

Public Engagement Fund scheme notes

Deadline: 12 November 2025 at 12pm

This document contains important information about the Public Engagement Fund. Please read it carefully before submitting your application.

This guidance includes:

- 1. What is this funding scheme?**
- 2. Who is eligible?**
- 3. How applications are judged**
- 4. Completing your application**
- 5. Information on next steps**
- 6. Application guidance notes**

We encourage all applicants to get in touch to discuss their ideas before submitting an application and members of the Public Engagement team are available for phone or video consultations at any point during the application process. We would also encourage you to use your institution's public engagement expertise when drafting your application.

If you have applied for the scheme previously and been unsuccessful, please do get in touch with us before you submit a new application.

If you have any queries about the scheme or would like to discuss your application, please get in touch: public.engagement@royalsociety.org.

1. What is the funding scheme?

The Public Engagement Fund provides between £500 and £10,000 for Royal Society-funded researchers to create and lead public engagement projects based on their research. The minimum amount of funding you can apply for is £500 and the maximum amount is £10,000 over two years. Up to £5,000 can be requested for a one-year project.

The scheme is designed to support you to undertake a public engagement project based on your research, and to increase your knowledge, skills and confidence in sharing your research with different audiences.

All funded projects should:

- be based on Royal Society-funded research
- be designed for a non-scientific public audience
- involve scientists interacting with a public group outside their institution
- target specific audiences based on the aims and rationale of the project
- provide opportunities for open dialogue and two-way communication between researchers and the target audience
- aim to produce benefits for the public, the researcher, and any partners or collaborators

Please note, projects being delivered outside the UK are eligible but must show clear impact and strong links to UK research and audiences.

We are particularly interested in projects that:

- reach people that are currently underrepresented in the Society's public engagement work, including, but not limited to:
 - those without a science degree
 - those from geographically remote locations
 - those from culturally and demographically diverse backgrounds
- facilitate collaboration between science and the arts, including partnership with creative arts organisations or professionals
- involve collaboration partners or community organisations that can enhance the project's outcomes, impact or quality
- involve elements of co-creation

Projects must begin on or before 30 June 2026 and all funded activity, not including evaluation and reporting, must be completed by 31 March 2028.

As a part of the funding, you will be required to submit an end of project evaluation report, due three months after the conclusion of your project.

We will endeavour to inform applicants of the funding decision before the end of February 2026.

Things to consider:

- If your project involves working with a museum, we recommend reviewing the scheme notes and guidance for the [Places of science](#) scheme which may be a route to secure additional funding for a museum partner.
- If you are considering [applying to exhibit at the Summer Science Exhibition](#) in 2026 or 2027 (either as a main exhibit or as part of the additional programme), you may apply for this funding to support your exhibit design and delivery costs. Please note that the deadline for the [2026 call for proposals](#) is 8 October 2025; the call for 2027 exhibits will open in August 2026.
- We welcome applications for projects involving young people and school groups, but recommend reviewing the scheme notes and guidance for the [Partnership Grants](#) scheme, which may be more suitable. Additionally, Partnership Seed Grants support individuals and organisations to foster collaborations between UK schools and STEM professionals through small-scale, hands-on investigative projects, aiming to particularly support schools in underserved areas. To find out more contact education@royalsociety.org.

2. Who is eligible?

The applicant must be a current Royal Society University Research Fellow, Dorothy Hodgkin Fellow, Career Development Fellow or Newton International Fellow who completed the first year of their fellowship on or before 31 October 2025.

3. How applications are judged

The assessment panel will judge the applications using the following criteria:

- **Relevance and suitability (40%)**
The extent to which the project meets the scheme's criteria.

- **Impact and significance (40%)**
The potential effect of the project on the researcher, audience and any partners involved.
- **Planning and evaluation (20%)**
The coherence and feasibility of the proposed timeline, budget and evaluation plan.

The panel, comprising of public engagement professionals and scientists, will aim, where possible, to select a demographically, geographically and scientifically diverse range of projects.

4. Completing your application

All applications must be submitted via the Flexi-Grant system. Below you can see the questions that will be asked and guidance on how to approach them.

If you have queries or would like any advice on your application, please contact the Public Engagement team at public.engagement@royalsociety.org. We encourage all applicants to get in touch to discuss their ideas before submitting an application and members of the Public Engagement team are available for phone or video consultations at any point during the application process.

Using Flexi-Grant®

Applications can only be submitted online using the Royal Society's Grants and Awards management system (Flexi-Grant®) via grants.royalsociety.org. Support, FAQs and troubleshooting can be found via [The Royal Society online Grants Management System – Flexi-Grant® | Royal Society](#). If you have not previously used Flexi-Grant®, please follow the registration process from the Flexi-Grant®, homepage. **Paper-based applications will not be accepted.**

Before completing the online form, all applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements and ensure all necessary information is presented in the application. These requirements are strictly adhered to and applications without all the necessary information will be rejected.

Use of Application Data

If successful, the Royal Society will contact you regarding the administration of your award throughout the course of your funding and after its completion. You may also be contacted by the Royal Society for reporting and evaluation purposes throughout the course of your funding and after its completion.

5. Information on next steps

Following the close of entries, applications are sent to the Public Engagement Fund Allocation Panel, who solely make grant decisions. Please note that funding decisions will be made in January and the earliest you are likely to receive a grant is April 2026.

We will endeavour to inform applicants of the funding decision before the end of February 2026.

If you are successful, you and your organisation will need to accept the offer via the Flexi-Grant system.

If you have queries in the meantime, please contact the Public Engagement Team at public.engagement@royalsociety.org.

6. Application guidance notes

The application form divided into the below sections, all of which need to be complete in full before you will be able to submit your proposal.

We suggest you prepare your application offline, before submitting it via the FlexiGrant system. Please take a look at the application form notes below to get an idea of how long the application will take to complete.

Section 1: Contact details

1. Primary applicant contact details
2. Organisation details
3. Co-applicant contact details

Review and complete your personal details and details about your institution and any co-applicants here accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application.

4. Institutional public engagement or outreach contact name and contact details

You should contact your institution's public/community/societal engagement or outreach team in the development of your application and in the development, delivery and evaluation of your project, and their details should be included here.

Section 2: Proposal

1. Project title

Maximum 15 words

This should be clear, simple and eye-catching as well as accurately reflect your project and topic. This title can be a working title, as you will have the opportunity to modify the exact title of your project if you are successful in your proposal.

2. What are the aims and outcomes of your project?

Maximum 350 words

Here we want to know why you are doing the project. What will be different when you've finished? What are the drivers or needs for the project, from your own perspective and that of the public?

Try to be as specific as possible and distinguish between your aims (what you hope to change as a result) and objectives (the things you will do to realise those changes).

Your aims should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound, and be a result of your project.

You could answer this question as a series of bullet points.

3. Who is your target audience?

Maximum 200 words

Please provide as much detail for this question as you can and be as specific as possible. High quality applications will have clearly articulated audiences that are relevant to the project aims.

Consider how your audience might be defined. For example, by an age group, profession or shared interest.

Your target audience is who you are primarily trying to engage and should be a public audience (non-scientific and outside of your institution), but we would also like to hear about other groups you might want to engage, such as partners, students and staff.

4. Describe your project, what you plan to do and its links to your research

Maximum 500 words

Please consider addressing the following questions here:

- *What do you plan to do?*
- *What are the project outputs / deliverables?*
- *How does this relate to your Royal Society-funded research?*
- *What is the project's link to science?*
- *What is the relevance to your target audience?*

5. How do you plan to reach your target audience?

Maximum 200 words

Consider why the group you've identified will be interested in what you're doing, and how you will make them aware of your project.

If you have worked with similar groups before, or have relevant contacts, please mention them here.

Section 3: Personnel and partnerships

1. Please provide details of the project team and partners

Maximum 250 words

Please tell us who will help deliver the project, how they will be involved and what experience they bring.

Section 4: Evaluation and legacy

1. How do you plan to measure the aims and outcomes defined in the previous section?

Maximum 350 words

You will be asked to complete a short report on the outcomes of your project, so you should think about evaluation from the outset.

Think about the aims and objectives you have set and how you will effectively measure them. How will you collect evidence from the public and your team?

How will you use the evidence gathered to a) assess the impact of your project, and b) inform future work?

2. How will you maximise the legacy of this funding?

Maximum 350 words

Please use this section to think about any lasting or future outcomes of acquiring this funding, including the benefits to yourself, your institution and target audience.

As well as seeking guidance from your engagement team, you can find guidance on evaluation public engagement activity on the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement's website: www.publicengagement.ac.uk/resources/guide/how-evaluate-public-engagement-projects-and-programmes.

Section 5: Budget and planning

1. How much money are you requesting? (to the nearest £1)

The minimum amount you can request for this scheme is £500 and the maximum amount is £10,000 over two years. Up to £5,000 can be requested for a one-year project.

2. What will you spend the money on?

Please itemise individual costs as accurately as you can. Where feasible, any items that cost more than £200 should be accompanied by evidence of market research (such as a link to a website selling the item) or a quote.

Estimates are acceptable for smaller items but, if successful, you will be expected to return any significant amounts remaining to the Royal Society at the end of the project.

The scheme is designed to support you to deliver projects, so you can budget for training and development to improve the skills of you and your team, if required.

You may budget for costs associated with acquiring additional expertise or support to deliver your project, including consultants, artists, designers and those helping to deliver public-facing activities. You should follow your institution's guidelines when costing for these aspects. You cannot claim for the time of university employees, including post-docs, research assistants and faculty members.

3. Upload quotes and market research here

You will be able to upload any supporting evidence on the FlexiGrant system.

4. Please provide a timeline for your project

Please include all key dates and milestones, including evaluation, in as much detail as possible. We cannot fund projects that have already started and the project must commence before the

end of June 2026. Projects should be complete by 31 March 2028. Funding decisions will be made in late January 2026 and the earliest you are likely to receive funding is April 2026.