

## Frequently Asked Questions: Fusion Investment Fund

Updated: June 2012

The following abbreviations are used throughout this document to refer to the strands:

- **SMN** Staff Mobility and Networking
- **CCCP** Co-Creation and Co-Production
- **SL** Study Leave

### General

Q: Who is responsible for the fund?

*A: Professor Matthew Bennett (PVC) is responsible for the fund on behalf of UET and chairs all three selection panels.*

Q: If funds are 'under-spent', does the school return the funds to the pot? And school accountants provide a report on how money spent?

*A: Yes all under-spent money should be returned to the Fund for re-allocation in a subsequent round. Major departures from planned expenditure must be agreed in writing from the Panel Chair.*

Q: How long before a successful applicant can apply again to one of the strands?

*A: Applicants can apply to the next call.*

Q: What is the purpose of the fund?

*A: The fund exists to support a range of practical initiatives to provide pump priming around Fusion.*

Q: Is the fund open to everybody?

*A: Yes all strands of the fund are open to every member of academic staff at BU. There are specific requirements for the SL Strand and the reader is referred to the specific details of that strand which can be found on the staff intranet. Visiting Professors/Fellows are not eligible to apply, but may be associated with applications indirectly. With respect to the CCCP Strand there is an expectation that senior colleagues should be looking to find funding their projects externally and should not necessarily need to apply to a pump priming fund of this sort.*

Q: What is a Principle Investigator and how is this different from a Co-Investigator?

*A: A Principle Investigator is the lead academic on a project, the individual who is responsible for submitting the application and subsequently taking a lead in managing the fund. A Co-Investigator is simply another member of staff who is contributing or collaborating on a project. Where a submission is being developed by a team of individuals they will need to nominate a Principle Investigator for the purposes of managing the submission.*

Q: Do funds awarded from the FIF contribute to my Schools Research & Enterprise targets?

*A: No, they are internal funds not external funds. Staff should also be aware that in seeking promotion or performance increments internal grant income such as that obtained from the FIF is not viewed as favourable as income generated externally.*

Q: Have any changes been made to the different strand since they first went live?

*A: Yes the CCCP Strand agreed to reduce the minimum value of bids to £5K in the first round (July 2012) and subsequently to £2k in future calls. The SL Committee recognises that in some cases it may need to make grants larger than £15k in order to support some periods of study leave. Applicants requesting larger sums should make this clear on the application form and in the case of support.*

## **Application Process**

Q: What support is there to help me write my application?

*A: We have run a number of bid surgeries over the last few weeks (May/June 2012) including several sessions about writing the perfect proposal. There are further surgeries details of which can be found on the Staff Intranet and BU Research Blog, in addition you are encouraged to speak to your colleagues or contact the Professor Matthew Bennett (PVC) directly for support.*

Q: Do I need to provide a CV and demonstrate a track record in a particular activity?

*A: For the SMN and CCCP strands submission of a CV is not required and while a track record may in certain circumstances strengthen a case for support, the fund is about investing in innovation and new departures so a track record in a given area is not essential. For the SL strand applicants are requested to provide a CV alongside their application form and any letters from host institutions, where relevant.*

Q: Do applications need to be costed at full economic cost (fEC)?

*A: No, staff time is not to be costed into proposals, nor BU overheads with the exception of new posts such a research assistants costed into a proposal. Principal and Co-Investigators will need to give an estimate of the amount of their time that will be allocated to the project if successful however. If in doubt discuss this with RKE Operations.*

Q: I don't have detailed costings, does this matter?

*A: Yes, you need to have precise and detailed costing for proposals based on the minimum expenditure necessary to execute a project. If in doubt discuss this with RKE Operations and please bear in mind that basic principles of 'value for money' will apply at all times. We want the fund to benefit as many people as possible.*

Q: Do I need to justify the resources requested?

*A: Yes, clearly state why expenditure or resource is required. Panels may decide to fund a project but to strike out anything in their view that is 'wasteful or unnecessary' expenditure.*

Q: Can I make more than one successful application to the same funding strand?

*A: You can in theory apply to every call of a particular strand and be successful. It is the merit of the proposal that is key.*

Q: Can I apply to a different strand of the fund at the same time and link the applications?

*A: Yes you can, but be aware that obtaining funding from one strand does not guarantee funding from another. For example, you could apply for a period of Study Leave and link this to an SMN application to provide additional support for travel for example, or to enhance scale and scope of your proposed activity.*

Q: Do I need references for applications to the SMN and CCCP strands?

*A: No, references are only needed for an SL application.*

Q: On the application form I am asked for two references. I wish to apply for the Study Leave Strand, who can I ask to be a referee?

*A: Your line manager should be a referee as the fund needs to ensure that the impact of any study leave is managed. A second referee should be a member of your schools management team, for example your Dean, Deputy Dean Research/Education or a senior Professor who is familiar with your research.*

Q: How will the references be obtained and will they remain confidential? Why are they needed?

*A: The Resources Administrator (FIF, Sam Furr) will email referees following receipt of your application. References will only be seen by the Chair of the SL Panel (Professor Matthew Bennett, PVC) and used to verify the principle which underpins this funding strand namely that: 'no student or fellow staff member will be adversely disadvantaged by the study leave applied for'. It is about verifying that the implications of a period of Study Leave have been worked through in detail.*

Q: What is meant on the form by Benefits/Impacts?

*A: This is about benefits or impact on BU stakeholders, these can be broadly defined as: students, staff, external professions or industry and society at large. A project should be able to deliver impact or benefits across a range of different stakeholder groups but is not necessarily expected to benefit all potential stakeholders.*

Q: Can I use a CCCP application to obtain capital investment in equipment and who will have control of that equipment?

*A: In theory small pieces of equipment and capital investment can be funded from this strand of the Fusion Investment Fund, however the fund is there to facilitate and pump prime activity not necessarily fund it directly. For example, if you wanted to invest in a new laboratory or digital editing suite it would be more appropriate to use the fund to develop the 'prospectus' or 'pitch' for that investment to be obtained from an external source (e.g., donor or research bid) than to apply for the money directly. Smaller piece of equipment bought as part of a project will be at the disposal of the project and under the control of the Principal Investigator during the duration of the project and subsequently managed as any other capital purchase would be within a School, that is at the disposal of all staff/students.*

## Assessment Process

Q: Who will assess my application?

*A: Each of the three funding strands is managed by a selection and management committee chaired by Professor Matthew Bennett (PVC) and consists of a range of self-nominated colleagues from across BU at a range of different staff grades. The composition of each panel is as follows:*

### **Staff Mobility and Networking Committee:**

Matthew Bennett (Chair), Mark Hadfield, Feng Tian, Ann Bevan, Richard Shipway, Christina Koutra, Timothy Etheridge. Administrator: Sam Furr

### **Study Leave Committee:**

Matthew Bennett (Chair), Adele Ladkin, Stuart Allan, Zulfiqar Khan, Ann Hansford, Keith Hayman, Jane Murphy, Jim Andrews, Deborah Sadd. Administrator: Sam Furr

### **Co-creation and Co-production Committee:**

Matthew Bennett (Chair), Anthea Innes, Holger Schutkowski, Hugh Chignell, Caroline Jackson, Heather Hartwell, Susan Horner, Richard Scullion, Hong Bui, Sarah Bate, Louise Hanlon-Brooks. Administrator: Sam Furr

**Additional/reserve panel members:** Dimitrios Buhalis, Stephen Page, Jim Roach, Jan Wiener, Ann Hemingway, Karen Thompson, Simon Thompson, Fran Biley, Christos Gatzidis, Miguel Moital, Huiping Xian, Mark Brisbane.

**Panel meetings:** The panels will meet three times for each call: 1) Prior to the deadline to confirm the assessment criteria, FAQs, committee working methods, etc.; 2) Shortly after the deadline a moderation panel meeting will be held to assess the applications and select projects to fund; and, 3) After the awards have been made to review the process.

Q: There is no one from my School on a panel and no subject specialist, why and will this affect my chance of success?

*A: The panels are lay academic panels and not subject specific which is true of many external funding bodies. They are there to provide a broad assessment and consequently it is one of the reasons why it is important to make your proposal or case for support accessible to a broad readership. Panel members are not there to represent specific academic areas or Schools but are there as BU academics and have been instructed to disregard School/Group loyalties in making their assessments.*

Q: What is the function of additional/reserve panel members?

*A: They will be drafted into a moderation committee meeting should it be in danger of not being quorate for example. Panel members who have submitted an application to the strand on which they are part of, or who have a conflict of interest (for example, a personal relationship with one of the applicants) are unable to take part in the moderation meeting.*

Q: Will the minutes of the panel meetings be made public?

*A: Yes, via the Staff Intranet in due course.*

Q: Can I contact a panel member directly for advice (or feedback) on an application?

*A: No, any questions should be directed either to Professor Matthew Bennett or to the Fusion Investment Fund email address ([FusionFund@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:FusionFund@bournemouth.ac.uk)).*

Q: Is the assessment process confidential?

*A: The assessment process is confidential as are the contents of any unsuccessful proposal. Successful applications will be made available in due course via the Staff Intranet, unless there are material reasons of confidentiality for not doing so. The Panel Chair will agree this with the applicant at the time the funding is awarded.*

Q: What are the detailed assessment criteria for each strand?

*A: This was not available prior to the week of the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012 because the panels had not met before then, but these have now been agreed as set out below. These criteria may change in light of practice and case law and may be updated for subsequent calls.*

### **Study Leave Assessment Criteria**

All criteria are equally weighted and will be scored out of 4 [Weak, Fair, Good, Excellent].

- 1. Quality of Proposal:** basic assessment of the case of support: how well written is it? Is it convincing? The principle here is that irrespective of how good an idea is it won't be funded unless the application/case is well-made, identifies novelty, is convincing and therefore competitive both within BU and beyond.
- 2. Project Viability:** a project/application should meet the technical requirements as set out in the FIF Study Leave Funding Policy, primarily that no *'student or colleague should be adversely*

*disadvantaged by the leave of absence*'. The panel will look particularly to see that letters of invitations and support are provided to show clearly that resourcing issues have been considered and managed accordingly.

3. **Contribution to Fusion:** the proposed period of study leave must contribute to Fusion. Proposals need not be perfectly balanced but must show a trajectory or path towards a Fusion contribution. Equally a proposal should not solely be about research, education or practice. A proposal should demonstrate alignment to School and Corporate Strategy as set out in BU2018 (<http://strategicplan.bournemouth.ac.uk/>).
4. **Impact or Benefits to Stakeholders:** this is about the outcomes from a period of study leave and the return on investment derived there from. In this context 'return' is defined in the broadest of terms and not necessarily solely in terms of money but across a wide range of Fusion based activity. This could also be re-phrased in terms of 'value for money'. Stakeholders are defined as: BU staff, BU students, BU community, external stakeholders and society at large. There should be a clear dissemination strategy for the work/learning obtained so that it can be shared by all at BU. The panel will look favourably, as evidence of commitment, on applicants who also secure or are applying for other funds to support their proposed period of study leave especially those externally sourced.
5. **Value to the Individual:** the panel is keen to recognise and acknowledge the importance of the award to the individual's career and the opportunities for development, progression/promotion and enhanced qualification that it will provide. This is true at all stages of the career journey.

#### **Co-Creation/Production Assessment Criteria**

All criteria are equally weighted and will be scored out of 4 [Weak, Fair, Good, Excellent].

1. **Quality of Proposal:** basic assessment of the case of support: how well written is it? Is it convincing? The principle here is that irrespective of how good an idea is it won't be funded unless the application/case is well-made, identifies novelty, is convincing and therefore competitive both within BU and beyond.
2. **Contribution to Fusion:** how will the proposed project drive co-creation/production within/between BU Stakeholders? Stakeholders are defined as: BU Staff, BU Students, the BU Community, External/Professional Stakeholders and Society at Large. Proposals need not be perfectly balanced but show a trajectory/path towards a Fusion contribution. Equally they should not solely be about research, education or practice. Projects that help drive interdisciplinary collaboration across BU and beyond will be favoured. A proposal should

demonstrate alignment to School and Corporate Strategy as set out in BU2018 (<http://strategicplan.bournemouth.ac.uk/>).

3. **Impact/Benefits to Stakeholders:** this is about the outcomes from project and the return on investment. In this context 'return' is defined in the broadest of terms and not necessarily solely in terms of money, but it could be equally expressed in terms of 'value'. There should be a clear dissemination strategy for the work/learning obtained so that it can be shared by several stakeholder groups. Plans for communication about the project outside BU will also be viewed favourably.
4. **Innovation & Sustainability:** the fund is looking to invest in innovative and novel ideas which have the potential to have a large impact on BU Stakeholders. Proposals by new academics will be viewed favourable by the panel. The fund is about 'pump-priming' or 'facilitating' so sustainability beyond the life-time of the project is an important element. What funds, opportunities, and follow-on initiatives will the project/investment unlock or lead to? Projects that have a clear set of auditable deliverables and future outcomes which can be tracked will be favoured over those that don't and do not set out a clear set of deliverables.
5. **Feasibility:** is the project deliverable and can the outcomes be achieved within the requested resource envelope and the timescales set out in the proposal? In the spirit of 'pump-priming' how will the project leaver additional resources to help deliver the project? Is the project contingent on those resources?

#### **Staff Mobility and Networking Assessment Criteria**

All criteria are equally weighted and will be scored out of 4 [Weak, Fair, Good, Excellent].

1. **Quality of Proposal:** basic assessment of the case of support: how well written is it? Is it convincing? The principle here is that irrespective of how good an idea is it won't be funded unless the application/case is well-made, identifies novelty, is convincing and therefore competitive both within BU and beyond.
2. **Proposal Content:** the assessment panel are looking particularly for proposals which deliver two or more of the following: research/educational/practice collaborations; international partnerships around research, education and staff/student exchange; drive international recruitment and internationalisation; enhance international student experience; and provide training or enterprise opportunities. Projects that drive cross-BU collaboration and inter-disciplinary activity will be actively favoured.

3. **Contribution to Fusion:** how will the proposed activity drive staff/student mobility and networking within and between BU Stakeholders? Stakeholders are defined as: BU Staff, BU Students, the BU Community, External/Professional Stakeholders and Society at Large. Proposals need not be perfectly balanced but show a trajectory/path towards a Fusion contribution. Equally they should not solely be about research, education or practice. Projects that help drive inter-disciplinary collaboration across BU and beyond will be favoured. A proposal should demonstrate alignment to School and Corporate Strategy as set out in BU2018 (<http://strategicplan.bournemouth.ac.uk/>).
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## Feedback & Reporting Process

Q: How will I find out the outcome of my submission?

*A: You will receive an email from Professor Matthew Bennett (PVC) normally within four weeks of the submission date. For the SMN and CCCP strands there are three possible outcomes: (1) grant awarded; (2) grant not awarded, but re-submission to a later or different call is encouraged; and (3) grant not awarded and re-submission of the current proposal is not encouraged. In the case of the SL strand there are four possible outcomes: (1) study leave grant awarded; (2) study leave grant awarded subject to clarification of key points/arrangement; (3) study leave grant not awarded, but re-submission to a later call is encouraged; and (4) study leave grant not awarded and re-submission of the current proposal is not encouraged without a major re-think.*

Q: What sort of feedback will I receive?

*A: In the formal result letter you will receive the panel's assessment of your application against the criteria and some basic panel comments. However each panel has nominated the Professorial*



*members, including the Panel Chair, to provide oral feedback should you request it. Their contact details will be provided in the result letter and it is up to the applicant to make an appointment with one of the named contacts to receive oral feedback in person. Detailed written feedback will not be provided. The feedback mechanism will be clearly set out in the result letter.*

Q: Can I appeal a decision?

*A: Yes. There is an appeals process, but to be clear grounds for appeal are based on the fact that due process has not been followed or that there is substantive and demonstrable evidence that your application did not receive a fair hearing. Appeals that simply challenge the opinion of the panel will not be allowed; material irregularity or evidence of prejudice/inequality are the only grounds. Appeals should be made to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Tim McIntyre-Bhatty via the Resources Administrator (FIF) Sam Furr within four weeks of the date of the result letter.*

## **Project Management Process**

Q: How will the funds be administered?

*A: Upon receipt of your result letter you will be requested to confirm your acceptance of the award. The funds will then be transferred to your School budget and it will be the responsibility of the School to administer the funds. Audits will be conducted on c. 20% of awards to ensure funds have been spent according to the agreed project plan.*

Q: How will funds be managed if there are more than one School involved?

*A: The funds will be awarded and managed by the Principal Investigators School. Co-Investigators from other Schools will file their expenditure requests to that School. Funds will not be split between Schools.*

Q: Will there be an end of award report?

*A: Recipients of funds are expected to complete an end of award report within one month of the end of a funded project. They are also expected to provide material for use on the Staff Intranet, BU Research Blog and BU's external website, for example video/podcasts, images, text, etc. Outputs produced by projects will be monitored bi-annually for three years after the project end.*