Participatory Research Grants

Application Guidance Notes

Overview

"Participatory or co-produced research strengthens research outcomes by involving the communities and users of research, better recognising their experience, needs and preferences, and giving greater agency to communities to implement findings." - Research England

Research England has allocated funding to higher education providers in England to be used for participatory or co-produced research. The scheme is a competitive process with a maximum of £10,000 of funding available per project.

Participatory research involves non-academic partners in the research process. This could include contributing to the research question, data collection and analysis and interpretation of results.

All applications will be subject to a panel review and will be judged against how well applications meet the criteria of the scheme (see Application Criteria subsection) and whether the proposal presents a robust, carefully considered project relating to participatory research (see Application Guidance subsection).

We recommend that all projects that are considering applying to the scheme familiarise themselves with the Guidance Documentation and seek appropriate support from the CPE before submitting their proposal.

Application Criteria

Due to the nature of the funding and purpose of the scheme, all applications to the Participatory Research Grants **must** meet the following criteria:

- The project enables participatory or co-produced research with stakeholders outside of the university.
- The communities of the research have been well-defined, or there is a clear plan to better define this community, with a view to improving opportunities for involvement in the future.
- There is a clear link to the research being undertaken at Queen Mary University of London. Applications can come from any faculty or institute, at any stage of the research lifecycle.
- There are some indications as to how learning from the project will be shared with others

Project applications **should also**:

- Contain a detailed and feasible project plan that has clear objectives, and has considered how to manage potential risk
- Contain a thorough evaluation plan that will appropriately enable projects to measure outcomes against their aims and is proportionate to the scale of the project.
- Have considered what legacy the project could have and identify potential opportunities for future growth and/or sustainability

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must be current staff at Queen Mary, with a contract end date no sooner than August 2024. We welcome applications from staff at all career stages and this is not used as a criterion in the selection process.

Lead applicants must be the individuals who will be responsible for delivering the project and subsequent reporting. External applicants are able to apply to the scheme (for example community groups) as co-applicants on projects.

All submissions **must have at least one** applicant from within the University who will be held responsible for assisting the delivery of the projects and reporting on outcomes.

Activity Timings

All activities must be able to spend the funds before the end of the current financial year, which is **July 31st 2024**. Please note that finance year-end procedures often mean that in practical terms, any final financial processes must be started well before this date.

If you'd like to discuss the feasibility of your timescales, or would like help with planning timelines, please talk to the CPE as soon as possible.

Funding Use

What can this funding be used for?

- Costs associated with developing and delivering participatory or co-produced research, or projects to better enable a culture of participatory research in your School/ Institute/ Faculty.
- Payments to undergraduate, masters or PhD students to enable their participation on the project (guidance on this should be sought from your School, including HR where appropriate)
- Internal staff costs for services related to the project such as out of hours charges or AV support
- Payment of specialist external expertise (e.g. freelance artists, patients, interpreters)
- Contributions to partner organisations who are integral to the success of the project and whose participation would otherwise be limited.
- Materials and equipment unable to be supplied through existing Queen Mary channels
- Catering costs, but only where this is integral to supporting participatory research.
    - Applications requesting funds for catering must demonstrate clearly how these will improve the quality of the project and why it is necessary and appropriate for the activity and target public. Where catering is funded, this will need to align to the Queen Mary hospitality guidelines.
- The funding may cover the costs of a Queen Mary member of staff to work on a project if their current contract does not allow them to work on it in the time already paid for (i.e. staff members who are part-time). **Please note:** these costs have to be approved by your Faculty HR Manager or the JRMO and your School/Institute Manager.

What is this funding unable to cover?

- Buy-out costs for the Queen Mary staff lead or other applicants
- Activity that is already accounted for by other grants.
- Activity which would happen without funding from the CPE. If the project, or aspect of the project that funding is requested for, has already been advertised or has already taken place, we are unable to fund the project as it will be judged to be going ahead without CPE funding.
- Projects which aim to engage an academic audience (e.g. researchers, staff and students).
- Projects where the primary goal is dissemination of research findings, outreach to schools/colleges or public engagement activities which are not focussed on co-production or participatory research.
- Activities where funding cannot be spent before 31st July 2024.

The Funding Process

Applicants can apply for a maximum of £10,000 of funding for their project.

The deadline for this application round is 10am on Tuesday 5th December 2023.

Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Panel review

Each application received will be subject to a panel review process. The panel is composed of individuals with participatory research experience/responsibilities, with a mixture of academic and professional service staff. Each application will be reviewed by a panel who will score applications against the following criteria:

- **Idea and approach**: the project involves clearly defined stakeholders, has an appropriate methodology, and that social/ethical/cultural considerations have been made.
- **Potential impact of the project**: there is adequate evidence of mutual benefit for all participants.
- **Links to Queen Mary**: the project engages groups with the research of Queen Mary and will shape the future work of the University through connections, opportunities, or outcomes from the project
- **Project value for money**: the project is appropriately and realistically costed
- **Project feasibility**: the project has realistic and measurable aims that are achievable in the timeframe of the scheme, there is a well-thought-out project plan with defined milestones, and risks have been identified and mitigations suggested
- **Evaluation and learning**: the project has an evaluation plan in place which measures against the proposed aims and thought has been given to the legacy of the work.

Following a panel review meeting to consolidate and discuss the scoring, the highest scoring projects will be awarded funding to support their work. All projects will receive feedback on their applications.

Successful Projects

Successful projects will receive confirmation of their award of funding once panel reviews are completed. Projects will have to then contact their Finance team/Research Manager to have an appropriate budget code set up for funds to be transferred into.

(a) Reporting requirements:

The reporting for the participatory research funding is expected to be light touch, however we expect to be able to confirm this in the next few months.

At the end of the project teams will be required to submit an evaluation report which is designed to capture the outcomes of the project, as well as learning that has occurred as part of the process.

Support for Applicants

Applicants are encouraged to take advantage of the advice and support offered by the Centre for Public Engagement.

Application Guidance

Below is section-by-section guidance on how to fill out the application for the Grant scheme.

Section 1: Background and Aims

This section focuses on highlighting what applicants are looking to achieve over the duration of the project and why this engagement is appropriate.

Project Title:

Titles should accurately reflect the aims and/or activities of the project, **and should not contain jargon, specialist language, or acronyms**. Applicants should also consider their stakeholders when naming the project.

1.1 Summary of Project:

This summary will be used in publicity material should the application be successful. Applicants should give a clear and concise overview of the project without going into fine detail and should not use technical/specialist language. We recommend covering the following:

- What the proposed project will involve
- Who this project will engage with
- What the intended outcomes of this project are
- Why this is important

1.2 Aims of Project:

This should set out a few (ideally, no more than three) aims for the project. Consider the following questions as a starting point for developing aims:

- What change do you hope that the project will achieve?
- Are there specific outputs you are working towards?

Successful projects are expected to measure success against these aims at the end of the project so ensure these aims are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound)

1.3 Who are your partners and stakeholders?

Applicants are encouraged to think carefully about who they will work with during this project. The more well-defined target stakeholders/participants/project partners are, the better. The stakeholders should be informed by the research and the project you would like to undertake.

You should consider how these partners will be meaningfully involved in the project as collaborators, and outline what they will bring to the project by being involved.

1.4 How the project links to Queen Mary and its work:

Applicants should include details about how this project links to current Queen Mary research. You may want to highlight how the project links to Queen Mary's Civic University Agreement or Strategy 2030.

Section 2: People

This section focusses on naming the individuals who will be significantly involved with the delivery of the project.

2.1: Principal Applicant

Any project applying for a participatory research grant must be led by a Queen Mary staff member who will remain until the end of the project. The scheme welcomes applications from all career stages.

2.2: Co-Applicant(s)

Please ensure details of any colleagues or members of staff from external organisations who will play an integral part in the project you are proposing are provided as co-applicants. It is expected that if co-applicants are named, their contribution to the project is clearly demonstrated throughout the application.

Section 3: Methods

This section allows applicants to expand on their initial project summaries to outline how they plan to meet their project aims.

3.1: Project Plan

Applicants should use this space to set out the timeline of the project, as well as to go into more detail about the activity. This should be a realistic proposal of what will happen if funding is approved. It should cover the following:

- The methodology and approaches you intend to use
- A timeline of major milestones and key dates
- How the activity is appropriate to the stakeholders that you plan to work with
- Details of how you plan to communicate to and reach the people you will engage with (this may include publicity or working with external organisations)
- Any partnerships that are already in place that will support the project

If any elements of the project are proposed to run beyond the funding period (including resources), applicants should describe in what capacity these will continue and highlight how it will be funded.

Project Completion Date

Project spend must be completed by 31 July 2024 and reported on by 19 August 2024.

3.2: Participatory Methods

Please describe how the project has been tailored to meet the needs of target stakeholders or partners to encourage their participation. If applicants have run pilot activities to help shape the project or have developed aspects of the project in collaboration with target stakeholders and/or input of partner organisations highlight this here.

You should consider how your approaches will enable equitable partnerships and address any potential for a power imbalance.

3.3: Risk Mitigation

Applicants should be aware that there are risks associated with all projects: from not being able to secure your intended venue to participants not turning up. Such risks are not considered indicators that a project shouldn't proceed instead applicants should show an awareness and an ability to manage these risks.

3.4: Diversity and Inclusion

Please use this space to show how you have considered diversity and inclusion in your project. Avoid activities which feature "about us, without us" content – i.e. where a topic is explored without representation from communities and individuals affected by it.

3.5: Accessibility

Please use this space to set out how you will ensure events are accessible for the groups being engaged and minimise barriers for participation. For example, this might include:

- using a suitable venue (easy to get to, accessible to people with mobility impairments, with seating, with accessible and gender-neutral toilets)
- hiring British Sign Language interpreters
- providing equipment or access to the internet via data top-up cards
- covering transport costs for participants
- transcription and translation
- scheduling breaks into activities
- using inclusive language

3.6: Ethical considerations

Please use this space to highlight any adjustments you have made to this project to ensure it is ethical (i.e. informed consent, data protection, paying people for their time and expertise, crediting partners, sharing knowledge and resources).

Any research funded by this scheme will need to have ethical approval in place. For more information about ethical approval at Queen Mary, please visit the JRMO webpages. If you are not sure if ethical approval is required, contact the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee.

3.7: Legacy and Sustainability

Applicants should have clear ideas about the legacy of their project and plans about how the project (or project elements) could be sustained or developed in future. Use this space to highlight any opportunities/resources/relationships that you hope will continue beyond the lifetime of the grant.

Section 4: Evaluation

This section focusses on how applicants intend to evaluate their project activities to determine the success, capture unintended outcomes, and highlight learning points from the project.

4.1: Indicators for success

Applicants should refer to the aims proposed in question 1.2 and consider how they will know if these have been achieved. This might include collecting monitoring information (for example *n* people engaged, *x*% increase in *y*), capturing qualitative measures (such as changes in behaviour or ideas), or detailing specific outputs (such as collaborative research paper published, future funding secured).

4.2: Evidencing success

Applicants should map out how evidence linked to the successes (above) will be collected. This should include information on evaluation methods and tools that applicants intend to utilise and any documents/resources you might need to support this. The Public Engagement Evaluation Toolkit available on the CPE website may help you determine appropriate methodologies to measure the difference made by your project.

Section 5: Background

This section allows applicants (and co-applicants) to highlight why they are the appropriate candidates for delivering the project. Applicants should consider what elements of their backgrounds evidence their suitability for the project and highlight relevant experience of those working on the project—particularly focusing on articulating why, based on these experiences, you are the right person to deliver this activity.

Applicants are also asked to highlight whether they have previously applied for, or been a recipient of, CPE Small or Large Grant funding, and whether they have received any other internal funding from Queen Mary for this or a related project. This helps us when tracking the impact of the CPE's work.

Section 6: Finances

Please refer to the Funding Use subsection above to determine what funds can be requested in an application. Projects can request a maximum of £10,000 funding from the scheme. If project costs exceed this, applicants are welcome to seek match funding from alternative sources.

Applicants are asked to set out the costing for the total project (**inclusive of VAT**). Applicants should then break this total project cost down into amount requested from the CPE and amount from match funding sources. If projects are seeking funding from elsewhere and this is not yet confirmed, please indicate in the project plan and risk management sections (section 3.1 and 3.4) what implications this will have if the funding is not secured.

We recommend that all applicants seek advice from your Finance Managers and/or HR contact during the construction of your budget to ensure that you appropriately cost any items such as student support, freelancers, and staff time.

You can add additional rows to this section if needed.

Project Costs:

Please include all costs associated with running the project in the 'Project Costs' table and ensure that these are:

- Accurate costs of all projected spend (where possible)
- Costs inclusive of VAT
- Have a short justification for each listed item (i.e. where this is being obtained from, precisely what this is being used for)

If asking for equipment, applicants are asked to consider if support from elsewhere in Queen Mary may be an option and if not, please explain why these items are unable to be sourced internally and must be purchased/hired (i.e. technology, specialist equipment).

As budgets have to be signed off by Heads of School, and in some instances the School Research Manager and/or Faculty HR Manager, we strongly advise that you seek advice when preparing this element of the application form.

A large contingency budget is not normally approved by the panel, unless in exceptional circumstances (where it is impossible to know true costs at the submission stage). If applications include a contingency budget, please give clear reasoning for including it.

If you are seeking—or have secured—match-funding, separate columns have been provided for applicants to highlight what project costs are being requested from the CPE and what is being covered by the match-funds.

Staff Costs:

Staff costs should only be included if new roles are being created as part of the proposed project or existing contracts are due to be extended in order to deliver this project. Full economic costings details are essential for new Queen Mary roles and extensions of existing contracts where those staff are not full-time. Applicants must speak to either the HR contact in your School or the JRMO to determine these costs. You must submit Faculty HR Manager or School Research Manager approval of these costs when submitting the final application.

For extensions of existing staff employed on University contracts where those staff are not full time, please provide details in the ‘Details and Justification’ on how this project role aligns with their existing/current role.

We strongly advise that if you are intending to cost in Queen Mary staff time as part of the application that you discuss this with the CPE prior to submitting your application.

Applicants can include costing for student time within this section in the ‘Queen Mary Students’ box. This cost should reflect involvement of students at hourly rates. Additionally you should not employ students for hours in excess of their weekly limits (i.e. 20 hours per week for students on Tier 4 Visas and 6 hours for funded PhD students). Please follow guidance from the HR contact in your School to determine the appropriate hours and associated costs.

If students are making significant contributions to the work-- for example they are responsible for significant portions of development and/or delivery of the project—they should be named as collaborators and contribute to the development of the application form.

Applicants may also include costing for contributions to external partner organisations who are integral to the success of the project and whose participation would otherwise be limited, as well as freelancers who will be providing specialist services (e.g. translation, artists etc.) in the ‘External expertise’ box. If the external partners and freelancers are not already Queen Mary suppliers, please ensure you adhere to Queen Mary financial and HR procedures in paying these individuals.

Section 7: Signatures and Approval

There are a number of signatories required alongside the submission of your application form to ensure the projects are feasible, realistic, and supported by your department.

To ensure your sign-off is as easy as possible, we recommend seeking appropriate advice and support well in advance of the submission deadline—particularly around the formulation of your budget.

The CPE will accept emails of support as the equivalent of signatures. Ideally these should be submitted alongside the application. Any applications which have not been signed-off or submitted the appropriate emails of support by the submission deadline cannot be considered.