Translational Funding

Open Innovation Platform Applicant Guidance

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1. Introduction to Exeter's Open Innovation Platform

Financed by Research England's Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF), the Open Innovation Platform (OIP) provides financial support for University of Exeter staff to accelerate the translation of research into economic and societal benefit by engaging and collaborating with external partners or by facilitating Commercialisation.

Open Innovation Platform funds cannot be used to fund research activity. Research activity is considered core university activity and is therefore out of the scope of UKRI funded Translational Funding. The OIP funds are intended to facilitate the translation of existing research into advances in new or existing products, services, policies, or practice.

2. Exeter's OIP Funding Streams

I.   Link Fund

Funding Amount: Up to £5,000
Aims and Objectives: Link Fund awards help you to create links with new external organisations where there are clear opportunities for collaboration or to develop innovative ways of engaging with existing partners. Link Fund awards help to reduce the initial costs associated with this activity and provide the seed funding to kick start larger projects. They are not intended to fund on going or reoccurring activities. Applications that build links with SMEs and UK industry are encouraged.
Indicative Activities: Small-scale activities, such as workshops, meetings, the translation of findings, and development of frameworks to explore how the potential social and economic benefit of existing and on-going research might be realised; or to establish a network in order to create and develop knowledge exchange opportunities.
Suggested Length of Project: Up to 3 months.
Faculty Authorisation: Director of Research & Impact.
Notification of outcome: Within 2 weeks of application being submitted.

II.   Collaboration Fund

Funding Amount: Up to £20,000
Aims and Objectives: Aims and Objectives: Collaboration Fund awards enable University of Exeter academics and external organisations to undertake short term collaborations in order to translate existing research into advances in new or existing products, services, policies or practice. We expect successful applications to include some element of direct cash or in-kind match funding to augment the funding requested from the Collaboration Fund. Funded projects are also expected to leverage or lead to direct investment from the external organisation or from other external sources in future. The Collaboration Fund is not intended to provide bridge funding or top ups to staff salaries. Applications that involve SMEs and UK industry are encouraged.
Indicative Activities: A co-created project through which research or other outputs are produced. This funding can be spent on Research or Project Assistant salary costs, a (e.g. an existing or recent PhD student), travel and subsistence, impact events such as symposia, or on specialist services (e.g. a mobile app designer).
Suggested Length of Project: Up to 6 months.
Faculty Authorisation: Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact, and Director of Research & Impact.
Notification of outcome: Within 5 weeks of application being submitted.

3. Eligibility

Anyone employed by the University of Exeter on an academic/research contract seeking to accelerate the non-academic impact from their research is eligible to apply to the Open Innovation Platform. Your employment contract must last for at least the length of the proposed project.

The project must clearly demonstrate how it will strategically take forward and build on the existing Research and/or relationship to make a significant difference either socially, economically, regionally, nationally or internationally etc.

4. Assessment Criteria

1. Application details

Successful applications to this scheme will demonstrate:

Collaboration with a committed external, non-academic partner.
- o Has the external partner provided a letter of support that demonstrates their commitment to and enthusiasm for the project?
- o Are the project partner(s) making a cash and/or in-kind contribution to the project? Partner contributions should be relative to the amount requested from IAA funds, and appropriate to the size and type of organisation.

The benefit to society and/or the economy the project activities aim to achieve.
- o Does the application clearly articulate the overarching non-academic aim of the project?
- o Why is it important that this project is supported?
- o Is the overarching non-academic aim achievable and feasible?
- o If the aim is commercialisation, does the application demonstrate a clear pathway to commercialisation and have they spoken to a member of the IP & Commercialisation Team?

Effective knowledge exchange (KE) activities.
- o Do the proposed KE activities maximise engagement with the partner organisation?
- o Are the KE activities outlined in detail and the intended outcomes clearly identified?

A clear and feasible project delivery and project plan.
- o Does the application detail a specific set of activities (outputs), setting out responsibilities of the applicant(s) and of the project partner(s) for each?
- o Does the application clearly state what the outcomes of the activities undertaken will be?
- o Does the application have a clear and feasible delivery plan with realistic milestones?

Clearly defined key performance indicators (KPI'S). A guide to outputs, outcomes and KPIs can be found on the Internal Funding Opportunities page of the Research Toolkit.
- o Does the application have clear and realistic targets?
- o Does the application detail how the outcomes & KPIs will be recorded and monitored?
- o Does the application detail what method of evidence capture they will use? Successful applicants will be required to provide evidence that they have achieved their stated KPIs.

A well-planned, realistic & clearly defined project budget.
- o Are the activities eligible for OIP funding? See the eligible and ineligible costs lists below.

- o Does the budget demonstrate value for money?
- o Are the funds requested appropriately justified and reasonable?
- o Does the budget provide adequate detail? For example, rather than stating '£1k for workshop', is the workshop cost broken down into to its constituent parts (venue cost, printing costs, travel etc)?

Ethical and Health & Safety consideration.
- o Does the application identify any potential ethical and/or health & safety issues?
- o Does the application propose reasonable mitigating actions for any risks identified?

Appropriate Faculty Approval & support.

Adhesion to the application page limit.

2. Partner contribution and letters of support

It is expected that non-academic partners will make a match funding contribution to OIP projects, the cash or in time contribution should be appropriate to the size and type of organisation. We request that a letter of support is submitted with the application. Non- academic partners will need to demonstrate their commitment to the project and applications should detail how participants will work collaboratively to achieve the aims and objectives of the project.

Letters of support are not essential when applying for the Link Fund, however, this would strengthen the application where a support letter is appropriate (i.e., where a relationship with the partner has already been established)

3. Faculty contribution

It is expected that the faculty will make an in-kind and/or cash contribution to OIP projects to show their support for the project and their approval of the PI time spent on the project.

PI and Co-I time, Indirect Costs, and Estates will be considered an in-kind contribution from the faculty and will be calculated on Worktribe.

Match funding from the faculty must be approved by the Director of Research & Impact (applications under £10k) and by the Director of Research & Impact *and* the Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research & Impact (applications £10k and over) prior to the application being submitted.

5. Eligible Costs

If you are considering a cost that does not appear here, please contact the Translational Funding Team for guidance.

Activities that are eligible for OIP funding include:

✔ Travel and subsistence.

✔ Venue hire.

✔ Research Assistant or Administration assistant salary costs.

✔ Participant payments (a small sum to cover out of pocket expenses and as compensation for inconvenience).

✔ External contractors for specialist tasks (e.g., design work).

✔ Equipment up to the value of £9,999.

✔ Costs associated with secondary analysis of primary data (the use of data that was collected by someone else for some other purpose).

Activities that are ineligible for OIP funding include:

✖ PI and Co-I salary costs.

✖ Partner costs.

✖ Undergraduate activities, core PhD training, Masters. Postgraduate research students cannot apply for funding.

✖ Direct funding for staff and funds to support IP protection and patent costs.

✖ Attendance at academic conferences or other initiatives with a primarily academic audience.

✖ Preparation of research grant applications.

✖ Contributions to KTPs.

✖ Equipment with a value of £10,000 or more.

✖ Indirect costs or estate costs (these will be part of your faculty contribution).

✖ Impact activities which have already been included within an OIP funded project.

✖ Primary/Basic research activities.

✖ OIP funds cannot be used to support a private company, as they are a public funder and have to adhere to Subsidy Control measures . If you are unsure whether your cost would be considered to be a subsidy for a private company please contact the Translational Funding Team.

6. How to Apply (including Costings)

1. In all cases, please contact the Translational Funding team to notify them of your interest in the OIP and to discuss your proposal.

2. Download the application form for the appropriate funding stream from the Internal Funding Opportunities page of the Research Toolkit on the University of Exeter intranet.

3. Create a new Project cost your application using the Worktribe system. Full instructions for using the Worktribe system to log and cost your proposal can be found on the Research Toolkit. 100%

directly incurred and directly allocated projects costs can be applied for. All costs must be stated with the inclusion of VAT.

4. Complete the application form. Please ensure type size is no smaller than 11pt. If applications exceed the permitted length, they will be returned to you to be edited down, proximity to deadline permitting. If time does not permit, only the first six pages will be sent to reviewers.

5. Obtain a Letter of Support from external collaborators outlining their agreement to participate and details of any match funding or in-kind contribution.

6. For applications under £10k, obtain Faculty approval for your application from your Director of Research and Impact. For applications of £10k and over, obtain Faculty approval from your Director of Research and Impact *and* the APVC for Research and Impact. **Your application will not be accepted without this.**

7. Email your word application form and your Letter of Support to the Translational Funding Team openinnovation@exeter.ac.uk

7. Assessment Process

Applications will be reviewed by the Translational Funding Team and relevant Exeter Innovation Sector leads and theme teams. We aim to notify you of the outcome of your application within two weeks of your submission for the Link Fund and up to five weeks for the Collaboration Fund.

8. Reporting Requirements for Funded Projects

The Principal Applicant (Principal Investigator - PI) of each funded project will be required submit a mid-term project update and an end of project report on the activities carried out, outcomes and impacts (or expected future impacts), specifically:

• A report of the tangible benefits and successes achieved or likely to be realised after the project, by both the user (and their potential beneficiaries) and the University. This includes indicators of success, such as number of new connections and partnerships (defined as involving an exchange of resources – e.g., co-funding, leverage, and contributions in kind), projects started and numbers participating in events etc.

• A member of the translational funding team may also follow up several months after the project to find out about longer-term impacts.

• The PI must comply with requests for information about the project for publicity and for the Translational Funding website to enable us to share good practice and news about impact within the University and beyond.

9. Award terms and conditions

- Allocated funds must be used within the time frame agreed when the award is made and cannot be rolled from one financial year to the next.
- Allocated funds must be used for the agreed project.
- Changes to the use of any awarded funds must be applied for and agreed in writing and may be subject to additional review.
- The applicant will need to provide progress and final reports as requested.
- The applicant must ensure they declare any perceived, potential or actual conflict of interest regarding any external or collaborating partners when submitting an application or if it arises during the project.
- The applicant agrees to notify the Exeter Innovation IP and Commercialisation team prior to publicising work or findings from a funded project as this may impact on future IP exploitation.
- Funds awarded may be withheld or withdrawn if the terms and conditions are not met
- Awards may be subject to further terms and conditions.
- It is a condition of funding that details of projects and contacts will be recorded in a database and made available to other members of University staff wishing to work with the Organisation in question.
- All projects must start within 3 months of the award date.

10.   Frequently asked questions

What is considered an Early Career Researcher (ECR)?

UKRI defines an ECR as someone who is either:

- Within eight years of their PhD award (this is from the time of the PhD 'viva' oral test), or equivalent professional training.
- Within six years of their first academic appointment (the first full or part time paid employment contract that lists research or teaching as the primary function).

These periods exclude any career break, for example due to:

- Family care.
- Health reasons.
- Reasons related to COVID-19 such as home schooling or increased teaching load.

Is it compulsory for my project to have a CO-I?

No, having a Co-I is not a condition of funding.

11. Further Information

If you have any questions about the OIP Account, please contact the translational funding team at openinnovation@exeter.ac.uk