

Research Culture Fund 2023/24 Guidance Notes

PLEASE NOTE: This initiative is intended to develop research culture through developing your skills for career development, and developing a stronger connection with your research community. The aim is to develop the wider research culture at the University. This funding is **NOT** designed for funding research projects directly.

1. About the Research Culture Fund Competition

The Research Culture Fund (previously called the Researcher Development Fund) Competition offers awards of **up to £1,500** to support researchers who are pro-actively identifying their own development needs and that of the research community and culture. Please note that the primary aim of this fund is to develop researchers, rather than research activities.

One of the main reasons for funding not being awarded in previous years is that funding applications did not explicitly draw out how researchers will benefit from the activity. This means that it is important to not only draw out the benefits for the researchers who are making the application, but also the intended participants of the project being applied for. Improving research culture should be at the heart of the application.

Funding is available for initiatives which support personal, professional and career development for researchers. Awards are intended to enable doctoral students and early career research staff to initiate, design, manage and deliver new professional development activities for their peers which will in turn develop the skills and experience needed to progress their own careers. Initiatives aimed at cohort building and building community are actively encouraged.

Examples include:

- Creating a Research Seminar Series
- Developing a writing group or other development group, which prioritise creating community
- Holding a short symposium on a particular research method or research area
- Creating resources (for example videos, study guides, webpages) that support research skill development

The awards will support short-term, well-defined initiatives that develop and deliver transferable skills, training experiences and/or resources to the applicants' peers across departments. Collaborative applications are encouraged. Examples of previous funded projects are on the [RIE Blog](#). To understand the kinds of skills and attributes that this funding is aimed at supporting and developing, please refer to the [Vitae Researcher Development Statement](#) which is a national document derived from the Researcher Development Framework. It is endorsed by all UK Research Councils and other major funding bodies.

Timeline

Tuesday 28th November 2023 – Competition opens for applications

Friday 19th January 2024 – Deadline for applications

w/c 6th February 2024 – Successful candidates will be notified

6th February 2024 – 31 July 2024 – Carry out projects / initiatives

31 July 2024 – Deadline for completing spend for projects / initiatives

2. Benefits of application

Applying for the Research Culture Fund brings with it several benefits in personal, professional and career development, in line with Vitae's Researcher development framework.

Personal development (B1): Having a side project can help maintain and reignite motivation for your own research, can improve your self-confidence, helps with self-reflection including seeking feedback and learning from mistakes as well as taking responsibility for your own projects.

Professional development (C3): Applying for this funding helps you to understand the process for funding and evaluation of research. This Research Culture Fund qualifies as applying for small grants. Writing this application will enrich your writing skills.

Career development (B3): Successful grant funding is beneficial in many careers, especially for academic careers. The experience of applying for this Research Culture Fund will be beneficial for future grant applications. Applications which are collaborative in nature in working with others are considered in a positive light. Collaborative projects enable the development and maintenance of co-operative networks and working relationships with members of the research community.

3. Eligibility

Applicants must be:

- Registered on a Doctoral Degree at Edinburgh Napier University

OR

- Post-doctoral researchers who hold a current contract of employment at Edinburgh Napier University.

OR

- Hold a current contract of employment as a member of academic staff at Edinburgh Napier University at Lecturer level.

4. Application Criteria

- You must be able to manage your normal study/research/workload when undertaking the additional activity for which you have applied.
- If successful, you will be required to write a report and contribute to the RIE blog at the end of the project. The report should detail where possible the impact of the event together with your experiences of managing the project, and successful applicants will receive a template for this.
- **All events and spending must be completed by 31st July 2024.** No funds will be available for events held or spending submitted after that date. This is due to the University's financial year structure and is not flexible or negotiable.
- The application must be signed off by the immediate Supervisor/PI/Line Manager.
- An individual may lead on only one application; however, they may also take part in a consortium/joint application (but should not be the named lead).

5. Application Process

We welcome applications from doctoral and early career academics of all backgrounds. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you require any special provisions in order to make an application.

Completed application forms should be emailed to the Researcher Development team at RIEvents@napier.ac.uk, by 12pm on Friday 19th January 2024.

6. Selection Process

Applications will be assessed by a panel chaired by the University's Head of Researcher Development and will include the Convenor of the Research Degree Committee and relevant academics.

The Panel reserves the right to consider the distribution of the Research Culture Fund across the University. The Panel also reserves the right to offer partial funding for applications. Applicants may be asked for further information, or to amend their application. The decision of the panel is final. However, you are encouraged to seek feedback on your application.

The panel's decision will be based on the following criteria:

- 1) Value for money
 - Is the requested resource justified?
 - Will the money directly develop the research culture of the University?
- 2) Realistic and Manageable
 - Are the aims of the project achievable in the time frames outlined?
 - Is the activity appropriate?
- 3) Aligns with Strategy
 - How well is the case made for developing the research culture of the University?
 - Will the project help achieve University/School Objectives?

7. Further Information

Estimating costs

As a guide for [costing your catering](#), please note the following costs available at Edinburgh Napier University. Catering costs which appear differently in your application will need to be explained.

Sandwich lunch	£7.95 per person
Tea, coffee & biscuits (Beverage Tray 2)	£2 per person
Jug of tap water for 8	£2

For external speakers, honorariums should be no more than £500. Half-day contribution would be £250 and full-day would be £500. Benefits to Edinburgh Napier University researchers of such a visit by an external speaker must be clearly detailed. In other words, external speakers sharing research through a keynote speech would be insufficient for this funding. **It is expected that external**

speakers would also offer dedicated formal 1-2 hour session for PGR and ECR researchers e.g. a careers-focused session, skills sessions, writing for publication, sharing their own personal career journey etc.

External speakers must be identified with web links so that the panel can evaluate the proposal.

If you would like to recruit a PhD or other postgraduate researcher to assist with your Research Culture project, please include your budget their time based on the Student Experience Contract, paid at Point 29, Grade 5, currently £19.79 per hour.

Examples of successful applications

Three previous successful applications—[Sibylle Ratz](#), [Lucy Johnston](#), and [David Hamilton](#)—have all kindly consented to having their applications shared. Please click on each person’s name to open up that individual’s application. We hope these will be helpful in preparing your own application.

8. Checklist for applications

1. Have you articulated the benefits of developing this proposal in terms of the applicant’s/applicants’ development?
2. Have you articulated the benefits for the development of researchers in your school/area of interest/university?
3. Have you identified how aspects of the Researcher Development Framework can be applied in relation to your specific project? (i.e. don’t just copy and paste!)

For further information and questions, please contact the Researcher Development team at RIEvents@napier.ac.uk.