necessary costs for the implementation of the project. Employing PhD students in this role is acceptable.

Can I pay for external partner time?
Use of consultants and other external partner specialists is only encouraged if the requisite expertise is not available amongst the 3 White Rose universities and evidence is provided to this effect.

What is an early career researcher?
We would usually class an early career researcher (ECR) as being:
• within eight years of the award of their PhD or equivalent professional training (this duration should exclude any period of career break, for example, family care or health reasons)
Or
• within six years of their first academic appointment (by 'first academic appointment', this is a paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, which lists research and/or teaching as the primary function).

Note: we advise people that the fund is designed to include opportunities for early career researchers, so while they don't have to lead the bid, there must be a clear case as to how early career researchers will benefit from the collaboration.

Any early career researcher with significant engagement in the project must have a contract of employment (fixed or permanent) for the entire project period ie a minimum 12 months from project start date.

Who makes the decision on what to fund?
The Pro-Vice Chancellors for Research & Innovation (or equivalent) make the decision. Hence, bids should be written for an intelligent, but not subject specialist audience.

Can I spend the award on foreign travel?
The money can be spent on paying for overseas speakers to attend your event etc, but it cannot be spent for you or your project to travel aboard or for overseas conference fees.