Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland

Research Incentive Grants Presentation

About the Trust
Research Incentive Grants: Eligibility, Aims & Scopes, Advice to Applicants
About the Carnegie Trust

• Charity, SC015600, created by Andrew Carnegie in 1901
• One of over 20 foundations created by Carnegie
• Original endowment: $10 million, now worth about £80M
• Income from interests, special dividends generated by investment portfolio
• Annual income about £2.5 million (post COVID)
• Our purpose defined by Trust Deed written by Andrew Carnegie and by Royal Charter

“... providing funds for improving and extending the opportunities for scientific study and research in the universities of Scotland...”
Funding schemes

Clause A of Royal Charter: Extending opportunities for Research
- Research Skills Development through
  - UG Vacation Scholarships
  - PhD Scholarships
  - Research Incentive Grants

Clause B of Royal Charter: Payment of Tuitions fees
- Undergraduate Tuition Fees
- Study Support Grants
Ongoing constraints

- Financial constraints
  - Drop of 40% in income in financial year 2019-20 due to COVID
  - Stagnant income in last two years with slow growth predicted for years ahead
  - March 2020 round of RIGs funded by using reserves
  - 21-22 and 22-23: focus on rebuilding reserves
  - Impact of inflation on real value of individual grants

- Impact on the Trust’s funding schemes
  - **Vacation Scholarships** for Undergraduates
    Smaller number of awards made in 21-22 (65, down from 81 in 20-21)
    Going forward: may be suspended for one year depending on demand for other schemes
  - **Carnegie Research Workshops**: Scheme permanently closed
  - **PhD Scholarships**
    Funded extensions into 22-23 for Carnegie PhD Scholars affected by the pandemic (1 to 12 months in length)
    Drop in number of awards: 12 in AY 22-23
  - **Research Incentives Grants**
    Scheme suspended until AY 2022-23 with only one round of funding available this year.
    About £500K available for this single round.
## Applications and awards 2019-20 & 21-22

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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UG Tuition Fees</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>£505,237</td>
<td>£395,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacation Scholarships</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
<td>£187,685</td>
<td>£211,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>PhD Scholarships</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>£892,785</td>
<td>£1,102,955</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Incentive Grants</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>£726,506</td>
<td>nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>308</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>£2,312,213</td>
<td>£1,709,086</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**RIGs 2022: Practical details**

**Closing date**
- One deadline in 22-23: 30th November 22 for projects starting after 1\textsuperscript{st} June 2023
- To apply, follow the link and go through the eligibility checker:  
  https://www.carnegie-trust.org/award-schemes/research-incentive-grants/

**Decisions**
- Communicated in an email to applicants by 1\textsuperscript{st} May 2023

**Funding available**
- Maximum grant value is £15,000 and minimum value £1,500
- About £500,000 allocated for this single round
- Likely to fund 40-50 projects at the most: highly competitive

**Maximum project length**
- 12 months & projects must start within 12 months of the date funding was awarded
Eligibility: Principal Investigator (1)

- **Definition of an Early Career Researcher**
  - At the closing date for a particular round the PI must be either:
    - within 7 years of their **starting independent academic career** OR
    - within 7 years of **completing a PhD** (from date of thesis submission)
  - In determining the length of independent academic career, the following factors are taken into account:
    - Periods of part-time working are calculated on a pro-rata basis
    - Career breaks (e.g. parental leave, extended sick leave), periods of employment in non-researcher roles or periods of unemployment are not included in calculations
  - If in doubt, check with the Trust first by dropping us an email at: incentive-grants@carnegie-trust.org
Eligibility: Principal Investigator (2)

- **Employment terms**
  - Employed (= salaried position) as a **researcher** at one of the eligible HEIs in Scotland:
    - Universities: Aberdeen, Abertay, Dundee, Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Heriot-Watt, Queen Margaret, Robert Gordon, St Andrews, Stirling, Strathclyde, UHI, UWS
    - Glasgow School of Art and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
  - Employed either full-time or part-time on an open-ended or fixed-term contract.
  - End date on fixed-term contracts must be 3 months after the end of the funded research period.
  - Staff whose position is funded by another academic’s grant must email us a statement from their PI/Funder confirming the applicant has clearance to apply from the funder and from their PI.
  - Applicant must have time and resources to undertake the research – as confirmed by HoD/S during the application process.

- **Note:** above restrictions only apply to the PI (=Applicant).
Research project eligibility

- **Aim of the scheme:** Enable the PI to conduct a short research project, either stand-alone or an initial study expected to lead to a more extensive project.
- Open to **all academic fields**
- No geographic restrictions as to where the research is carried out

**Research activities:** project could include (but not limited to)
- field work, data collection
- archive and library visits
- development and testing of a new methodology or concept
- surveys, interviews or focus groups
- laboratory tests and experiments
- access to other research facilities unavailable in the applicant’s home institution, etc.

- **Exclusions:** organisation of seminars/workshops/conferences, knowledge exchange or public engagement events, facilitation of networks, or solely aiming at the digitisation of resources or data.
Eligible costs

Eligible costs include but not limited to

- Travel, accommodation and subsistence for the PI, collaborators or participants
- Salary costs of a research assistant, technical or administrative staff
- Survey costs
- Consumables and equipment
- Animal costs
- Access charges to specialised research facilities
- Consultancy fees, specialist services etc.
- Contingency for inflation
- Dissemination costs: publication, conference presentation, public engagement or knowledge exchange activities

A full list of eligible costs is available on the Trust’s website. **Full justification** must be given for each of the cost items at time of application.

**Restrictions and exclusions:**

- Dissemination costs: max 10% of the budget requested
- Excluded: PI’s salary and that of collaborators, PG studentships, indirect/estates costs, other overheads
Assessment process

Carnegie Research Assessors
Use four criteria
Score proposals on a scale of 0 to 100

Panel members
Review proposals and assessments
Give one score on scale of 0 to 100
Rank proposals based on scoring of both reviewers and panel members
Awards are based on this ranking and the available budget

First sift: eligibility check by Carnegie staff
Peer review: each proposal reviewed by 2 Research Assessors
Shortlist of proposals for panel review
Panel review: each proposal reviewed by 2 panel members
Panel Meeting: to determine funding cut off and make funding decisions

Tip: Make sure your application is complete. We will not contact you if required information is missing and the application will not get pass the first sift.
Criterion 1: Originality & significance

- A **clearly specified** research question/hypothesis.
- Addressing a **significant scientific, societal or intellectual** issue.
- Strong case for the proposal’s importance and originality from an **international perspective**.
- Clearly **filling gaps** in, or **extending**, existing knowledge.
- Potential to advance the academic field of the proposed research, or expected to impact on industry, culture or public policy, or more widely.
- Prospect for the project to open up new areas of study.
- Potential to further strengthen research in the chosen field within the Scottish universities (strategically significant).
Criterion 2: Feasibility

- **Principal Investigator:** has the necessary **expertise** and **experience** to deliver the research project.

- **Proposal**
  - Clear and realistic rationale for the proposed methodology, timescale and resources.
  - Specified research methodology and activities are appropriate for the project to yield results.
  - Applicant has considered potential **pitfalls or difficulties** and how these could be best handled.

- **Budget:** Requested **funds** are appropriate for the scope of the project and essential for its successful completion.
  - The budget demonstrates **value for money**.
  - **Justification for resources:** clearly and fully explains why the cost items in the budget are necessary and relevant to the project.
    - Does the applicant provide a rationale for the different cost items in the budget?
    - Could any of the costs be covered by funds from the applicant’s own department or university?
    - Could the research take place without the requested funds?
Criterion 3: Outcomes and Outputs

• The proposed research outcomes are **relevant** and of sufficient **scope**.

• The academic outputs are anticipated to be of **high quality** and sufficient strength, e.g. likely to be included in future REF.

• Is the project likely to open up a new area of research and/or lead to the preparation of larger grant applications to other funders?

• Are the anticipated outcomes and outputs likely to have an **impact** through industrial applications, cultural events, or public policy development and/or on the chosen research field?
Criterion 4: Overall quality

• An overall quality assessment on the basis of the above criteria.

• Form
  • Grammar, spelling, syntax
  • Clarity of writing, convincing
  • Presentation

• Content
  • Do the various parts of the proposal all fit together?
  • Does the description of the methodology and expected outcomes fit with the stated objectives and the research questions?
Final words of advice

Fit with the funding scheme

- Check you meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme/funder you wish to apply to.
- Make sure your proposed research activity fits the remit of the scheme you are applying to.
- Don’t apply for funding towards costs that are not eligible for a particular scheme or funding body.

Developing a proposal

- Great ideas don’t necessarily make great proposals.
- Allow yourself plenty of time to develop your research ideas.
- Chat to others about your ideas. Can you explain clearly and concisely what it’s about to a non-specialist?
- A proposal is a demonstration: convincing, clearly written and to the point.
- Strong proposals are the sum of all their different parts: don’t underestimate the importance of realistic costings, a clear and precise justification for resources, or a solid description of methodology, outcomes and outputs.
- Picture in your mind or draw a sketch showing how the different parts of the proposal fit together.
- Mood does affect writing: take a break, go for a walk, talk to a friend!
- Get a critical, but friendly, colleague to review your proposal before you submit.
- Not successful? Ask for feedback and try again!

Good luck!
Further information about the Research Incentive grants

Visit our website: https://www.carnegie-trust.org/award-schemes/research-incentive-grants/

Download today’s slides at the above page, under the heading Downloadable documents.

To discuss a proposal informally or ask questions, email: Incentive-grants@Carnegie-trust.org

Follow us on Twitter @CarnegieUni
Applying for a RIG: Pitfalls and how to avoid them
### Criterion 1: Originality and Significance

#### Common errors

- Proposal does not clearly or explicitly explain how it will fill gaps in existing knowledge and/or what particular gaps it aims to fill.
- Proposal makes a strong case for its importance for the Scottish context but originality from an international perspective is absent or understated.
- Conceptual/intellectual or scientific framework is not well explained, justified or ignores recent developments and/or publications.
- No link is made to existing work relevant to the topic.
- Rationale for why a particular project needs to take place is not clearly stated.
- No hypothesis or research questions or very broad research questions.
- Proposal lacks critical discussion of the concepts underpinning the proposed research.

#### Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research topic or subject</th>
<th>Have I clearly stated my specific research questions or hypothesis?</th>
<th>Why is this research important?</th>
<th>How does it relate to existing work?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State what you aim to research</td>
<td>What do you wish to address?</td>
<td>Why is this research relevant?</td>
<td>What is the conceptual/scientific framework for this work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define the subject of your proposal</td>
<td>What specific needs/gaps am I aiming to fill?</td>
<td>What is the rationale for this work?</td>
<td>Are there recent development relevant to my research? What are the limits to this existing work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is its relevance from an international perspective?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How will my own work add to what is already known?</td>
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</table>
**Criterion 2: Feasibility**

**Common pitfalls**

Applicants are unaware of the limitations of the proposed approach or methodology. The proposal aims to apply a specific method of investigation but the team members lack the expertise relevant to the proposed research.

Criteria/rationale for choosing particular groups, communities are not explained.

Lack of details on what particular data the applicants propose to use, how it will be collected, processed and analysed.

Tight timescale for scope of proposal.

The expertise/time contribution from each member of the project team is not explained.

No justification is given for the budget items and the applicant simply lists the cost items in the budget once again.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expertise and experience</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Value for money</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have I done work in this area before &amp; mentioned it in the proposal?</td>
<td>Have I allowed for enough time for the scope of the project?</td>
<td>Are the requested funds what is required for a project of this scope?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I need to bring in additional expertise, e.g. collaborators?</td>
<td>Why is my proposed methodology the better option?</td>
<td>Is there a clear rationale for the proposed costs? E.g. justification for resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have I listed my relevant publications?</td>
<td>Have I allowed for setbacks or challenges?</td>
<td>Am I realistic about what I can achieve within the scope of project?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have I taken into account other variables that may influence the outcomes?</td>
<td>Am I realistic about what I need? It’s OK to be ambitious!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is the rationale for my methodological choices?</td>
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**Expertise and experience**

- Have I done work in this area before & mentioned it in the proposal?
- Do I need to bring in additional expertise, e.g. collaborators?
- Have I listed my relevant publications?

**Methodology**

- Have I allowed for enough time for the scope of the project?
- Why is my proposed methodology the better option?
- Have I allowed for setbacks or challenges?
- Have I taken into account other variables that may influence the outcomes?
- What is the rationale for my methodological choices?

**Value for money**

- Are the requested funds what is required for a project of this scope?
- Is there a clear rationale for the proposed costs? E.g. justification for resources
- Am I realistic about what I can achieve within the scope of project?
- Am I realistic about what I need? It’s OK to be ambitious!
**Criterion 3: Outcomes and outputs**

**Common pitfalls**

- Little detail as to where findings will be published and disseminated
- Unclear what impact the findings might have
- Need to clearly state how the applicants intend to impact on a policy process, service delivery etc. What steps will they take to disseminate the findings to the right groups?
- Lacks an explicit strategy for informing policy makers and practitioners
- Lack of engagement with user community for the research could limit the usefulness of the findings and their dissemination
- Proposal does not convincingly make a case that the findings will provide sufficient evidence to underpin decision making processes in this particular area.
- Need for stronger links with user groups/policy makers while developing the research to facilitate impact further down the line.

### Outputs

- Have I named the potential journals I am targeting for publication?
- Have I named the conference I am targeting for presenting findings?
- Are there other opportunities for dissemination relevant to my project?

### Outcomes

- What is the potential **added value** of my research?
- Will my project result in a new methodology, knowledge, data etc.?
- Can the project be developed further with other grant applications?

### Impact

- What is the likely impact? Is this impact intellectual, societal, economic or scientific etc.?
- Who can benefit from my findings?
- What strategies will I follow to facilitate impact?
Criteria 4: Overall quality

Common pitfalls:
- Lack thorough editing
- Poorly written, syntax errors
- Spelling mistakes
- Poorly presented

Form
- Have I checked my grammar and syntax?
- Are names and titles spelt correctly?
- Is my writing style clear and to the point?
- Does my text flow logically?
- Have I kept to the funder’s guidelines?

Content
- Do the various parts of the proposal all fit together?
- Does the description of the methodology and expected outcomes fit with the stated objectives and in the research questions?