



Engaged & Participatory Research Funding Scheme Guidance (2026-2027)

Description of funding scheme

The Engaged and Participatory Research Fund is an annual funding scheme supported by the University of Exeter's Participatory Research Fund allocation from Research England.

Because of Research England funding rules, all funding must be spent by the end of June 2027. Please only propose activities that can realistically be completed within an 8-month timeframe (i.e., November 2026 to June 2027).

A total of £70,000 is available. You can apply for between £1,000 and £10,000.

Applications must be co-created by a University of Exeter researcher and an external partner who is not from a higher education institution.

Aims of the Engaged & Participatory Research Fund:

- 1) Enable engaged and participatory research throughout the research lifecycle.
- 2) Benefit communities affected by or involved in the research.
- 3) Promote inclusive and equitable research practice.
- 4) Create lasting impact and future research opportunities.
- 5) Build capacity for engaged and participatory research by developing the skills, experience, confidence and networks of both researchers and external partners.

What do we mean by 'engaged and participatory research'?

- 'Engaged research is a two-way process which recognises and values the expertise, skills and knowledge of non-academics. Engaged research encompasses the different ways that researchers meaningfully interact with other partners during the research process, enabling the co-creation of research questions and shared delivery of research. Partners could include communities; members of the public; private, voluntary sector or public organisations.'
- Participatory research is an approach to research that is collaborative, where people whose lives are affected by the issues being researched are equal partners in designing, undertaking and disseminating research to bring about social change. Participatory research emphasises the principles of inclusivity, respect, reflexivity, responsibility, and transparency, and involves a continuous cycle of reflection, action and learning.

We know it can be difficult to judge whether your idea fits a funding call. The examples below show the types of projects we are looking to support.

Relationship building – funding to help researchers and external partners start new relationships, strengthen existing partnerships, or build connections with communities. Outputs could include things like meeting notes, partnership plans, maps of shared interests, or partnership agreements. Costs might cover travel, venue hire, refreshments, participant payments, etc.



Research planning – funding to support the co-design of engaged or participatory research, with external partners or communities. Projects should include clear engagement activities delivered within the funding period to generate the plan. Outputs could include things like workshop reports, a research funding application, or a research ethics application. Costs might cover travel, venue hire, refreshments, participant payments, facilitation, editing support, bid writing support, etc.

Research – funding for engaged and participatory research activities that can be completed within the award period. Projects should have a clear and realistic scope. Where required, ethics applications should be ready to submit or already submitted. New partnerships are welcome, but projects should still include meaningful activities that can take place during the funding period. Outputs could include things like participant recruitment, data collection, easy-to-read summaries, infographics, exhibitions, toolkit, policy brief, etc. Costs might cover travel, research assistant time, refreshments, venue hire, participant payments, materials, design work, photography, videography, etc.

Extending research impact – funding for activities that build on previous engaged or participatory research and help create social, cultural, environmental, economic, health, legal, political, and/or technological impact. Applicants must explain the impact they hope to achieve, how it will be achieved, and how it will be evidenced. Outputs could include things like trainings, toolkits, games, resources, exhibits, podcasts, radio or print news, policy briefs, apps, etc. Costs might cover design, printing, materials, consultants, training, etc.

Your project may fit one category or several. This is not a complete list. If your project is very different from these examples, please email per@exeter.ac.uk before developing a full application.

Who can apply

The lead applicant must be a member of University of Exeter staff, or a postgraduate student applying with a staff member as co-applicant. We welcome applications from both academic and professional services staff at any career stage. Every application must also include a lead co-applicant who is external to the University of Exeter and does not work for a higher education institution.

If you are external to the University of Exeter and would like to apply but do not yet have a university partner, please contact per@exeter.ac.uk. We will try to connect researchers and community partners, although we cannot guarantee a match.

We particularly encourage applications from and with groups who are underrepresented in research.

Application process

A Word version of the application form is available on the Public Engagement with Research (PER) website to help you prepare your submission: [Funding | Public Engagement | University of Exeter](#)

However, *applications must be submitted through the online Microsoft Form: [Engaged & Participatory Research Funding Application – Fill in form](#)*. We welcome discussions about any reasonable adjustments that may help applicants apply to this fund. If this is relevant to you, please reach out well in advance of the deadline to Dreolin Fleischer, Engaged Research Manager, at d.n.fleischer@exeter.ac.uk.

The application deadline is 10AM Monday 5 October 2026. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.



If you have questions, we encourage potential applicants to attend one of the drop-in sessions below. Members of the PER team will be available to answer questions. You do not need to register. Simply copy and paste the Teams link in your diary and join the session on the day.

Date	Link
11:00-11:30 / Tuesday the 25 th of August	Microsoft Teams meeting join: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/376498056149689?p=RSEa2fKoq9zFPnYvan Meeting ID: 376 498 056 149 689 Passcode: Dc2mg25m
13:30-14:00 / Wednesday 9 th of September	Microsoft Teams meeting join: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/396041683770232?p=SdBxKXSRzNmwsCHtZc Meeting ID: 396 041 683 770 232 Passcode: mF2LP2Kk
9:30-10:00 / Thursday the 24 th of September	Microsoft Teams meeting join: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/388315546166423?p=6y7R0l7Tvfthl2X6Pv Meeting ID: 388 315 546 166 423 Passcode: hv3oG7Qq

Selection process

Each application will be reviewed by a member of the Public Engagement with Research (PER) Team and a second reviewer with relevant subject, engagement, or methodological expertise. Applications reviewed positively by both reviewers will be shortlisted for panel review. The panel will include people from both inside and outside of the University. The panel will take a 'portfolio approach', aiming to support a range of projects across disciplines, to funding, which means we will be looking to support a range of projects of different sizes and budgets, with researchers from different disciplines across career stages. Projects which show direct benefit to communities involved in and/or affected by the project will be prioritised.

For reference:

In 2024, we received 60 applications, shortlisted 23, and funded 13 projects.

In 2025, we received 69 applications, shortlisted 20, and funded 14 projects.

The applications will be reviewed according to the following assessment criteria:

Assessment Criteria

Criterion	Description	Weight (%)	Relevant application questions
Aims	We are looking for projects that align with the aims of this funding scheme.	15	1-3
Partnership & Communication	We are looking for evidence that each partner has a clear and suitable role, that decision-making is shared fairly between university and external partners, and that there is a plan for ongoing communication.	15	4-7



Project Feasibility	We are looking for a clear project plan with key milestones and intended outcomes that are realistic for the requested budget and funding period.	20	8-10
Value for Money	We are looking for budgets that use funding appropriately and clearly explain planned spending. Where relevant, budgets should include payment for partner time and public involvement.	10	11-13
Ethical Considerations	We are looking for evidence that ethical issues have been carefully considered.	10	14-16
Inclusivity and Equity	We are looking for plans to address power imbalances and support meaningful involvement from underrepresented groups, where relevant.	10	17-18
Mutual Benefit	We are looking for a clear explanation of how the project will benefit both university and community partners.	10	19
Legacy	We are looking for projects that could lead to future activity or lasting impact.	10	20-21

Key Dates

Date	Item
Monday 17th of August 2026	Funding announcement
August-September 2026	Drop-in advice sessions (schedule above)
Monday 5 th of October 2026 (10am)	Application deadline
Friday 23 rd of October 2026	Notice of awards to applicants
Monday 2 nd of November 2026 (10-11am)	Kick off meeting for award holders
Wednesday 30 th of June 2027	Awardee spending deadline
Friday 30 th of July 2027	Awardee reporting deadline

Budget

We want to support as many high-quality applications as possible with the funding available. Make sure your budgets are informative and easy to understand. The funding period is short, so make sure your plans are achievable within the time available to you and your partners. Feasible projects with worthwhile outcomes are usually more competitive.

You can use funding for:

- Paying for space, refreshments, and materials
- Paying for a facilitator, or community researcher time
- Paying for student ambassador time
- Paying for contracted researcher (e.g., Research Assistant, Research Fellow) or Student Intern
- Participant payments
- Domestic travel (note: travel should only be undertaken where required and in line with the University's Travel Policy). Link to travel policy: [University Travel Policy.pdf](#)
- International expenses (participant payments, refreshments, travel by those within that country, etc.)



You *cannot* use funding for:

- Travel between countries
- Paying for core funded staff, topping-up existing salaries or covering postgraduate studentship fees or estates and indirect costs
- Activities that are funded under existing grants
- Projects aimed at a purely academic audience, or projects disseminating research findings with no participatory elements
- Projects where the primary goal is outreach to schools/colleges and do not include any participatory elements

Please *also* note:

- Where appropriate, some or all the funding may be granted to the external partner to enable flexibility of the spend (possible for larger, constituted organisations with a bank account). A collaboration agreement will be prepared and signed by both partners.
- Matched funding is not required. However, if you have matched funding available, please do indicate this in the application.
- You do not need to submit an idea on Worktribe, and you are responsible for determining your budget without Research Services support.

Ethics

If your project involves research with people, you will need research ethics approval from the University of Exeter. Please make sure you allow enough time for this in your project plan. If you are unsure, there are ethics self-assessment tools ([Ethics Self-Assessment Tool – UK Statistics Authority](#)) or for UoE staff [Ethics self assessment tool.pdf](#).

Successful applicants

Successful applicants will receive a funding letter explaining the award conditions and an invite to a kick-off meeting online. If part of the funding will be managed by an external partner, the award holders must sign a collaboration agreement. Funding managed by University of Exeter staff will be assigned a budget code. **University of Exeter lead applicants are responsible for processing payments and managing project finances through T1.** The PER team can provide advice but is not responsible for the financial administration of your award.

Reporting requirements

Reporting requirements are designed to be light touch and support reflection on project learning. In February 2027, award holders will be invited to a one-to-one meeting with the PER Team to discuss progress. At the end of the award period, award holders will be asked to prepare a draft blog post using a provided template and complete a short feedback survey.

Questions

If you have questions about the fund or the application process, please read the Frequently Asked Questions document found on the PER website, alongside other information: [Funding | Public Engagement | University of Exeter](#)

You can read blogposts about previously funded projects on the Public Engagement with Research website: [Funding Archives - Public Engagement with Research \(PER\) at the University of Exeter](#)



Lead Applicant Checklist

	I have reviewed the guidance document
	I have reviewed the application questions and discussed them with my external partner
	My co-applicant is a partner who is external to the University of Exeter and not within a higher education institute
	I am staff (or a postgraduate student) at UoE with a contract (course) end date no sooner than 31 st of August 2027
	We are applying for funding between £1,000 and £10,000
	Our proposed activities are achievable within 8 months (approx. Nov '26 – June '27)
	(If you have question) I have attended a drop-in session to answer questions we have about the Fund

Note: Microsoft Copilot was used to support editing this document for clarity, readability, and conciseness. All content was reviewed and approved by the document author.