To Chairs and Heads in HSS
From Professor Phil Allmendinger, Head of School
Date 8 February 2017
Copy to HSS Administrators
HSS Research Grants Administrators
HSS Secretariat
Subject HSS Research Support Fund – second call
[Deadline 17 March 2017]

The School Research Support Fund [2016-19] was created to support the School research strategy (attached for reference overleaf). Its main objective is to enable development of large-scale interdisciplinary research projects led by Cambridge PIs, and to support associated large grant applications. ‘Large-scale’ is taken to indicate interdisciplinary activities that have the potential to be nationally or internationally-leading, and capable of self-sustained existence through grant income.

The Fund is distinct from other sources of internal funding such as the Cambridge Humanities Research Grants Scheme [CHRG], which is an essential resource for individual PIs in supporting initial exchange activity, proof-of-concept projects and support for dissemination and outreach. The CHRG can also support research assistance throughout the lifetime of a project. It is not expected that PIs will simultaneously hold awards from the CHRG and the School Research Support Fund.

The Fund is also distinct from the School’s New Initiatives project, currently under review by the Council of the School. The New Initiatives project will not provide direct support for research.

A series of projects were supported in Round 1 of the current phase of the Fund. Proposals are now invited for a second round of funding; approximately £100k is available to support activities meeting the criteria below.

The Fund will operate in responsive mode; PIs are invited now to formulate proposals for consideration by the School Research Committee in the Easter Term 2017; it is anticipated that a small number of projects will be funded, to commence on or after 10 May 2017.

Criteria

The main criterion for funding will be capacity to enable development of large-scale multidisciplinary research networks and projects. These should be at least national and ideally international in scope. Collaborative proposals, with multiple Cambridge partners, are likely to be well-received; PIs applying as individuals should be able to demonstrate the existence of an active network ready to move to the next level.

Research assistance may be sought, but should be demonstrably a direct need for development of the network overall, and/or the preparation of application(s) for large-grant funding.
Proposals are encouraged in particular around the following strategies:

- Co-ordination costs to support the preparation of large grant applications [e.g. research assistance or other support for formation of specific proposals]
- Supporting interdisciplinary networks in the formation of large grants and centres

**Process**

A proforma is attached for completion and return please. Proposals should address the following criteria:

i. Intellectual purpose and justification
ii. Potential for long-term viability/added value
iii. Alignment with School research strategy
iv. Capacity for leveraging external funding
v. Potential for impact

There should be a clear strategic plan and research coordination between the different parties involved.

Applications should be led by a PI holding UTO status (University Lecturer or above) and should have explicit approval from the relevant Head(s) of Department. Collaborators should be named and their roles clearly explained to demonstrate interdisciplinary reach of the proposal.

Applications for teaching buyout are not excluded, but are unlikely to be highest priority.

**Funding**

The Fund will support specific direct costs necessary to achieve proposal objectives. Conference costs will not normally be supported. Proposals securing promise of match-funding will be at a distinct advantage. Please consult the following summary of funding schemes which could, potentially, provide either match- or follow-on funding for proposals; [https://www.ahssresearch.group.cam.ac.uk/res-fund-opps](https://www.ahssresearch.group.cam.ac.uk/res-fund-opps)

**Timeline**

Proposals are invited using the attached proforma, to reach the School Office no later than close of business on Friday 17 March 2017. Please send documentation to grantsahss@admin.cam.ac.uk

The School Research Facilitators are available to assist with preparation of proposals and for advice on the Fund. Please contact Daniel.Wunderlich@admin.cam.ac.uk or Andrea.Salter@admin.cam.ac.uk.

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1 Postdocs are not eligible to apply for their own support via this scheme, but PIs are encouraged to formulate proposals that will have benefits for early career researchers.
University of Cambridge

School of the Humanities and Social Sciences: Research Strategy

1. Key strategic priorities
   - Contribute to research excellence through diverse range of research projects, arising organically from research strengths of individual researchers
   - Develop senior research leadership in the social sciences
   - Nurture future research leaders
   - Promote societal impact of the School’s research, in varied forms
   - Create a productive and supportive research environment, including research
     o facilitation, accommodation and mentoring
   - Prepare on an ongoing basis for research assessment

2. Responsibilities of Faculties and Departments
   - Recruitment and resourcing – maintain critical mass, innovate where needed
   - Mentoring of early career staff/ regular review of staff research plans
   - Departmental incentives and priorities
   - Support for quality grantmaking
   - Research-driven teaching, including an effective balance between teaching and research duties for the faculty.

3. School support for research
   - Continue to invest in CHRG in its current form with emphasis on international exchange
   - Manage sufficient space to meet anticipated growth in empirical research
   - Targeting of philanthropic support, especially:
   - Postdoctoral research appointments
   - Interdisciplinary research projects
   - Outreach and impact
   - Networking and collaboration
   - Continued support for ESRC IAA
   - School research team – facilitators, ROO and Research Grants team

4. Development of early career researchers
   Investment in development schemes e.g. Future Research Leaders School wide mentoring scheme
   Other steps arising from consultation 2015
5. **Collaboration and engagement**

- Continued support and facilitation from CRASSH
- Via Research Committee, identify and nurture networks
- Identify means to increase engagement with SRI and SRN, including:
  - Co-funding
  - Co-option to Research Committee
  - Emphasise opportunities for convening e.g. Philomathia Forum

6. **Thematic priorities**

Promote projects and networks in the following areas (no order of priority):

- Public Policy
- Global Diversities
- Material Culture
- Health, Medicine and Society
- Digital Society
- Big Data

Last updated: 20 January 2016