**Internal Funding: Cross Disciplinary Research for Discovery Science**

**Background**

The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) has awarded a grant of £100,000 to the University of Aberdeen to fund activities up to 31 March 2023 at the latest that will support academics and researchers to ‘discipline-hop’ and, in doing so, facilitate and enhance interdisciplinary research in areas of relevance to NERC’s Discovery Science agenda.

The fund will be managed by the University of Aberdeen Grants Academy. We therefore invite applications for ‘discipline-hopping’ activities in areas of relevance to NERC’s Discovery Science agenda.

For example, projects could be undertaken to:

* Embed researchers, for a short period of time, in departments outside of their own discipline area (within the same organisation, or in other eligible UK research organisations).
* Share insights on priorities and looking for synergies/ new ideas that cut across departmental boundaries.
* Work shadowing in other departments, for example to learn new skills and techniques.
* Organise meetings/ seminars/ workshops between departments and disciplines to share learning, understanding of key terms, concepts, language and tools to tackle problems.
* Work with end users (e.g. businesses, policymakers, non-governmental organisations) to understand how their needs could be addressed through interdisciplinary approaches.

All projects must seek to cross disciplinary boundaries **and** funded activity must be within NERC remit (see ‘Eligibility’ below).

**Eligibility**

The funding must be used to facilitate and enhance interdisciplinary working in areas of relevance to the [discovery science](https://www.ukri.org/councils/nerc/guidance-for-applicants/types-of-funding-we-offer/discovery-science/) agenda. NERC discovery science funding supports environmental research driven by curiosity and imagination rather than the funder’s strategic priorities, and spans the full breadth of sciences and methodologies required to advance our understanding of the Earth’s major systems and to reveal people’s impact on environmental processes. This funding will cover collaborations (to enable discovery within environmental science) across the breadth of UKRI remit, including the arts, humanities, engineering and technology and medical sciences.

The grant can be used to support University of Aberdeen academics and researchers employed at lecturer (or equivalent) level or above, and costs for Post-Doctoral Research Assistants can be supported. PhD students are not eligible.

The funding can be used to support activities within our organisation, or in partnership with other UK research organisations (and/ or end users).

**Level of Award**

We are inviting applications for up to £10,000. Larger awards will be considered if a strong justification can be made. Please discuss your needs with your [Research Development Executive](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/contact-us/contact-us-10570.php) in the first instance.

**Eligible Costs**

NERC has awarded up to £100,000 at 100% FEC. Eligible costs include:

* Directly Allocated staff costs, plus associated indirect and estates costs
* Directly Incurred staff costs, plus associated indirect and estates costs
* Directly Incurred T&S
* Directly Incurred Other costs (to cover other expenses, workshops, consumables etc.)
* Other Directly Allocated costs
* Equipment (over £10k) is not an eligible cost.

**Dates of Eligible Spend**

We can fund activities to 31 March 2023 at the latest due to the terms of NERC funding. **We cannot prepay or commit funds for an activity/event that takes place after 31 March 2023.**

**Review**

Applications will be reviewed by email circulation. The process will be overseen by our Internal NERC Panel which was established to make decisions and provide support to applicants seeking NERC Discovery Science funding. Membership of this Committee comprises an institutional Dean for research, and representatives from Schools with research within NERC remit, along with Research and Innovation. There will also be additional input from the Directors of our 5 Interdisciplinary Centres (as appropriate) and additional representatives to ensure compliance with NERC expectations.

**Key Assessment Criteria**

To ensure that funding is used to facilitate and enhance interdisciplinary research working in discovery science, the Committee will broadly apply the following criteria when assessing the good fit of applications in line with guidance provided:

* Establishing new, high quality **interdisciplinary research** **collaborations**, or significantly enhance existing partnerships, both internally and externally.
* **Building expertise and agility** to work across disciplinary boundaries. This could involve supporting projects which embed researchers in a different School within the University Structure, or in other eligible UK research organisations.
* Supporting **development opportunities for Early Career Researchers** (ECRs) to undertake independent research projects which involve exposure and experience outwith their current research environment. Especially where such development will facilitate future applications to either NERC Independent Research Fellowship or UKRI Future Leader Fellowship schemes.
* Potential of the project to **share skills knowledge, techniques**, and support best practice across academic silos.
* Encourage the development of **stakeholder engagement** in bids particularly for ECRs.
* Demonstrating **clear pathways to achieve outcomes** e.g. attracting external funding or creating demonstrable impact within and beyond academia.

**Ethics**

Where applicable, approval of the relevant ethics board is required as a condition of activities taking place.

**Reporting**

A brief final report on the activities undertaken and lessons learned, as well as a final expenditure statement, will be required and we will share a simple proforma for this purpose in March 2023. The funder’s terms and conditions are still to be confirmed however we expect that ResearchFish submissions may also be a requirement.

Please note details of successful applications will be added to [Pure](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/pure-14556.php). Awardees are encouraged to keep Pure up to date with the latest research outputs and activities. For more information and guidance on how to add your content to Pure please visit [Pure | StaffNet | The University of Aberdeen (abdn.ac.uk)](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/research/pure-14556.php).

**Internal Funding Cross Disciplinary Research for Discovery Science**

**APPLICATION FORM – Round 2 - January 2023**

Please submit this form by email to [grantsacademy@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:grantsacademy@abdn.ac.uk)

**Deadline: The next deadline is 26 January 2023. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis after this date with the proviso that the activities have to be completed by 31 March 2023 at the latest. Early application is strongly encouraged.**

*Comments in italics are provided for guidance and should be deleted prior to submission of the application. The word limits are provided for guidance; however the application should be no more than five pages (excluding the cost breakdown).*

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| **Section 1: APPLICANT(S)** |
| **Name of lead applicant:** |
| **Other applicants:** |
| **School(s)/Institute(s):** |
| **Email address of lead applicant:** |

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| **Section 2: PROJECT SUMMARY** |
| **Title:** |
| **Proposed Start and End Dates:**  *We can fund activities to 31 March 2023 at the latest due to the terms of NERC funding.* |
| **Summary (maximum 200 words):**  *Please provide a brief summary of the proposed work - in accessible language suitable for an informed, general readership.* |
| **Total amount requested from Internal Cross Disciplinary Research for Discovery Science Fund:** |

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| **Section 3: ABERDEEN 2040 INTERDISCIPLINARY CHALLENGE AREAS** |
| Please select (X) one or more challenge as applicable. |
| Colleagues should feel free to contact relevant Interdisciplinary Challenge Directors for assistance if and when required. |
| Energy Transition |
| Social Inclusion & Cultural Diversity |
| Environment & Biodiversity |
| Data & Artificial Intelligence |
| Health, Nutrition & Wellbeing |
| Other (please give details) |
| Please briefly summarise your interdisciplinary approach (e.g. integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts or theories from two or more disciplines)  NB. Interdisciplinary research is understood to achieve outcomes (including new approaches) that could not be achieved within the framework of a single discipline. Interdisciplinary research features significant interaction between two or more disciplines and/or moves beyond established disciplinary foundations in applying or integrating research approaches from other  disciplines. |

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| **Section 4: UN Sustainable Development Goals** | |
| Please select (X) one or more of the [UN SDGs](https://sdgs.un.org/goals) that your project will inform or align with. | |
|  | |
| SDG 1. No Poverty: Access to basic human needs of health, education, sanitation | SDG 10. Reduced Inequalities: Reducing income and other inequalities, within and between countries ☐ |
| SDG 2. Zero Hunger: Providing food and humanitarian relief, establishing sustainable food production ☐ | SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities: Making cities safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable ☐ |
| SDG 3. Good Health and Wellbeing: Better, more accessible health systems to increase life-expectancy ☐ | SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production: Reversing current consumption trends and promoting a more sustainable future ☐ |
| SDG 4. Quality Education: Inclusive education to enable upward social mobility and end poverty ☐ | SDG 13. Climate Action: Regulating and reducing emissions and promoting renewable energy ☐ |
| SDG 5. Gender Equality: Education regardless of gender, advancement of equality laws, fairer representation of women ☐ | SDG 14. Life Below Water: Conservation, promoting marine diversity and regulating fishing practices ☐ |
| SDG 6. Clean Water and Sanitation: Improving access for billions of people who lack these basic facilities ☐ | SDG 15. Life on Land: Reversing man-made deforestation and desertification to sustain all life on earth ☐ |
| SDG 7. Affordable and Clean Energy: Access to renewable, safe and widely available energy sources for all ☐ | SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Inclusive societies, strong institutions and equal access to justice ☐ |
| SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth: Creating jobs for all to improve living standards, providing sustainable economic growth ☐ | SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals: Revitalize strong global partnerships for sustainable development ☐ |
| SDG 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Generating employment and income through innovation ☐ | None ☐ |
| **If you have indicated that your project will inform or align with one or more of the UN SDGs, please detail which indicator(s) this pump-prime funded project would help to address:**  *For example, SDG7 Affordable & Clean Energy > Target 7.1 By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services > Indicator 7.1.1 Proportion of population with access to electricity.* | |

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| **Section 5: CASE FOR SUPPORT** |
| **Project Description (maximum 400 words)**  *Please include details of interdisciplinary scope, and articulate the ‘discipline-hopping’ activities and how this project will facilitate and enhance interdisciplinary working in areas of relevance to the Discovery Science agenda. If you intend to collaborate externally during the project, provide details of the partners and how they will contribute to the deliverables.* |
| **Project Timeline (maximum 150 words)**  *Please provide a brief timeline of proposed activities, including milestones.* |
| **Expected Outcomes**  *Outcomes from successful applications may include the following, please select all that apply.*  External funding applications  Pilots of proof of concepts  Multi-stakeholder capacity building for transformative future research  New interdisciplinary approaches, methodologies, technologies or archives  Working papers, scoping studies, research reviews or reports  Other (please give details) |
| **Impact (maximum 150 words)**  *Outline how you plan to demonstrate and evaluate impact. Describe impact of the proposed research on non-academic stakeholders (e.g. policy makers, business, third sector) where appropriate. Please name the stakeholders that will be involved in the project if known at this time.* |
| **Justification of Resources (maximum 150 words):**  *Full justification of all costs requested. Include a description of any additional funds or resources that will be used to contribute to the project. Please note you must ensure pump priming funds awarded are spent/ committed by 31st March 2023.* |
| **Plan for sustainability (maximum 50 words):**  *Please detail the plan for sustainability, including details of potential calls or future funding opportunities. If suitable calls have not yet been announced please point to the relevant area(s) of a funder’s strategic plan/ framework.* |

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| **Section 6: COST BREAKDOWN** | | |
| Please complete tables A and B below. In table A, please detail the funds requested from the internal fund.  In table B, please specify any matched funding from other sources if applicable.  Internal funding applications are not currently recorded on the University’s grant management system Worktribe. Should you require any project staff costings please contact the RAMS project team (ramsproject@abdn.ac.uk) to request access to Worktribe’s Standalone Budgets tool. Once your access has been granted please give Research Finance Manager, Donna Walker, access to the standalone budget (add ‘Editor’). | | |
| ***A. FUNDS REQUESTED FROM* Internal Cross Disciplinary Research for Discovery Science Fund** | | |
| **BUDGET HEADING** | **DESCRIPTION** | **AMOUNT (£)** |
| **Project staff** | *Name/Post, Grade / point / %FTE* |  |
| **Academic time** |  |  |
| **Travel** |  |  |
| **Consumables** | *e.g. Lab supplies* |  |
| **Access costs** | *e.g. microscopy* |  |
| **Third party costs** | *e.g. sub-contractors or consultants* |  |
| **Other** | *Detail:* |  |
| **Estates cost** |  |  |
| **Infrastructure tech** |  |  |
| **Indirect cost** |  |  |
| ***Total amount requested from the internal fund*** | |  |

If you have any other funds available to use on this project, please complete table B.

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| ***B. ADDITIONAL PROJECT COSTS NOT REQUESTED FROM Internal Funds*** | | |
| **COST DESCRIPTION** | **SOURCE OF FUNDING** | **AMOUNT (£)** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| ***Total amount funded from other sources*** | |  |

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| **Section 7: ENDORSEMENT BY HEAD OF SCHOOL - OR HEAD OF INSTITUTE** | | |
| The Head of School of the lead applicant should endorse the application. In doing so they agree to take responsibility for provision of the necessary facilities and undertake to ensure timely reporting by the applicant.  *For cross-School/ Institute applications, endorsement from all Heads is required.*  *A copy of email confirmation of endorsement is acceptable.* | | |
| Name | Signature | Date |
| **Signature of Lead Applicant** | | |
| Name | Signature | Date |

**DIVERSITY MONITORING FORM**

The University values and recognises the benefits of its diverse workforce and welcomes and encourages applications from all sections of the community. Gaining information on the diversity profile of applicants and the workforce is important to the University so that the effectiveness of Diversity Policies can be measured, and compliance requirements can be met. Therefore, please support us by completing the following questionnaire. Please be assured that the data you supply will be used for monitoring purposes only and will not be viewed by selection panels. By providing the requested information you are consenting to its use as stated in this paragraph.

**Personal Details**

**First Forename: Other Forename(s):**

**Surname: Known As:**   
**Nationality: Date of Birth:**

**Equal Opportunities Details**

**Please mark with an “X” the boxes which describe you**

**1a I am:** Female  Male  Other

**1b Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were originally assigned at birth:**

YES NO  PREFER NOT TO DISCLOSE

**2. Marital Status:**

Single  Married  Civil Partnership

Co-habiting  Separated  Divorced

Widowed  Prefer not to disclose

**3. Please note the following are the main classification categories used by the Census 2011. Please specify how you would describe your ethnic origin if this differs from the choices given:**

White -British  Asian or Asian ~British Bangladeshi  
 White Irish  Chinese  
 White Scottish  Other Asian Background  
 Irish Traveller  Mixed White and Black Caribbean

Other White Background  Mixed White and Black African  
 Black or Black British Caribbean  Mixed White and Asian  
 Black or Black British African  Other Mixed backgrounds  
 Other Black background  Other Ethnic background   
 Asian or Asian British Indian  Asian or Asian British Pakistani

Arab  Not Known

Prefer not to disclose  
  
If other, please specify ……………………………………………………………………………….

**4. I belong to the following religion, religious body or denomination:**

No religion  Buddhist  Any other religion or belief  
 Sikh  Hindu  Christian Church of Scotland  
 Spiritual  Jewish  Christian Roman Catholic  
 Muslim  Christian other denomination  Prefer not to say

**5. My sexual orientation is:**

Bisexual  Gay man  Gay woman/lesbian  
 Heterosexual  Other  Prefer not to disclose

**6. I have a disability:**

YES  NO  PREFER NOT TO DISCLOSE

Please describe your disability:

Two or more impairments  Physical impairment or mobility issues  
 Specific learning disability  Deaf or serious hearing impairment  
 General learning disability  Blind or serious visual impairment  
 Long standing illness or health condition  Mental health condition

Other type of disability  
 A social/communication impairment such as Asperger’s syndrome/autistic spectrum disorder  
 Prefer not to disclose

**7. Would you describe yourself as a carer?**

(A carer is defined as anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability (including mental health issues) or an addiction cannot cope without their support. Examples of the duties carers may undertake include household tasks (e.g. cooking/cleaning), personal care (bathing, dressing, administering medication) and/or providing emotional support.)

YES  NO  PREFER NOT TO DISCLOSE

