

Research Development International Collaboration Award Standard Call 2026-27

Contents

Overview	1
Key dates for next confirmed round.....	1
Funding and scope	1
Eligibility	2
Required outcomes	2
How to apply.....	3
Assessment.....	3
Scoring scale. 1 (weak/ineligible) to 6 (excellent).	4
Guidance for completing the application form	4
Section 1: Details of Collaboration	4
Section 2: Activity Proposal.....	5
Section 3: Funding	6
Section 4: Head of School Declaration and Sign-Off	6
Financial guidance.....	6
Permitted costs	7
Travel.....	7
Accommodation	7
Subsistence	8
Other eligible costs	8
Ineligible costs	8
Example Costings Table	9

Contact information

For all queries, please contact the Research Development International team via
rd-international@bristol.ac.uk

Overview

Purpose: the Research Development International Collaboration Award (RDICA) Standard Call catalyses and advances international research development between University of Bristol (UoB) academics and overseas collaborators, with the primary goal of producing collaborative external research funding bids with the Bristol PI as the lead. This call is designed to support the development of new international collaborations. If you are applying for support for an existing collaboration, you must demonstrate how this award would enable a significant step-change in your collaboration. Additional outputs could include policy briefings and/or international co-authored publications. If your plans don't align to the purpose of this call, you could instead consider applying for the [Global Positioning Fund](#) or check the list of other sources of internal funding on our [SharePoint page](#).

If you believe that it would be of benefit that a partner is the lead on the proposed external grant bid, please contact us at rd-international@bristol.ac.uk before you apply to the RDICA call.

Expectations on inclusive and equitable partnerships

UoB has a commitment to support equitable and transformative partnerships within research programmes co-created by overseas collaborators. Applications should demonstrate an approach that reflects this. Resources and principles that applicants could refer to include:

[Our team's training on Develop: Part 2 of 'Intro to Grant Funding for International Research Collaboration'](#)

[Global Challenges Toolkit](#)

[Equitable Partnerships Resources Hub](#)

[Research in a global setting – UKRI](#)

[ACU Equitable Research Partnerships](#)

Key dates for next confirmed round

Application deadline: end of day on Wednesday 11th November 2026; late applications will not be accepted.

Delivery window for activities & spend: 1st February 2027 – 31st July 2027 (no exceptions) – no activity or spend can take place before February 2027.

Funding and scope

Award size: £2–3k; up to £4k where well justified. Up to £5k where the International Co-Applicant is from a Low- or Middle-Income Country (LMIC), recognising potential additional costs (e.g., flights, visas).

Team structure: each proposal must have a UoB Academic Lead (budget holder) and a named International Co-Applicant. Additional collaborators may be included where they add value.

Activity scope: short visits or similar activities, in-person or hybrid, designed to catalyse and develop joint external funding bids with the Bristol PI as the lead, and that demonstrate alignment to School, Faculty or University research priorities. **Visits and/or associated activities would normally last from a few days up to a week and may involve individuals or groups.** Engagement with wider university communities is encouraged.

Activities should be interactive and involve two-/multi-way knowledge exchange, rather than dissemination events. There must be explicit plans and a clear demonstration of the intention to work on bid development during the visit.

Out of scope (not eligible for funding): conference attendance; sustained research activity; work focused solely/primarily on publications or outputs other than research funding bids.

Eligibility

UoB Academic Lead:

- Based in any school/department/faculty and on any academic pathway; must be officially registered as an academic researcher at the University of Bristol for the full duration of the proposed activities and be employed by UoB at the point when the external grant outcome is due to be announced.
- Any career stage provided there is clear demonstration of the capacity, knowledge, and experience required to apply for and lead significant external research funding bids – see Required Outcomes section.
- PhD students are not eligible to apply as UoB Academic Lead.
- Maximum two applications per UoB Academic Lead per academic year (only one per deadline).
- Unsuccessful bids cannot be resubmitted unless invited.
- Applicants who have not met terms of previous RDI awards (incl. reporting) are ineligible.

International Co-Applicant:

- All awards must have one named International Co-Applicant.
- International Co-Applicant must be eligible to be a joint applicant on the specified collaborative research grant(s).
- Based outside the UK with any disciplinary focus; often academics, however, international partners can be from another sector if their organisation has demonstrable capacity to contribute significantly to developing and participating in competitive research funding bids.

Additional collaborators:

- Participants from any country may be included where their value is justified.
- Costs for academics from other UK universities/eligible UK organisations are not fundable (their own institutions should support their participation).

Required outcomes

Primary outcome: Explicit plans for one or more substantial collaborative external research funding bids that include research income to UoB, with the Bristol PI as the lead. Timelines for bids should be clear and justified.

Additional outputs: Policy briefings and/or international co-authored publications are encouraged. Other outputs are welcome, including those that support strategic aims.

Panel expectations: Multiple planned external research bids and realistic contingency plans are looked upon favourably. Applicants are encouraged to consider contingency plans for alternative external funding sources in case their primary target for external funding is unsuccessful.

What counts as a collaborative research funding bid?

Examples of eligible funding schemes include research funding schemes focused on international collaboration, for example:

- AHRC-DFG Research Grants
- AHRC/ESRC/MRC responsive mode grants with international co-leads
- UKRI bilateral calls on a particular topic, e.g. EPSRC Japan-UK joint call for collaborations in advancing human-centred AI
- Pillar 2 of the EU's Horizon Europe programme
- ERC grants where a clear explanation of how the international collaboration will be integrated into the grant and how this will add value is provided

Examples of ineligible funding schemes include:

- Individual fellowships, e.g. the Royal Society Newton International Fellowships / British Academy International Fellowships
- Other internal UoB funding schemes
- Innovation funding, e.g. Innovate UK funding
- Industry funding
- Commercial tendering
- Gifts from trusts or endowments or individual prizes
- Overseas funding which isn't received by UoB

How to apply

1. Identify a collaboration opportunity between yourself as UoB Academic Lead and an International Co-Applicant (plus any other contributors).
2. Read this guide paying particular attention to the eligibility and assessment criteria, and conditions of award.
3. Download the application form from the [call webpage](#). The UoB Academic Lead and their International Co-Applicant should work together to complete this form.
4. As this is an internal funding award, a [Worktribe submission](#) is usually not required when the total costs are under £5,000 and no staff costs are included. Costing specialists typically only need to be involved to set up a Worktribe where staff time forms part of the proposal (if unsure please check with your Faculty Finance [Costing Specialist](#)).
5. Complete and submit the [Research Compliance Initial Assessment](#) to the Research Compliance Team **before** submitting your application.
6. The UoB Academic Lead must submit the completed application form to their Head of School (HoS) for approval in good time before the deadline. The HoS's typed signature can be accepted if an email trail with their approval is provided. We recommend that applicants notify their HoS of their intention to submit in advance.
7. Email the completed, HoS-approved application to rd-international@bristol.ac.uk before the deadline.

Assessment

Office checks are conducted prior to review. **Applications which do not comply with eligibility and application rules as set out in the call specification will be rejected.**

Applications are reviewed by the RDI panel. A panel meeting is held around 4–6 weeks after the deadline; outcomes and next steps are then communicated to applicants.

Assessment criteria (summary):

Applications will be reviewed against the following criteria:

- Is the primary aim of the proposal to develop and submit a joint external research funding bid?
- In line with Bristol's commitment to support equitable and transformative partnerships, is there strong potential for developing a mutually beneficial collaboration?
- Is there evidence that the applicant and collaborator(s) can deliver the proposed activities and sustain the collaboration beyond the award duration?
- Are the costs reasonable and appropriate, offering good value for money and demonstrating collaborator buy-in through financial and/or in-kind contributions?
- Does the application identify tangible links that will further the school, faculty or university research priorities and specify clear actions to engage with their objectives?

Scoring scale. 1 (weak/ineligible) to 6 (excellent).

Assessment	Score
An outstanding application which fully meets all criteria.	6
An excellent application which meets the criteria.	5
A good application which generally addresses the criteria well.	4
A reasonable application which addresses most of the criteria.	3
A weak application which has some merit.	2
A weak application which does not meet the criteria.	1

Guidance for completing the application form

Applications which do not comply with these rules will be considered ineligible:

- Use **Arial font size 11**.
- Do not alter the margins.
- All sections must be completed, except where not applicable (enter N/A for these).
- Please enter your responses in the white boxes only.
- You must adhere to the word limits for all sections – any applications that go over the word count will have the additional words redacted before being reviewed by the panel.

Please ensure that your application is written for a general audience, avoiding technical detail and jargon which would be inaccessible to a non-specialist.

Section 1: Details of Collaboration

- Provide details of:

- Proposed collaborators and their contribution (**max 50 words in the contribution box**)
- Planned activities
- An **activity title** that reflects the *thematic focus*, not the logistics.
 - Example: “*Linking shopping data with health information for public benefit research*” (not “*Collaborative activity between Bristol and Melbourne*”)
- For **11th November 2026 deadline**, all activities and associated spend must occur **between 1st February 2027 and 31st July 2027**.
 - Please note that project activity cannot start before February 2027.

Section 2: Activity Proposal

Case for Support (max 800 words)

- Use this section to demonstrate strategic value and show clearly how your application meets the call criteria.
- This is the primary section reviewer's assessment, so keep it focused and relevant.
- Do **not** include:
 - Academic references, footnotes, bibliographies, or links
 - Images or diagrams

The Case for Support must cover:

- Research context and background to the collaboration
- Rationale for selecting collaborators
- Strategic relevance of the proposed activities in line with the school, faculty or university research priorities as laid out in their objectives
- Provide a detailed schedule of the planned activities, including the content and people involved, ensuring joint bid development for the external funding opportunity(ies) identified is central to the overall agenda
- Expected outputs and outcomes
- Longterm plans to sustain the collaboration

Important Note

- Ensure each part responds directly to the assessment criteria listed in the call guidance.

Planned external research grant bids

- Use this section to summarise the external research bid(s) that will be developed to support the collaboration.
- Include key details for each planned bid:
 - Funder(s)
 - Scheme(s)
 - Anticipated award value (full economic cost)
 - Submission dates
- All applications **must identify at least one external funder and scheme** that will be targeted for a future research bid, with the Bristol PI as the lead applicant.
- The submission date must be justified in relation to the timing of the proposed activity.

Additional outputs (150 words total)

- Use this section to list additional planned outputs, such as:

- Co-authored publications
 - Policy briefings
 - Joint seminars
 - Public or civic engagement
- Provide only high-level details, e.g.:
 - Proposed topics/titles of coauthored papers
 - Target journals for submission
- You may also note planned internal funding bids, such as:
 - Research Institute Seedcorn funding
 - Impact funding through DREI
- Additional rows may be added as needed.

Section 3: Funding

- Provide itemised costs **in GBP**.
 - Use [xe.com](https://www.xe.com) for currency conversion where needed.
- Total requested funding must not exceed the limits specified in the [Financial guidance](#) section.
- Refer to the [Example Costings Table](#) when completing this section.
- All applicants must contact their costing specialist **at least three weeks before submission** to:
 - Discuss planned activities and proposed costs
 - Confirm whether a [Worktribe](#) costing is required
- **Worktribe signoff is mandatory** if the application includes any **costed staff time** (e.g., administrative support).

Section 4: Head of School Declaration and Sign-Off

- The application must be approved and signed by the UoB Academic Lead's Head of School.
 - **Institute or Centre Directors cannot sign off** applications.
- Contact rd-international@bristol.ac.uk in good time before the deadline if you have any questions about the approval process.
- The Head of School may add optional comments (**up to 200 words**) addressing:
 - The value of the proposed activities to the Department/School and/or UoB
 - Additional context supporting the Case for Support
- If provided, these comments will be considered by the panel as part of the assessment.

Financial guidance

- Applications should typically request **£2–3k**.
- Up to **£4k** may be awarded where fully justified.
- Up to **£5k** may be awarded **for applications involving an International Co-Applicant from an LMIC**
 - India and China are excluded from the LMIC uplift (please speak to the RDI team for more info).
 - The additional amount must relate only to higher unavoidable costs (e.g., flights, visas) or financial constraints of some LMIC institutions.
 - Extra costs must address genuine barriers to participation.
- All applications must demonstrate clear value for money.
- Additional funding from other sources is welcome to supplement the budget.

- Applicants are expected to show some contribution (financial or in-kind) from the International Co-Applicant's institution (excluding LMICs), demonstrating their commitment to the collaboration. Estimated salary contributions related to Co-Applicant time should not be included.

Permitted costs

Information on eligible and ineligible costs is provided in the sections below. Costs considered extraneous to the activities or that aren't fully justified may be deducted from the award value. If you are unsure whether costs are eligible, please contact the Research Development International team (rd-international@bristol.ac.uk). All relevant costs must be compliant with the [University of Bristol travel and expenses policy](#).

Travel

- Funding may be requested for economy return travel for named collaborators (excluding academics from other UK universities).
- Travel normally covers the journey from the collaborator's home to the partner university city; onward travel from another location may be supported if more cost effective or environmentally preferable.
- Applicants must consider sustainability and value for money, avoiding flights where lower emission alternatives are available.
- We would expect the most economical form of airport transfer to be booked, **which would normally be a coach/bus**.
- All travellers must have appropriate travel insurance once plans are confirmed.
 - UoB staff can apply for insurance at no cost through UoB (therefore not an eligible cost).
 - Insurance for international collaborators may be funded if their organisation does not provide it.
- Only economy class travel is funded.
 - Travellers choosing higher class travel must pay the difference themselves.
 - Exceptions apply only where a medical need makes economy unsuitable, in line with UoB travel and expenses policy.

Accommodation

- Applicants must **arrange their own accommodation** and include the cost in their bid.
- Accommodation must be **reasonable and appropriate**.
 - Normally expected to be booked through [Key Travel](#).
 - For visitors to Bristol, [Staff Residential Lettings](#) (including **Principal's House** on campus) is also acceptable.
- For stays in Bristol, the **maximum fundable amount is £120 per night** (excluding breakfast).
- For UoB Academic Lead's travelling abroad, accommodation costs must be:
 - Within [UK Government limits](#) for overseas employee travel, and
 - Within the [University of Bristol expenses policy](#).
- Please note that **maximum limits are** not considered standard rates. Reviewers will assess **value for money** when considering applications, therefore, please ensure the rates you quote are reasonable and justified.

Subsistence

- Applicants may request a daily subsistence contribution for days spent in another country.
- For visitors coming to Bristol, subsistence can be requested **up to £50 per day**.
- For UoB Academic Lead's travelling abroad, subsistence must remain:
 - Within [UK Government limits](#) for employees' overseas travel, and
 - Within the [University of Bristol expenses policy](#).
- Reviewers will assess value for money; the maximum rate should not automatically be requested.
- Subsistence should be reduced where meals are provided elsewhere, such as:
 - Catered events
 - Long-haul flights
 - Hotel bookings that include breakfast
- Example subsistence calculations are provided in the [Example Costings Table](#).

Other eligible costs

- Funding may be requested for mandatory COVID-19 tests or vaccinations required for safe travel.
- Applicants may request support for essential visa costs, including economy travel to and from an embassy for required appointments.
- Event planning and delivery costs may be funded where justified, proportionate, and clearly adding value to the award.
Eligible examples include:
 - Workshops led by the International Co-Applicant for UoB academics
 - Collaborative bid development workshopsEligible costs may include:
 - Administrative staff time for event logistics
 - Reasonable catering through UoB suppliers (e.g., tea/coffee/lunch)
- Funding may also cover:
 - Translation services, including sign language
 - Support for participants in regions with limited internet access, such as free/subsidised dial in options or data bursaries
- The UoB Academic Lead must manage all expenditure and ensure **full compliance with UoB policies**.

Ineligible costs

- Any cost **not explicitly listed as eligible** should be assumed **not fundable**.
 - If unsure, applicants should contact the RDI team (rd-international@bristol.ac.uk) before applying.
- Academic staff salaries or buy-out (UoB or international)
 - Exception: A small amount of Research Associate time may be eligible for planning workshops (contact the RDI team for further info).
- Academic speaker/participant fees or honoraria
 - Exception: Payments to non-academic stakeholders (e.g., NGOs, community organisations) may be eligible if justified.
 - Service providers such as sign language interpreters *are* eligible.
- Estate, indirect, and overhead costs.
- IT equipment, including laptops.
- Research equipment (hire or purchase).

- Conference related costs.
- Retrospective funding requests (activities already undertaken).
- Travel and accommodation for other UK academics
 - Exception: They may receive catering at events where appropriate (e.g., provided lunch at a full day workshop).
- UK based travel, except travel to/from the airport for the main international journey.
- The RDI team will review all costs; excessive or ineligible items will be removed.
- Award values are fixed once confirmed in the offer letter and **cannot be increased** later.
- Successful applicants are **strongly advised** to book flights, accommodation, and visas early to avoid price increases.

Example Costings Table

To calculate the total, you are applying for from the RDICA scheme, please follow these three steps:

1. Calculate the total of all costs
2. Calculate the total of all contributions
3. Subtract the total contributions from the total costs

Activity costs		
Item	Description of individual costs (e.g. per person)	Value (GBP)
Travel costs Please itemise	Professor Forrest visiting Bristol, June 2027 Return economy flights New York-London (£500) Transport to/from airport in New York (£60) Return National Express Heathrow to Bristol (£50) Travel insurance (£20)	£630
Subsistence costs Please itemise and reduce accordingly when a meal will be covered by another source e.g. workshop catering*	Professor Forrest visiting Bristol, June 2027 Daily subsistence in Bristol for 11 days (£35/day for 10 days including breakfast costs, plus a reduced rate of £25 for the day of the workshop as lunch/refreshments will be provided. Total £375)	£375
Accommodation costs Please itemise and indicate if breakfast is included*	Professor Forrest visiting Bristol, June 2027 Nightly rate for accommodation in Principal's House, Bristol (£85/night for 11 nights excluding breakfast, total £935)	£935
Other costs Please itemise	Administrative support for workshop 4 days TSS Administrator (Grade F) to support logistics for the December workshop (£620) Catering costs	£930

	Lunch and tea/coffee for one-day hybrid workshop at University of Bristol for 15 people (£310 including VAT and delivery)	
	Total costs	£2870

Contributions towards activity costs		
Item	Description of individual costs (e.g. per person)	Value (GBP)
UoB Faculty/School/ Dept Contribution <i>Please provide details</i>	Advanced Computing Research Centre (Engineering) have agreed to pay for the administrative support	£620
Collaborator Contribution(s) <i>Please provide details</i>	The New School is paying for Professor Forrest's flights	£500
	Total contributions	£1120

Award amount requested (Total costs – Total contributions)	£1750
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* Please note the following maximum limits:

- For visitors to Bristol, maximum of £50 per day for subsistence and maximum of £120 per day for accommodation
- For UoB researchers going abroad, accommodation and subsistence costs must be within the limits set by [UK Government employees' overseas travel guidance](#) and within the limits set in [UoB expenses policy](#)
- We would expect the most economical form of airport transfer to be booked, which would normally be a coach/bus.