**UoB Benjamin Meaker Annual Awards**

**FAQs for 2024-25 Call (2025-26 Awards)**

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# Applicant eligibility

## I would like to apply but my current contract at the University of Bristol ends in March 2026. Can I still apply?

No, all award holders must be contracted members of staff for the entire 2025-26 academic year (i.e. up to and including 31 July 2026).

## I am interested in applying as an International Collaborator, but I am from a non-academic organisation, can I apply?

All applicants to this scheme must be from a recognised research organisation, and non-academics are therefore not eligible to apply for a Benjamin Meaker Annual Award. If you are a non-academic researcher interested in collaborating with UoB academic researchers and you are from an organisation which has the in-house capacity in terms of staff and infrastructure to support a research programme and its outputs, we recommend you take a look at our [Research Development International Collaboration Awards](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/international-research-development/bristol-research-development-opportunities/rdica/) instead.

## If my International Academic Collaborator moves to a different university during the course of the award, can the award continue?

Yes, potentially; however, any changes such as this need to be discussed and signed off by the RDI team. Please therefore contact us as soon as possible to discuss your particular situation, and the potential implications for the project. Please note that such changes would only be possible where the collaborator’s new employer is an international research organisation which would have been eligible for our scheme in the first place, and where the total project costs do not exceed the amount originally awarded.

## The scheme actively encourages ECR involvement in the project. What kind of ECR involvement would you expect to see?

The purpose of encouraging Early Career Researcher (ECR) involvement is to support capacity development and prepare ECRs to develop and manage their own externally funded research applications in the future. ECR engagement at all stages of the project is therefore encouraged, including helping to develop the research concept and application as well as embedding them and their research into the project. Among other things this might include active engagement with partners, literature reviews, impact assessment, and/or policy or paper development. While ECRs can benefit from being involved in activities such as facilitating workshops, we would not expect projects to simply use an ECR in an administrative capacity such as planning travel and/or the day-to-day administration of running a project. Please also refer to the FAQ on employing a Research Associate in the project below.

## Can I employ a Research Associate to support my activity?

Potentially, yes, but it depends on the nature of the work. Some activities, such as full-day workshops, require dedicated support for logistical arrangements such as booking the venue, arranging catering, coordinating attendees, etc.. We would normally expect this support to be at an administrative level, as outlined above; however, we recognise that sometimes subject-specific expertise can be beneficial to activity planning. For example, someone with understanding of the subject area who is able to help identify suitable collaborators, design a suitable programme of activities and set an agenda, and provide suitable questions and topics to workshop in order to serve the research development ambitions. This scheme does not, however, support research activity itself, nor buy-out of academic staff time for the purpose of bid or publication writing.

# Project activity

## Is this scheme the same as the Bristol Benjamin Meaker Distinguished Visiting Professorships?

No, but there are similarities. The former Bristol Benjamin Meaker Distinguished Visiting Professorships scheme was for visits to Bristol of 1-3months, whereas the new Benjamin Meaker Annual Awards are year-long awards allowing for multiple visits in either direction. This is therefore a more substantial award, and accordingly the expectations for outcomes and outputs are also higher. Both schemes, however, are framed around collaboration between international academics and the UoB community, and the pursuit of world-leading, curiosity-driven research. Please therefore ensure you fully familiarise yourself with the guidance document for this scheme before commencing your application.

## Can I hold a workshop in a third location (i.e. neither in Bristol nor my collaborator’s home city)?

Yes, where this is fully justified and represents value for money. For example, where the activity involves multiple collaborators from across a particular region it may be more practical to identify a third location which acts as a central hub for all collaborators, reducing travel time and costs.

## How many visits back and forth can my collaborator and I make during the year-long award?

The frequency and duration of visits will be determined by what best serves the project; however, considerations of value for money must be factored in at all stages. We require at least one extended visit to Bristol by the International Academic Collaborator (minimum one month) during the course of the year-long award, and would usually expect to also see at least one visit to the partner institution by the UoB academic(s). This could either be by the UoB Academic Host and/or the affiliated ECR. If the level of travel in an application is not fully justified and/or deemed excessive, some of these travel costs may be removed and/or applicants may be asked to reconsider their plans if the application is successful. For all awards, we would expect UoB Academic Hosts and International Academic Collaborators to work together remotely throughout the full year, and we would also expect all awards to have a longer-term legacy and continued engagement and development between the collaborators beyond the end date.

## Can I attend a conference as part of this award?

Travel for the specific purpose of conference attendance is not permitted, even if it involves both partners. However, it is permissible to attend a conference as part of a trip where the primary reason for travel is progression of the collaborative activity. Conference fees are not considered an eligible cost under any circumstances, nor are additional travel or accommodation costs if the location of the conference is different to the location of the collaboration (i.e. neither in Bristol, the International Academic Collaborator’s city, nor an approved third location).

## My collaborator and I have plans for several visits during the award, but the exact timing of these will depend on how things develop over the course of the year. Can our plans change?

Yes, within reason. We recognise that sometimes plans need to shift a little bit to capitalise on opportunities or in response to unforeseen challenges. However, your overall award needs to be consistent with what was outlined at application stage (e.g. number and overall duration of collaborative visits). Please also note that all spending must be compliant with the stipulated terms and conditions, and there will be no opportunity for an increase in budget. Under normal circumstances it will also not be possible for an extension beyond the end of the 2025-26 academic year.

## What happens if I cannot complete my award in the 2025-26 academic year due to unforeseen circumstances?

If circumstances have changed unexpectedly and unavoidably and you therefore need to explore changing the dates for your project, please contact the RDI team as soon as possible to discuss. All changes will need approval from the RDI team, so please do not make any arrangements until you have discussed the proposed changes with us and provided us with the rationale, and your request has received approval. We will need to take into consideration several factors which include the implications for the delivery of the activities and outputs outlined in the original application, and any budgetary constraints. Extensions into the following academic year will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.

# Costings

## I am a UoB member of staff who will be travelling abroad for my project. Are my visa and travel insurance costs eligible?

Yes, your visa costs (including travel to/from an embassy for interviews, if required) are eligible provided that the travel is essential to the project. As noted in the call specification, visa costs for International Academic Collaborators are also eligible costs. However, travel insurance for UoB staff is not an eligible cost, as business travel insurance is already available for all UoB staff. More information is available on the UoB [Travel and Working Off-Site pages](https://www.bristol.ac.uk/safety/staff/travel/).

## Does this award cover the costs of carrying out research?

No. We provide funding to cover the costs of travel, accommodation and subsistence to visit or host International Academic Collaborators to develop sustainable research partnerships. Reasonable additional costs such as administrative support and catering for workshops are permitted, provided that the focus of these is on research development (i.e. progress towards collaborative bids and other outputs such as co-authored publications). We recognise that collaborators may well undertake some research during the interaction, but this is not the focus of the funding, and costs directly associated with research are not eligible.

## As part of my project activity, we will be running a workshop in Ethiopia with local community organisations and small NGOs to provide vital local insights into our project. They would only be able to participate if we pay them for their time, and in Ethiopia it is conventional for participants such as this to receive a per diem. Can I pay them for their time?

Yes, under these circumstances it would be acceptable to pay these participants for their time, as they have clear added value for the project and not paying them would be a barrier to their participation. You would, however, need to consult with relevant colleagues in finance and procurement to ensure that your planned method of payment is compliant with University policy and procedures, and consider the potential implications (e.g. for tax or benefits) for the recipients.

## As part of my project activity, we will be running a workshop in Bristol with the NHS and Cancer Research UK. Can I pay them to participate in my workshop?

No, we would not expect to pay for participation from individuals from large organisations where engagement is in their organisation’s interest and falls within the remit of their salaried roles.