

Science Community Grants - FAQs

This list is not exhaustive. You may be able to find the answer to your questions in the Scheme Notes. Please check all relevant documents before contacting the Schools Engagement Team by emailing education@royalsociety.org.

Eligibility

1. Q: Can I contact the Royal Society ahead of the deadline to confirm my eligibility for the scheme?

A: The scheme notes provide guidance regarding eligibility for the scheme; however please contact the Schools Engagement Team by emailing education@royalsociety.org if you have any questions. Eligibility will be assessed based on the information provided in your Stage 1 application in Flexi-Grant, therefore, please take time to demonstrate this carefully.

2. Q: My institution is outside of the UK. Am I still eligible to apply?

A: No, applicants must be based in the UK (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).

3. Q: Am I eligible to apply if I currently have an active grant with the Royal Society; for example, a Partnership Grant or Partnership Seed Grant?

A: Yes, you are eligible, however, you must demonstrate in your application, your capacity to complete your existing grant in full, and administer the new Science Community Grant, without impact on the quality or timeline. If successful, the start of the Science Community Grant cannot be delayed to allow other awarded grants to be completed. Where an organisation already holds an existing Partnership or Seed Grant, other teams/groups are also eligible to apply.

- 4. Q: Can more than one applicant/team from an organisation apply?
 - **A:** Yes; however, with only 10 grants available, we expect the assessment process to be competitive. Please consider if your application would be stronger by collaborating across your organisation.
- 5. Q: Can I apply as an individual, without the support of my team/department/ faculty?
 A: No, one of the aims of the Science Community Grant is to create sustainable partnerships between organisations with clusters of schools/colleges, with unmet need, within their local area. While the grant can be driven by an individual or ideally a small team, organisational support is essential to ensure the engagement is embedded at an institutional level. For this reason, a statement of support from the head of the organisation (or department head, as appropriate) must be included as part of the application.
- 6. Q: If successful, can we work with schools we already work with?
 - **A:** It depends on the type of engagement but ideally, no. This grant is about responding to schools and colleges with unmet need. They should have little experience of long-term and sustained engagement with STEM professionals through investigative project work. Schools and colleges that have undertaken a Partnership Grant or have been part of a Partnership Seed Grant must not be included. Also, schools and colleges that are currently receiving on-going support via national STEM initiatives from other organisations are not eligible. For more detail on school/college eligibility, please see the scheme notes.

7. Q: What do you mean by the term STEM professional?

A: STEM professionals are the individuals who will visit, support schools and colleges, and share their skills and expertise, as part of this grant. The eligibility for those who can act as a STEM professional on a project is the same as that required for the full Partnership Grant scheme. This is to allow STEM professionals to continue working with their grant schools/colleges on a full Partnership Grant at the end of the Science Community Grant period, if they are able to do so. For more information, please refer to the scheme notes.

8. Q: How often are STEM professionals expected to visit schools?

A: STEM professionals should undertake at least 2–3 in-person visits to the school/college over the course of the small-scale investigation. Additional visits can be in-person or via remote working tools such as Teams or Zoom, as appropriate to the project. Funding can be used to support travel costs to ensure STEM professionals are not out-of-pocket, up to a value of £300 per person, per year. We support applications that wish to engage with schools/colleges in particularly rural/hard-to-reach locations, so where additional funding (over the £300 per year specified) would be required to support these schools/colleges, this should be explained fully in the application.

9. Q: Can I decide what small-scale investigation(s) we will deliver in schools/colleges after applying?

A: No, small-scale investigations must be clearly outlined in the application.

10. Q: Can small-scale investigations be undertaken as a club or after-school activity?

A: Ideally, investigations will align directly with the STEM curriculum so that they can be delivered within curriculum time. They must last a minimum of half a term (approximately 6 weeks) and be easily repeatable so that they can be carried out by multiple cohorts within a school. Small-scale investigations should involve as many students as possible, but at least 30 students as a minimum.

11. Q: Do I need to get ethics approval for my small-scale investigation?

A: Please use your judgement, and, where appropriate, consult your organisation and seek ethics approval. If the small-scale investigation includes components that rely on conducting experiments involving humans or animals, you will need to show in your application that you have thought about the ethics of the investigative project and how any ethical and safeguarding considerations will be dealt with.

12. Q: Can I design an investigation where the students themselves are the test subjects; for example, measuring their own health and well-being?

A: For safeguarding reasons, investigations of this nature should not be undertaken as part of this grant.

Application Process

13. Q: I have never used Flexi-Grant® before. Where can I get help?

A: The Royal Society uses the grants management system, Flexi-Grant[®] to administer the pre and post award stages of its grant giving work. You will need to create an account before you can start an application, which you can do on the Royal Society Flexi-Grant® homepage. You

can find more information about Flexi-Grant® here: The Royal Society online Grants

Management System – Flexi-Grant® | Royal Society. If you have any other questions related to completing your application, please contact the Schools Engagement team (education@royalsociety.org).

14. Q: Where can I see a copy of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 application forms before I start an application?

A: Blank PDF copies of the application forms can be found on the grants page. Full details of what should be included can be found in the scheme notes.

15. Q: Do I need to get approval from my organisation before applying?

A: Yes, you will need to invite the head of your organisation (or department head, as appropriate) to submit a statement of support as part of the application. This must be completed before the application can be submitted. It is highly recommended that you contact your head of organisation as early as possible.

16. Q: I have completed all the sections, and the application is at 100% but I cannot see a button to submit my application.

A: All participants on the participants tab must appear as 'complete' in green before the submit button appears. If a participant appears in orange as 'incomplete' they need to login and select 'Save & Submit' on the application form page or 'Submit your contribution' on the summary page – otherwise you will not be able to submit your application.

17. Q: Does the application form have word limits?

A: No, there are no word limits within the application; however, please write as succinctly as possible.

Review and assessment

18. Q: Who reviews the Stage 1 applications?

A: Stage 1 applications will be reviewed by the Schools Engagement team who will undertake a simple eligibility check based on the information included. Please ensure you read the eligibility criteria carefully. Eligible applicants will be invited to complete the full Stage 2 application. Completed sections from the Stage 1 application will transfer automatically to the Stage 2 application.

19. Q. Who reviews the Stage 2 applications?

A: The Royal Society uses Selection Committees (also known as Panels) to assess all grant applications and to make recommendations on funding. Panels are chaired by a Fellow of the Royal Society and membership comprises members with expertise and experience appropriate to the scheme. Each application is assessed by at least two members of the Partnership Grants Allocating Panel who will score the application against the criteria listed in the scheme notes.

20. Q: How soon can I expect to hear the outcome of my application?

A: All applicants will be notified of the review outcome within three months of the application deadline. Successful applicants will be given a conditional offer of funding, dependent on an offer letter and agreement to the terms and conditions of the grant award.

21. Q: Who will make the decision on my application?

A: The Royal Society Schools Engagement team will initially check all applications against the published eligibility criteria before they are submitted for assessment.

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22. Q: What criteria will my application be assessed on?

A: The assessment criteria are described in the scheme notes.

23. Q: Can I ask for feedback on my draft application?

A: Yes, if you would like feedback from the Schools Engagement Team on your draft application, please contact education@royalsociety.org; however, please note, we are only able to give feedback on your application compared to the requirements in the scheme notes. Please note, our panel is completely independent; therefore, we are unable to give an indication of how likely it is that an application will be approved.

Funding

24. Q: How is the grant payable?

A: The grant is a maximum of £105,000 over three years with the following payment schedule: £45,000 on receipt of the grant in year one, £35,000 in year two and £25,000 in year three. £10,000 of the grant will be retained in year three and paid upon receipt of the final impact report. Funding in years two and three will be dependent on receipt of the interim report by the Schools Engagement team

25. Q: Can I transfer unspent funds from years one and two?

A: Yes, with approval from the Schools Engagement team.

26. Q: Can I use grant funding to hire a new member of staff?

A: Funding cannot be used to support direct staffing costs; however, it can be used to support time needed for grant administration and coordination.

27. Q: Can I use the funding to pay STEM professionals?

A: No. You cannot use this funding to make an honorarium payment to STEM professionals; however, if you secure match funding to pay STEM professionals to undertake these visits, this is acceptable, as long as it is clearly stated in your application.

28. Q: Do I need to keep and document all receipts for expenditure?

A: No, however; accurate reporting of spend against the grant budget will be expected as part of monitoring calls, interim reports, and the final impact report. The Royal Society reserves the right to request a financial statement from the award holder at any time during the grant.

29. Q: Can I make changes to the budget once the grant is underway?

A: Yes, we understand that changes may be required; however, any significant changes to the budget will need to be discussed with and agreed by the Royal Society Schools Engagement team in advance before the changes are put in place.

30. Q: Where can I find more information on the funding arrangements?

A: The conditions of award (on the grant website) and, if awarded, the letter of offer will outline the specific funding arrangements between the Royal Society and the Award Holder for the grant.