

UNIVERSITY OF READING COMMUNITY FUND

Application Guidance

About the University of Reading Community Fund (the “Fund”), including how and when to apply.

You can apply for funding to develop and support a project or activity you are working or volunteering on. This project or activity can form part of your job within the University or may be something you do outside of your employment at the University provided that:

1. The project involves working with and for the benefit of a community group and/or individuals, located within the Thames Valley (defined as within the counties of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire or Oxfordshire); and
2. The project will further at least one of the University’s charitable objectives of advancing education, learning or research.

The aim of the Fund is to support projects that:

- Add value to new or existing partnerships between the University and the Thames Valley community; and
- Have the potential to create a positive social impact for the Thames Valley community; and
- Advance learning, education or research.

Projects should demonstrate clear and achievable goals.

Projects should also have a clear budget breakdown that shows you are applying for an appropriate amount of money to deliver your project. Ask for what you need rather than the maximum amount. Successful projects will demonstrate there is value for money.

Who can apply?

This Fund is open to employees of the University of Reading. This includes anyone with a substantive employment contract at the University of Reading, regardless of grade or role, as of the date of the application deadline. It includes those on fixed term contracts.

It is our preference for applications to be made by a minimum of two University employees jointly, to allow for the continuation of the project should one employee be unable to continue with it (temporarily or permanently) or cease to be an employee of the University.

Levels of funding available

There is no minimum amount of funding that can be applied for. Although the emphasis of the Fund is to provide one-off, smaller awards to projects (in the region of £1,000 p.a.), there is the capacity for the Fund to make a number of larger awards (up to a maximum of £10,000 p.a.) on a one-off or multi-year basis, where the selection panel feels more significant investment, over a longer period of time, will make a transformative difference to the Thames Valley community and the University's charitable objectives.

How much money is available?

A total sum of £30,000 is available to award for the academic year 2023/24. Levels of funding for future years will be announced once confirmed. Please see below restrictions on what we won't fund noting in particular, that this includes University staff salaries.

What won't we fund?

The aim of the scheme is to fund projects and activities which work with and for the benefit of Thames Valley community groups. We will not normally provide funding for

- Activities or projects that seek to promote religious or political beliefs.
- Activities that seek to further the interests of standard for profit organisations.
- Salaries of staff, although awards, or part thereof, may be used by a successful applicant to engage a person or persons to provide services on an ad hoc basis.
- General running costs of a building or organisation.
- Activities where there is not sufficient evidence of a will to engage positively with the University of Reading.
- Projects which do not sufficiently demonstrate how the outputs of the project will further the University's charitable objectives of advancing education, learning or research.
- Projects or activities that do not align with the University's Royal Charter or policies including but not limited to non-discrimination and freedom of speech.
- Projects or activities that may damage the University's reputation.
- Any activities/projects where profits will be generated from the award.

Do I need to work with the community in developing my bid?

Applicants must demonstrate they will be working with a Thames Valley community group and/or individuals and that the project will deliver tangible benefits to that community. These requirements are more likely to exist where projects have been co-developed in partnership with a Thames Valley community group.

Application process

- The scheme will run annually (subject to available funds and approvals).
- The Fund will open for applications from the first day of the University Summer Term.
- Applicants will only be considered if they have fully completed and submitted the application form provided.

- You will be required to obtain line manager and Head of School approval.
- The Fund will close to applications at midnight on 30th June.
- A due diligence process will be carried out by representatives from the Vice Chancellor's Office.
- A selection panel will meet in September to assess all applications.
- Some applicants, particularly those requesting larger sums of money and/or funding over multiple years, may be required to attend an interview with the selection panel.
- Applicants will be notified in writing of the funding awards in the first week of the University Autumn Term and funds will be disbursed upon written acceptance of the award.
- Unsuccessful projects cannot be re-submitted during the same academic year.
- Successful applicants will be required to agree to and sign an award agreement to confirm that they will adhere to the following (non-exhaustive) requirements:
 - Allocate the funding in accordance with the application;
 - Assign any Intellectual Property Rights in any results and reports that arise out of the project to the University;
 - Provide evidence of expenditure in the form of accounts and receipts;
 - Agree to the reporting obligations imposed by the University;
 - Engage with ASEO in preparation of internal and external communications to promote the project and the scheme more generally;
 - Allow the University the right to audit any accounts;
 - Repay the funds should (i) the funds not be spent in accordance with the application and budget breakdown (ii) the project not be carried out diligently and in accordance with the proposal (iii) there be no discernible advancement to education, learning or research.
- Funds should be spent by 31st July, the end of the University financial year.

How can I increase my chance of success?

We are more likely to fund applications if they:

- Have a clear itemised budget.
- Are clearly explained in plain English within the word limits of the application form.
- Offer value for money.
- Create a clear and simple pitch for the selection panel.
- Clearly set out how the project will:
 - Add value to new or existing partnerships between the University and Thames Valley communities; and
 - Create a positive social impact for the Thames Valley community; and
 - Further the University's charitable objectives namely advance learning, education or research.

Who will decide if my application get funds?

A selection panel, comprised of the Vice-Chancellor, one academic member of staff and one non-academic member of staff, will decide on the award of funding. All awards are made at the sole discretion of the selection panel, their decision is final and not subject to appeal.

Accounting requirement

The University will require evidence that the Funds awarded have been spent according to the agreed budget and application.

If the details of the approved application change subsequent to funds being awarded, the project leaders are required to inform the Vice Chancellor's Office vc@reading.ac.uk of the proposed change, in writing. Any significant changes will be subject to review and approval by the selection panel.

Funding will be transferred to a restricted Project Code and subject to audit in the normal way in accordance with University policies and procedures. Funds will not normally be provided in advance.

Reporting requirements

- All recipients of one-off awards will be required to complete a short project report at the end of their funding period setting out how the project has
 - Added value to new or existing partnerships between the University and Thames Valley communities;
 - created a positive social impact for the Thames Valley community; and
 - Furthered the University's charitable objectives namely advance learning, education or research.

A template will be provided for this. Recipients of multi-year awards will be required to provide a report at the end of each yearly funding period. You may also be asked to be involved in broader communication activities relating to your project and supply photographs as required.

You will be required to account for the expenditure of the funding allocated to you to the University's satisfaction.

Withdrawal of funding

The University may, in its absolute discretion, at any time;

- Vary the amount of funding available under the Fund and/or withdraw the availability of the Fund entirely.
- Change the eligibility criteria or other terms and conditions of the application process.

Misuse of funds

The University reserves the right to seek repayment of any funds allocated to a particular project should:

- A successful applicant not spend the funds in accordance with the agreed budget and application.
- The project not be carried out diligently and in accordance with the proposal.
- There be no discernible advancement to education, learning or research.