

Imperial's Societal Engagement Seed Fund

Guidance Notes

Imperial's Societal Engagement Seed Fund will support staff to engage the wider public with our research and education, for mutual benefit.

There is no closing date. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. Guidance information on the scheme can be found below.

Imperial's objectives for the Societal Engagement Seed Fund

The Societal Engagement Seed Fund has been introduced to:

1. Encourage and enable a wider range, and greater number of, Imperial staff to develop and deliver new societal engagement initiatives.
2. Enhance the diversity of engagement initiatives across Imperial. In particular encouraging two-way engagement – where participants are involved in the engagement process and/or involved in the research process.
3. Engage a range of patients, publics, schools and local communities with Imperial's research and/or education in a mutually beneficial way.
4. Increase the number of collaborative approaches to engagement.
5. Fund initiatives that have potential to strengthen research impact; leading to new applications for external funding and supporting Imperial's strategic goals.

Desired seed fund proposal outcomes

Seed fund proposals could include a discrete project or a pilot activity to be further developed, and ideally will include one or more of the following outcomes:

- Develop high-quality engagement with research activities that strengthen research impact.
- Extend previous successful societal engagement activities (e.g. reach a new audience group or develop a new collaboration).
- Undertake pilots of pioneering engagement activities to evaluate what works, ideally with a view to future development including securing external funding.
- Develop the engagement skills and learnings of the wider Imperial College Community.

Funding and eligibility

Proposals can request funding in the range of £500 - £2,500. The funding will be used to support proposals that aim to engage the public with current research in creative, in-depth collaboration.

Eligibility

1. The Principal Applicant must be an Imperial staff member, but proposals can involve a team made up of students and/or external partners as well as the Principal Applicant.
2. Proposals can have international reach and can involve international collaborators, partners and/or audiences.
3. Existing engagement activities will not be eligible for funding, unless the proposal demonstrates that a significant new/different element is being introduced, such as a new collaborator, audience or approach.
4. Exhibiting at the Great Exhibition Road Festival or Imperial Lates should not be the sole objective of the proposal, although proposals can incorporate the Festival or Lates events as one output among others.
5. Projects need to engage one or more of the following audiences – schools, local community groups, patients and the wider public*.
6. Projects can involve the engagement of other stakeholders, such as from industry, government or the media, however projects that only engage these stakeholders and not the audiences listed in Eligibility Point 5, would not be eligible.

*In this context “the public includes individuals, groups, young people and their families, who do not currently have a formal relationship with a HEI through teaching, research or knowledge transfer, but who may have an interest in these activities or upon whom the research or its application could impact.” – Research Councils UK.

Eligible costs	Internal	External
Staff costs	Not eligible	Students and/or freelancers are eligible costs (i.e. a day rate)
Travel	Eligible	Eligible
Subsistence	Eligible	Eligible
Consumables/equipment	Eligible	Eligible
Training costs	Eligible	Eligible
Indirect and estate costs	Not eligible	Not eligible
Bench costs	Not eligible	Not eligible

How to apply

Please download and complete the application form provided on the [Seed Fund webpage](#).

One supporting document is allowed per application (no more than one page in length) that either provides images or diagrams, or provides details of a previous similar project, to help illustrate your proposal.

Please send completed application forms and supporting documentation [by email](#) and we will aim to contact you within two weeks of receiving your application with an outcome decision. For any questions, please contact societal_engagement@imperial.ac.uk.

Review of applications

This award is offered by Academic Partnerships, led by the Associate-Provost Professor Maggie Dallman.

Proposals will be reviewed according to the order they are received. We will aim to get back to applicants within two weeks of submission.

In the interests of speed, proposals will be reviewed by a small panel from the Public Engagement team. Specialist guest reviewers (internal or external) will be invited where appropriate, such as where technical advice is needed on a particular platform or where others have experience with the proposed approach or target audience.

Applications will be judged against the following six criteria:

Quality	The engagement activities encourage two-way engagement. <i>For example, audiences and/or collaborators are involved in the development of the engagement process and/or involved in an Imperial research process – rather than solely being a recipient of the dissemination of our research and/or engagement activity.</i>
Targeted	Targeting of specific audiences with a clear rationale for why those participants, collaborators, and/or partners have been targeted, and evidence that there is sufficient means to reach those audiences. <i>Detailed descriptions are encouraged rather than broad terms such as ‘the general public’ e.g. specific research beneficiaries, ethnic minorities, socioeconomic groups, school key stages, geographically isolated communities, independent adults, families with under 5s.</i>
Impact	What is the need for the project and how will it benefit all those involved. For example participants, audiences and collaborators, as well as meeting Imperial’s research and strategic goals. <i>Relevance of the project or research to the target audience(s). The potential to impact research and/or researchers. Timeliness – Why is this needed now? E.g. linking to external events or agendas e.g. National Science Week, local festivals, or anniversaries of key people/events.</i>
Evaluation	Evidence of realistic evaluation commensurate to the project.
Achievability	Clear and realistic objectives and timelines with a clear plan for delivery of the project and the right expertise involved to make the project a success.
Legacy	The extent to which the project leaves a legacy beyond the life of the project. <i>This could be skills developed (internally and/or externally), relationships/collaborations developed and/or maintained, new avenues for funding being sought or lessons learnt to inform future engagement projects.</i>

Accessing funds and reporting

- A degree of evaluation commensurate to the project scale will be required from you.
- A brief final report will be required to summarise achievements and findings from your evaluation. Final reports should be sent to societal_engagement@imperial.ac.uk by the agreed project date.
- Project activities will need to be documented in some way e.g. by photography or AV, to capture the process and the outcome, which may be shared with the wider College community through the Societal Engagement webpages and/or internal news stories.
- For successful projects, please contact your Finance Officers for advice on setting up an internal G account code linked to the relevant departmental cost centre. Once your code is established, please inform societal_engagement@imperial.ac.uk who will arrange for the funds to be transferred to you.