

Birmingham-Nottingham Strategic Collaboration Fund Guidance to Applicants

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Introduction and principles of the fund

The Birmingham-Nottingham Strategic Collaboration Fund (BNSCF) is an internal fund designed to support collaborative ventures between the two universities. The 2018 round of funding is open to research and professional services projects undertaken between the two institutions.

A specific call for Education, Learning and Teaching projects will be launched separately. Details will be available on the partnership website: <http://www.birmingham-nottingham.ac.uk/funding-opportunities/funding-opportunities.aspx>.

The key principles of the BNSCF are:

- To enable innovative collaborative projects, programmes and activities to be initiated and catalysed that extend the scope and quality of research or professional services projects beyond that possible at either university alone
- To support/create a culture of collaboration and bilateral working
- To foster the delivery of activity that has strategic value
- To build on, or develop opportunities that will lead to, internationally leading/world-class research with demonstrable outputs (e.g., publications and/or external funding)and/or best practice in Professional Services within the two organisations
- To enable the building of (the personal) relationships on which collaborations thrive
- To be administratively light touch, whilst ensuring proposals are of the highest quality
- To deliver a clear benefit and added value to both institutions
- To deliver, or have the potential to lead to, genuine and sustained impact (in the broadest sense)
- To support projects, programmes and activities that may not be funded via other routes

Applications to the scheme must, therefore, involve participants from both universities.

Details of some of the projects funded under previous rounds of the BNSCF are available on the partnership website: <http://www.birmingham-nottingham.ac.uk/funding-opportunities/scf-funded-projects/scf-funded-projects.aspx>

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Funding streams

The BNSCF is divided into two open funding streams: **Creativity** (for initial engagements) and **Accelerator** (for forging substantive activities). There is a total of £200,000 available in the 2018 call.

What does Creativity funding support?

Creativity funding supports formative discussions between groups at the institutions, enabling exploration of key complementary strengths and new/emerging opportunities with the aim of *creating the foundations for new collaborations/engagement that have the potential to create a step change in our research and knowledge transfer, or professional services activities*. It is anticipated that projects successfully emerging from the Creativity stream will go on to be eligible for Accelerator funding.

The **Creativity** stream provides funding (up to a maximum of £5000) for costs directly associated with enabling exploratory collaborative ventures between the universities including:

- Sandpits
- Workshops
- Discovery days (challenge-led events, where researchers respond to real world problems, introduced by external participants)
- Open lab events (inviting potential new collaborators to experience your skills and equipment)
- Networking activities to investigate and develop new opportunities
- Proposal development programmes
- Team building activities

The **Creativity** stream does not fund staff time, equipment or attendance at external events. Reasonable travel costs may be funded, where it can be demonstrated that their provision will overcome a substantive barrier to collaboration.

What does Accelerator funding support?

Where there already exists a shared understanding of key complementary strengths and opportunities, the **Accelerator** stream provides funding to pump-prime further developments between the institutions that will *forge significant, sustainable activities that respond to/create new opportunities (e.g. for centres, funding, high quality research outputs, partnerships etc.) that will deliver a genuine and sustained impact for both institutions*.

For projects to qualify for **Accelerator** funding, applicants will need to demonstrate that work has already been undertaken to establish a shared understanding of key complementary strengths and opportunities that are being created from/addressed by the proposed activity.

The **Accelerator stream** provides funding (up to a maximum of £40,000) for costs directly associated with enhancing and supporting the development of existing strengths between the universities including:

- Seed corn funding for project/programme/proposal development initiatives including pilot/proof-of-principle studies
- Equipment
- Joint user engagement activities
- Staff exchange
- Incurred staff costs (i.e. where a technician for example is employed specifically for the project)

The **Accelerator** stream funding does not support allocated costs (i.e. where for example a technician who is already employed by the university supports the project).

The two universities would not expect to provide funding to projects where there is a strong overlap between the proposal and projects/programmes that have already received significant internal funding from either or both universities.



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It is important for applicants to demonstrate that the value of the two universities funding the proposed work as a collaboration goes significantly beyond that which could be achieved by providing funding in isolation to the two parties. For research projects, this would be likely to lead to joint publications and/or joint funding applications.

Applications

Applications to this scheme must be made using application form available on the BNSCF website. The scheme operates as an open call with a final submission date of **Friday 6th April 2018**.

Completing the application

All applications must be completed via the online application form available via the BNSCF website: <http://www.birmingham-nottingham.ac.uk/funding-opportunities/apply-for-scf-funding/apply-for-scf-funding.aspx>

Before submitting your applications please ensure:

- The name of the main project contact has been included. This person will be the main point of contact for both universities in relation to the delivery and impact of your project.
- All necessary fields within the application have been completed.
- A clear and concise breakdown of costs has been provided. This must include information on how the requested costs are divided between Birmingham and Nottingham.

How are applications assessed?

All applications submitted will be reviewed and funding recommendations made by the Framework Monitoring Committee responsible for the partnership between the two universities. The committee is comprised of senior university management and is jointly chaired by Pro-Vice Chancellors from Birmingham and Nottingham.

Assessment Criteria

The assessment criteria against which proposals will be assessed are:

General

Creativity and Accelerator
Overall fit of the proposed activity to principles of the fund – particularly with respect to stimulating collaboration
Novelty and quality of the proposed activity
Benefits and added value to both institutions. Proposals MUST demonstrate additionality, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the potential to leverage external funding that would not be possible in the absence of collaboration• the potential to generate joint publications or other outputs• increased reputational influence/impact
Potential to create a step change in the research and knowledge transfer, teaching or professional services activities for both institutions
Scale and/or scope of opportunity created from the funding

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Stream specific

Accelerator	Creativity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates that work already undertaken to establish a shared understanding of the complementary strengths and potential opportunity being created/addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to create a genuine, lasting collaboration or activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates the potential to have impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to deliver, or have the potential to lead to, genuine and sustained impact for both institutions

Please note that due to the nature of this fund applicants will **not** be given an opportunity to respond to reviewer comments or amend their application following submission.

Fund timeframes

Application deadline: Wednesday 6th April 2018.

Applications will subsequently be assessed by peer reviews from both institutions and ultimately the panel.

Decisions to applicants: late June/early July 2018

Following the dissemination of the funding decisions all applicants will be provided with feedback on their application.

Successful applications

Successful award holders will be required to provide regular updates that enable the universities to assess the success of the fund and (where appropriate) to provide information for the development of case studies for use on the partnership website. In reviewing this information the two universities are particularly keen to see evidence of joint publications and outputs, and external funding generated stemming directly from the collaboration.

Queries or further information

Please direct any queries relating to this scheme to either Soma Mukherjee at the University of Nottingham (soma.mukherjee@nottingham.ac.uk, 0115 951 5762) or Nathalie Kopecky at the University of Birmingham (n.z.kopecky@bham.ac.uk, 0121 414 5888).