

INTRODUCTION

1. Research Councils UK (RCUK) is committed to engaging members of the public with research and places an expectation¹ on the recipients of its research funding for them to engage actively with members of the public about their research and its implications. RCUK believe that public engagement with research can improve the quality of research and its impact, by widening research horizons and increasing its relevance to society².
2. There is a wealth of excellent public engagement practice within and beyond the Higher Education (HE) and research sectors³. However, RCUK recognises that further support to embed public engagement within the sector is required to create a culture that values, recognises and supports public engagement with research. Embedding public engagement with research within the HE sector has been, and remains, a priority of the RCUK Public Engagement with Research (PER) strategy⁴.
3. Through the RCUK Catalyst Seed Fund (CSF), RCUK is keen to build on the momentum generated from the investment in the Beacons for Public Engagement⁵ (ended December 2011) and the RCUK PER Catalysts⁶ (ending March 2015) and support a new cohort of HEIs. Successes of these past initiatives have included recognising public engagement with research through awards, embedding public engagement within strategic goals, planning cycles, recruitment and promotion criteria, the inclusion of public engagement with research in the responsibilities of senior managers, a better understanding of how researchers are working with different publics, building capacity through networks, professional development and partnership working and resource creation. As a result researchers and staff have felt more motivated and supported to undertake public engagement with research and rewarded for their successes⁷.
4. This institutional-level funding complements the support provided to researchers via the project and grant based approach of individual Research Councils and RCUK PER programmes, as well as policy mechanisms such as the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research⁸, the UK Charter for Science and Society⁹ and the Manifesto for Public Engagement¹⁰. The inclusion of public engagement within Research Councils

¹ RCUK Expectations for Societal and Economic Impact <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/innovation/expectationssei.pdf>

² What's in it for me? The benefits of public engagement for researchers: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/researchers/initforme/>

³ Engage Competition 2014 finalist brochure: <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/work-with-us/engage-competition-2014>

⁴ RCUK Public Engagement with Research strategy <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/public-engagement-with-research-strategy/>

⁵ Beacons for Public Engagement <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/beacons/>

⁶ Public Engagement with Research Catalysts <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/catalysts/>

⁷ People Science and Policy (2010) <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/scisoc/BeaconsEvaluationReviewFinalReport.pdf>

⁸ Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/Concordat/>

⁹ BIS Science and Society Charter <https://scienceandsociety.blog.gov.uk/uk-charter-for-society/>

¹⁰ Manifesto for Public Engagement <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/manifesto-public-engagement>

'Pathways to Impact'¹¹ and the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) Research Excellence Framework (REF)¹² also provide drivers to encourage HEIs to value, recognise and support public engagement with research.

THE PROGRAMME

5. The RCUK Catalyst Seed Fund (CSF) will provide flexible funding directly to the HEI to help create a culture where excellent public engagement with research is better embedded within the HEI and appropriately included within its policies, procedures and practices. HEIs are expected to take an integrated approach which operates across the breadth of their institution and extends to all research disciplines.
6. In the context of a one year spending review period, the programme will provide funds of £65,000 (for 12 months) to each of 10 designated HEIs following assessment of business plans. To receive funding, eligible HEIs will be required to submit a business plan on the template provided. Business plans will be assessed by the RCUK Public Engagement with Research Team.
7. The aim of the CSF is to create a culture within the HEI where excellent public engagement with research is better embedded. Specifically to develop a strategic approach where public engagement with research is:
 - Supported, valued, and rewarded; and
 - Integrated within policies, practices and procedures.
8. This funding is for HEIs to take stock of their institutional support for public engagement with research, forward planning and where they can quickly and efficiently target to make a significant difference in catalysing culture change. The funding should be used to:
 - Take stock of your Institutions support for public engagement using the NCCPE's self-assessment EDGE tool¹³ and appropriate base line surveys (this will include looking at senior level commitment and engagement with PER principles).
 - Start to create a shared understanding of the purpose, value, meaning and role of public engagement to staff and students within your organisation.
 - Develop a longer-term strategic approach and forward plans to embed public engagement with research across the institution within strategies, policies, structures and processes.
 - Secure high level leadership and buy-in in the form of a senior champion (or champions) for public engagement with research, whom is able to drive strategic and operational change.
 - Implement any areas you can quickly and efficiently target action to make a significant and longer-term difference in embedding public engagement with research within your institution.

¹¹ RCUK Pathways to Impact <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/ke/impacts/>

¹² HEFCE Research Excellence Framework <http://www.ref.ac.uk/>

¹³ EDGE tool <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/support-it/self-assessment/edge-tool>

- Consider how you will develop the public engagement capacity and capabilities of your researchers through support, training and development.
 - Build on the HEIs strengths in public engagement and complement other sources of support (e.g. Impact Acceleration Accounts, Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) and the Wellcome Trust's Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF).
 - Take on board the learning from the Beacons for Public Engagement, PER Catalysts and the NCCPE in developing best practice to realise culture change.
9. RCUK recognise that HEIs will be at different stages in terms of the extent to which public engagement is currently embedded, and face challenges and opportunities unique to their institution. HEIs should therefore consider how they can use this funding as a catalyst for culture change by strategically thinking about their own expertise and activities in public engagement with research and their institutional infrastructures and cultures. We anticipate that learning from the Beacons and Catalysts as showcased by the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE)¹⁴ will be of value both in terms of the development and implementation of CSF business plans.
10. RCUK is aware that culture change takes time and is realistic regarding what can be achieved within 12 months. RCUK acknowledges that HEIs will not be able to transform the culture of their institution within this funding period, but is looking for applicants to demonstrate progress and commitment towards the aims of the CSF and a rationale behind the approach they take and where they focus their efforts. The CSF funding is intended to be flexible, allowing applicants to consider which culture change approach and activities would be most appropriate for their institution.
11. HEIs are expected to demonstrate that further change and commitment to embedding public engagement with research, will continue beyond the funding period, across the institution.
12. Applicants should note that RCUK CSF is NOT intended to be used to support public engagement activities such as paying for events or public facing activities which would quickly eat into the available funding. However, RCUK recognise that a critical pathway to embedding culture change is to provide researchers with opportunities to practice their public engagement. Therefore a small proportion of the RCUK funding (maximum 20%) can be used to provide small scale seed funding to support individual researchers in engaging the public with their research where there is justification that this will provide a vital platform to mobilise culture change.
13. Further guidance is provided in *Annex A*.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT WITH RESEARCH

14. Business plans must be focused primarily to support public engagement *with research*. However, RCUK recognise that public engagement with research is likely in some cases to be difficult to separate from the broader public engagement within an institution when looking at policies and processes.

¹⁴ National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement <http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/>

15. For the purposes of this call the term ‘public engagement with research’ is defined as: “any activity that engages members of the public with research, from engagement in museums, science centres or festivals, to consultation, to public dialogue. Any good engagement activity should involve two-way aspects of listening and interaction”. This does not include activities where the primary purpose is to generate approval or acceptance of the institution or work that is designed specifically to increase student applications to the host institution.
16. The term ‘public’ includes individuals, groups, young people and their families who do not currently have a formal relationship with a HEI through teaching, research or knowledge transfer, but who may have an interest in these activities or upon whom the research or its application could impact.
17. RCUK have separate funding schemes for business and policy engagement and therefore these are not the intended audience for this call.

ELIGIBILITY

18. The CSF is open to HEIs named on the attached list only. Research Council institutes, and HEIs that were either part of the Beacon for Public Engagement partnership or have received previous PER Catalyst Funding, are not eligible. The CSF is open only to the top funded HEIs as determined by total value of RC standard grants, once ineligible institutions have been removed. RCUK will fund ten awards.
19. Alphabetical list of HEIs which meet the above eligibility criteria:
 - University of Birmingham
 - University of Cambridge
 - University of Glasgow
 - Imperial College London
 - King’s College London
 - University of Leeds
 - University of Liverpool
 - University of Oxford
 - University of Southampton
 - University of Warwick
20. RCUK is restricting the number of eligible organisations to effectively manage the budget and resource available. Eligibility is based on receiving substantial RC grant support, which forms the basis for engaging the public with RCUK funded research.
21. Institutions should be aware that further funding is not guaranteed should there be a further three-year PER Catalyst programme announced in 2016/17 or beyond.

THE AWARD

22. Successful applicants will receive £65,000 (non-fEC) to deliver activities that will meet the objectives as described in the business case. Successful award holders will be required to start activities by 1st September 2015. All activities should be complete by 31st August 2016 and a final report submitted by 1st November 2016. The report (template will be supplied) should detail how the applicants have delivered against the objectives set out in the business plan.
23. To demonstrate institutional commitment to this agenda RCUK would strongly encourage applicants to include matched funding (or in kind-support to an equivalent value) from the institution.
24. Applicants should also include details about how this funding will maximise investment and strategically complement other existing funding sources where relevant e.g. Impact Acceleration Accounts, HEIF and the Wellcome Trust's ISSF.

COORDINATION

25. RCUK expect applicants to contribute to a wider network supportive of public engagement with research including the NCCPE, other recipient HEIs and the wider HE community.
26. The PER Catalysts have found attending quarterly meetings with other Catalyst HEIs and the NCCPE to be extremely valuable in supporting them to achieve culture change within their own institutions. These meetings have facilitated collaboration and maximised learning between the projects, through providing an opportunity to share approaches and resources.
27. Applicants should include a budget for travel and subsistence to attend up to three national network meetings and at least three visits to other HEIs or conferences/workshops. This can be in addition to any business plan specific travel and subsistence costings.

KEY PERSONEL

28. Institutions will need to identify a Principal Investigator and a Project Manager within their business case.
29. Principal Investigators must be academic employees of an eligible organisation and must be resident in the UK. It is expected that Principal Investigators will hold appropriate senior management positions (such as pro-Vice Chancellor for Research) within the university to allow them to champion and drive strategic and operational change.
30. The project manager will lead the project at an operational level and be the day to day contact e.g. Head of Public Engagement with Research.

BUSINESS PLAN

31. Business plans should be completed using the attached template. These should also include a letter of support from the head of the institution highlighting evidence of high-level and cross-institution commitment to the aims of the initiative, and any additional internal funding secured for the project.
32. Business plans and letter of support must be submitted to Ruth Williams (ruth.williams@rcuk.ac.uk) in a single pdf by 12th May 2015. Business plans will be assessed by the RCUK Public Engagement with Research Team to ensure the required information has been provided, that plans meet the aims of the CSF (as outlined in paragraph 7), that the use of funds is appropriate (as per paragraph 8) and that the call guidance outlined in this document is adhered to. Successful applicants will be notified in July 2015.
33. Eligible organisations can contact Ruth Williams (ruth.williams@rcuk.ac.uk) for more information on this programme. Eligible organisations which do not wish to apply for this funding should contact Ruth Williams at the earliest opportunity.

ANNEX A

Applicants are encouraged to use the EDGE tool to help them think about how to create a culture where excellent public engagement with research is better embedded within the HEI.

Institutions should consider the following approaches to creating culture change:

- Strategic commitment to public engagement with research and a clear and shared understanding of the purpose, value, meaning and role of public engagement with research which is embedded within the mission and key strategies of the institution. Particularly so that it is embedded alongside research.
- Active involvement and engagement of staff and students in the development and implementation of strategies so that there is collective as well as individual ownership and responsibility,
- Integration of public engagement with research into core activities and ensure it is embedded within strategies, policies, structures and processes across the institution, using the principles of the Concordat for the Engaging the Public with Research and resources hosted by the NCCPE.
- Reward and recognition of researchers and staff at all levels involved in public engagement with research and reflected within academic promotion criteria, recruitment and academic workload planning cycles.
- Develop the public engagement capabilities of researchers by providing access to training, resource, support and encouragement for staff and researchers, and create networks within the institution to share and celebrate good practice.
- Enhance and extend excellent public engagement with research activities without duplicating provision supported under other schemes,
- Strengthen governance for public engagement with research as part of wider institutional goals and institution wide policies and practices (e.g. included within the remit of appropriate senior management) and ensure the approach is linked and integrated within faculties/departments/schools and research institutes.
- Appointment of a strategic champion working at a high level with senior management support and links across the institution. This high profile individual would be tasked with advocating and embedding public engagement with research (using the principles of the Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research) and also supporting researchers to engage within and across their university. This would allow the individual to provide a link between strategy and operations to embed and coordinate support and recognition for public engagement with research across the institution.
- Secure time commitment from stakeholders across the institution, including senior managers, research managers, Heads of Faculties/Departments/Schools/Research Institutes, professional services, external relations, marketing and communications over the life of the project,
- Deliver an effective communications plan to communicate consistent, clear messages to validate, support and celebrate public engagement with research across the institution.
- Commitment to organisational learning by measuring and evaluating progress and the quality and impact of public engagement with research activities. This should include identifying success indicators at the start of the project and being responsive to formative evaluation.
- Co-operation and collaboration with external partners including other HEIs, the NCCPE, community and cultural groups and public engagement organisations to embed public engagement with research, and to share learning and disseminate best practice.