

Uppsala - Durham Seedcorn Fund 2020

Guidance

Durham and Uppsala wish to develop a stronger bilateral relationship, building on their collaborations through the Matariki and Coimbra Networks of Universities. The *Uppsala-Durham Seedcorn Fund* follows delegations hosted by each partner.

Through a competitive process, Durham and Uppsala Universities will jointly advertise, select and fund projects in research. Successful research projects are expected to result in third-party funding applications. Parameters of this scheme are outlined below:

Awards

Each university will make available €50,000 for the call. Applications will be invited for a maximum of €25,000 for activity duration of between 6 and 24 months. Financial expenditure plans should indicate spend over the full duration of the proposed projects.

- The first call ran from 18th March – 20th May 2019 and 7 projects were awarded funding.
- The second call will run from **27th January – 27th April 2020**.

Eligibility

- Applicants/ PIs must be members of academic staff who are currently employed at either Durham or Uppsala Universities. They can be at any stage of their careers, and can include faculty from cooperating institutes.
- Additional external partners can be involved, however, a strong argument should be made where the external partners' contribution to the project exceeds 20%.
- Applicants must have expertise in the applied projects.
- Projects incorporating Early Career Researchers (ECRs) or postgraduate students are encouraged.

Objectives

This Seedcorn Fund supports the strengthening of the longstanding ties between Uppsala and Durham and the broadening of the existing partnership.

The core objective of the competition is to support the development of joint applications for large external grants. Funding can be used, *inter alia*, to engage with additional partners (academic or non-academic) in order to develop collaborative research proposals, to establish interactions with beneficiaries who will co-fund a proposal or help to develop the impact of the research, to conduct short proof-of-principle studies, or to carry out a specialised literature review in a new field of research.

It is expected that the seedcorn funding for research will lead to the submission of an external grant application and/or major research output. The proposal should address either:

- a. The funding body, timescale for submission of the external proposal and likely scope and value of the grant application;
- b. Or, how this project will achieve increased international exposure, i.e. plans for dissemination.

Priority areas

Applications to the Uppsala-Durham Seedcorn Fund should be aligned with the strategies of both universities.

Selection

Applications will be assessed using the below indicators:

- Academic quality of the proposed research including ambition, significance and originality.
- Importance of seedcorn funding for the likely success of any future, external grant application.
- Alignment with the research strategy of both universities and their faculties/ departments / schools.
- Clarity of intentions, including timetable of submission and targeted external funding scheme.

Proposals will be jointly evaluated by a panel that includes senior academics from each university. Where possible, the selection panel will award an equal number of awards to DU-led and UU-led projects.

Monitoring

A Project Completion Report must be completed by award holders on completion of the work defined in the seedcorn application. For 2 year projects, a progress report is expected at the end of the first year.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Durham and Uppsala are committed to encouraging applications from women, those with a disability, members of minority ethnic groups, and other groups who are currently under-represented. This will be taken into consideration by the panel. Both universities would particularly hope to continue improving the gender balance of applications.

Furthermore, Durham and Uppsala expects that equality, diversity and inclusion is embedded at all levels, and in all aspects of research practice.

Allowable and ineligible costs

See below for a list of *allowable* indicative costs:

- Travel, accommodation¹ and subsistence
- Facilitation of a workshop with potential academic or non-academic partners, with the aim of refining the content and objectives of a research proposal, or developing strategies for external impact
- Catering and room hire
- Administrative costs of organising meetings or workshops
- Consumables costs for a proof-of-principle study
- Market research
- Ad-hoc / short-term assistance from a research assistant (RA)²

An *exceptional* cost is given below:

- Consultancy costs (external consultants).
The applicant must provide an argument for the inclusion of these costs.

An indicative list of *ineligible* costs is given below:

- Computers, equipment, software
- Salary support for the applicant(s)
- Teaching buy-out
- Business start-up costs
- Travel or accommodation for non-DU or UU project partners

The panel reserve the right to withdraw or reduce funding for elements of the project if deemed ineligible, excessive or inappropriate.

Full details of all anticipated costs/activities must be clearly itemised on the application form.

Succession and Sustainability

Prior to each application round opening, universities will share information on current external grant funding opportunities for cooperative projects between the UK and Sweden.

Proposals must demonstrate sustainability beyond the funded period.

Projects that reach out to a wider audience of students and researchers will also be looked on favourably. For example, training of PhD candidates through sharing of expertise is encouraged.

Research Support colleagues will support PIs and Co-Is to develop external funding applications following the completion of the Uppsala-Durham Seedcorn Scheme.

¹ For budgeting purposes, the average cost of accommodation (per room per night) is €75 in Uppsala and €95 in Durham. KLM flights between Stockholm Arlanda (UU) and Newcastle airports (DU) vary in cost throughout the year but are on average around €200 per person, return, when booked in advance.

² Where short-term assistance from a research assistant (RA) is requested on a taxable fees basis, the name of the proposed RA, together with the current status (e.g. postgraduate, employment contract) and proposed dates of engagement, must be provided, to ensure eligibility of the RA to undertake the work can be checked. Employment contracts will only be considered **by exception** and must be in line with the host university's recruitment procedures and policies. The role of the RA must be fully specified. *The role and length of time the RA is funded must be proportionate to the seedcorn proposal activities and duration and fully detailed and justified. It is expected that assistance provided by a RA will be fully directed by the lead applicant.*

Outcomes

Approval: Where a seedcorn application is approved for funding, funds will be administered by Durham and Uppsala Universities. Please note the funding will be paid to the department of the lead applicant.

Refusal: Where an application is refused for funding, the applicant will be informed of the decision.

A record of the outcome of each seedcorn application will be maintained by:

Uppsala

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