

# Guidance and further information: The Seedcorn Fund

## 1. Background

The Seedcorn Fund is designed to support IPEM members and provide them with an opportunity to work with interdisciplinary teams to take early-phase development of new and innovative research projects leading to the submission of larger funding applications to externally funded grants. These projects should bring together distinct research expertise to address priority research problems in line with the IPEM's Science Leadership Strategy, where there is a clear pathway to sustainable external funding.

Up to £25,000 can be requested for a project, with a maximum duration of one year. Applications are welcomed only from interdisciplinary teams (e.g. groups must consist of a range of staff roles or disciplines, or spread across different sectors, such as NHS, academic, industry partners).

There are no restrictions on the career stage of applicants, but applications led by early career IPEM members are highly encouraged.

## 2. Eligibility criteria

- 2.1. The lead applicant must be a Full Member or Fellow who has been an IPEM member for at least one year prior to the grant application.
- 2.2. Inclusion of IPEM's member and non-member co-applicants will be viewed positively.

## 3. Application

- 3.1. A wide interpretation is permitted in the definition of 'innovation' or 'research'. This can be in any area relevant to physics and engineering applied to medicine and biology including healthcare practice, industry practice, research and teaching.
- 3.2. Applications are encouraged that align with the Grand Challenges and Emerging Trends outlined in the [Science Leadership Strategy](#):
  - Clinical Safety & Security
  - Climate change & the environment
  - Workforce & skills
  - Alignment & collaboration
  - Smart digitisation
  - Personalised health
- 3.3. The funding regulations are:
  - The following costs are allowable: staff costs, costs for supervision/training, equipment costs, transport, accommodation, facilities and consumable costs.
  - IPEM will not meet any portion of the directly allocated staff costs, but the fund may be used to cover directly incurred costs, such as salaries of research assistants
  - IPEM will support approved directly incurred non-staff costs in full. IPEM will not support overhead costs
  - Some directly allocated costs with appropriate justifications may be considered. For

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example, the costs of using research facilities such as imaging scanners.

3.4. The application form must be completed. Details required are:

- **Lay summary:** Briefly describing the project in simple terms that could be publicised to a general audience
- **Relevance:** Outline how this proposal will contribute to achieving IPEM's charitable objective
- **Need and impact:** Describe the need and impact of this project, with reference to a potential group of individuals, entire population(s), the scientific community, and/or commercial benefit. Please indicate and describe which of our [Science Leadership Strategic](#) areas your project is linked to.
- **Methods:** Proposed methods in sufficient detail to allow assessors to take a decision on whether these are reasonable and achievable. Diagrams and images are allowed.
- **Aims, objectives and hypothesis:** Summary of the key aims and objectives of the project and provide a concise statement of the research hypothesis
- **Scientific background:** A technical summary of background information that addresses the innovative aspects of the project
- **Research plan:** Outline of the proposed programme of work, including design and method; method of analysis; expected scientific outcomes; cross-disciplinary nature of the project
- **Research innovation:** Outline of the novel and innovative aspects of the project
- **Maintaining research:** Details of how the project will be sustained long-term
- **Equality and diversity:** Provide details on how you plan to address EDI within your project
- **Governance and ethical issues:** If the project anticipate any ethical issues, provide details on how you would address them
- **Timetables and milestones:** Provide information on the timeline for the project including key milestones and outputs
- **Other applications for funding:** Provide details on other funding applications you have completed
- **Justification of resources:** Provide a detailed breakdown and justification of the costs associated with the project, covering staff salaries, consumables, travel and equipment

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- 3.5. The application form should also indicate whether all ethical approvals relevant to this study have been considered and applied for where necessary
- 3.6. The application form should also contain information about the responsible person for financial administration and a declaration from the project support (i.e. Head of Department, Head of School)

### 4. Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed based on the criteria outlined below:

- 4.1. Does this project fit with IPEM's charitable objective?
- 4.2. Is the application original?
- 4.3. Is the work proposed to be undertaken of high research quality?
- 4.4. Is there a clear justifiable need for this research?
- 4.5. Is the methodology viable?
- 4.6. Is this research likely to have a positive impact?
- 4.7. Are the personnel aspects proposed viable to successfully undertake the work?
- 4.8. Are any ethical issues raised and discussed?
- 4.9. Are the costings appropriate?

### 5. Assessment procedure

- 5.1. Upon submission of your application, the Operations and Governance Officer will confirm that the applicant meets the eligibility requirements and will remove any ineligible applications.
- 5.2. All eligible applications will be sent to the Prizes & Awards Committee to begin the peer review process. Suitable individuals from the Prizes and Awards Committee or Scientific Panel of Experts will be identified to review the applications.
- 5.3. Reviewers will assess the application form for each of the criterion in Section 4 above and will provide a written report providing feedback on each section of the application form.
- 5.4. The reports will be sent to the Prizes and Awards Committee, who will discuss each application and assessor report in line with the criteria in Section 4. The Prizes and Awards Committee will then decide which applications are viable. Viable projects are ranked and the top-ranking applications are funded in turn until the budget is used up. In some cases, and if there is still funding available, the committee may request more information from the applicant and will defer the decision for funding.
- 5.5. The recommendations of the Prizes and Awards Committee will be sent to STERIC who

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will ratify the decision.

- 5.6. The name(s) of those receiving a Seedcorn Fund will be announced in the Newsletter and on the website once applicants have been informed. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified by e-mail.

## 6. Regulations

- 6.1. This grant is open to IPEM full members and fellows, from UK or overseas, who have been an IPEM member for at least 1 year prior to the grant application. Applications from early career members are highly encouraged. Early career is defined as those within the first 10 years of their career in Physics or Engineering in Medicine.
- 6.2. In a year when a call is announced, a submission deadline will be given. We aim to fund projects every year, subject to funding being available. Successful candidates will be announced, usually by 30 September.
- 6.3. Candidates must complete the application form.
- 6.4. Applications will be considered by the Prizes & Awards Committee. Feedback will be provided to all applicants.
- 6.5. Grants will be made on the basis of the details supplied in the application form. Additional funding requirements due to price increases, incorrect information etc must be met by the requesting institution/candidate.
- 6.6. IPEM will ask for regular reports of the status of the funding, and unused awards, in part or full, must be returned to IPEM.
- 6.7. If successful, regular reports are required to be sent to Prizes & Awards Committee containing information on the progress of the research project. The timings of the reports are dependent upon the intended length of the project. Typically, a quarterly report would be required to be submitted to the Prizes & Awards Committee, outlining: i) details of the work completed so far, ii) any issues arising such as delays, alternative methodologies, iii) projected timescales for completion, iv) plan for the next quarter.
- 6.8. At the conclusion of the grant, the Prizes and Awards Committee will determine the most effective way to communicate the work achieved (i.e. SCOPE article, talk at an IPEM conference etc.)
- 6.9. Initial results from this study relating to the outcome of the grant must be published in an IPEM journal, eBook, topical report etc in the first instance.
- 6.10. The applicant will present their work achieved from this grant at an IPEM event.
- 6.11. The recipient of the grant must acknowledge financial support from IPEM in any

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conference presentation or publication on the topic of the grant.

6.12. The maximum award that can be applied for is £25,000, with the following requirements:

- IPEM will not meet any portion of the directly allocated staff costs, but the fund may be used to cover directly incurred costs, such as salaries of research assistants.
- IPEM will support approved directly incurred non-staff costs in full. IPEM will not overhead costs.
- Some directly allocated costs with appropriate justifications may be considered. For example, the costs of using research facilities such as imaging scanners.

6.13. Candidates are restricted to 2 Seedcorn Fund awards which must be separated by a minimum of 5 years.

6.14. VAT Purchases of medical research equipment using a charitable donation in the UK is normally zero rated for VAT purposes (See Vat Notice 701/6 charity funded equipment for medical, veterinary etc uses). Your application needs to be explicit around the VAT position. Please check with your finance department because you need to provide the supplier with a written declaration of eligibility. Outside the UK other VAT/tax rules may apply and again the applicant is required to make enquiries in order to minimise the cost of the bid as appropriate. If VAT/tax is paid and subsequently found not to apply a refund must be given to IPEM.