

Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) Proposal Guidance & Information

Fundamentals

The Principal's Teaching Award Scheme (PTAS) provides funding to support learning and teaching enhancement through pedagogical innovation and research. **We welcome funding proposals that focus on teaching innovation, educational research, and/or a combination of both.**

Small & regular grants

There are two grants of differing amount of funding: **small** (monies up to a maximum of £2,500) and **regular** (monies between £2,500 and £18,000). The scope and scale of these projects is roughly proportional to the amount of funding provided. Please complete the correct proposal form and refer to past awards for examples of the types of projects appropriate to each level of funding.

Who is eligible to apply?

- All University of Edinburgh staff with learning, teaching, research, or student support roles. You don't need any special expertise in educational projects and the IAD can provide advice and support on your bid.
- Doctoral students may be Principal Applicants or included as co-investigators, but they must be employed by the university in existing employment contracts.
- Principal Applicants and all members of the PTAS project teams must hold an employment contract that covers the entire period of the award (proposed start date to end date).
- Principal Applicants may only be leading on one PTAS project at any single point in time, and may not apply to lead or co-investigate on any further PTAS projects until they have completed their existing grant.
- Principal Applicants may only hold a **small** PTAS grant once

Where does the funding come from?

The Principal's Teaching Award Scheme is fully funded by donors to the University of Edinburgh Development Trust. Without this ongoing support from alumni and friends of the university, we would not be able to fund these projects which do so much for the quality of the student learning experience at the University of Edinburgh. We would like to thank all of the donors who support the University of Edinburgh Development Trust. In addition, funding for projects related to special calls has been provided in the past by Information Services, the Careers Service and the Widening Participation Strategy Group.

Background Information

What kind of projects do we fund?

We are interested in receiving proposals for a variety of projects within higher education. Generally, applications tend to be focused on educational research, learning and teaching innovations, or a combination of both. Examples of learning and teaching innovations include the use and development of new pedagogies and technologies, or the development of revised class activities, experiences, and assessment practices, etc. Examples of educational research include inquiry into teaching in your discipline, across programmes, or on a specific assessment or pedagogical approach or technique. You might also consider how students learn in specific educational cultures, settings, environments, and modalities (i.e., online, blended). We also welcome projects that concentrate on student support, educational development, and institutional change that widely benefits student learning.

Themes and topics

We welcome proposals focused on all areas of learning and teaching. We particularly welcome bids which focus on the following themes:

- curriculum innovation, curriculum review, curriculum enhancements, and decolonising the curriculum.
- equality, diversity, and inclusion
- assessment and feedback innovations
- sustainability, sustainable development goals
- digital teaching, hybrid teaching and blended learning
- transitions (e.g., school to university, year to year, university to work)

Special Calls (one-off or short-term priority areas) for bids will occasionally be available and these will be advertised on the website and to Schools by the Institute for Academic Development (IAD).

Evaluation and research methodologies

All of the proposed PTAS projects should include a clearly defined and feasible evaluation or methodology that asks whether the research or innovation has met its intended outcomes. All qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodology approaches are welcomed and should be fitted to the research goal and context. Sound evaluation methods should also be used to assess participant or user feedback with any new innovation implemented. If you need assistance with developing an evaluation or methodology of a learning project, please be in touch with the PTAS academic convenor (Jackie Dohaney), prior to submitting, for specific advice.

Targeted at teams rather than individuals.

Proposed projects should usually involve teams of staff and students as there is research evidence that when a small group of staff from one area is involved in a development activity there is a greater likelihood of the innovation being successfully implemented. There could be special circumstances when individual staff would be eligible to apply. Staff and groups of staff applying for funds need to obtain the approval and strong support of their Head of School. Interdisciplinary and cross-School proposals are also particularly welcomed, as impact across university areas is favourable. Cross-institutional collaborations are also welcomed, but we typically do not fund travel, buy-out, or conference fees for external collaborators.

Working with students

We are also keen to encourage bids which demonstrate meaningful student involvement, student-staff collaboration, research assistance, and co-creation in the

project. This could be, for example, where undergraduate and/or PGT students are active co-investigators in PTAS teams or will be involved later in developing and shaping the project. Student involvement should go beyond simply collecting data from students, ideally, they should have a say in how the project progresses where possible. Students' involvement in PTAS projects provides them with an opportunity to develop valuable expertise in teaching, learning and assessment in their subject area while pursuing their studies.

Key Guidance

Length of award

The award is usually offered over one or two academic years, but please ensure you check the budget guidance as there are implications for financial arrangements in your School or Service area. Applicants are asked to clearly indicate on the application form whether they wish the award to extend over more than one financial year.

Level of funding

Small grants are funded up to **£2,500**.

Regular grants are funded up to **£18,000**.

How funds may be used:

Budgets will be assessed for **proportionate** and **reasonable** expenditure by the adjudication committee.

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Buy-out staff time (research time/project assistance)*	Buy-out staff time (teaching/teaching-related/teaching preparation)
Buying-in additional hours from part-time staff	Payment for duties considered to be work that should already be the responsibility of Schools, such as routine course development which staff would do as part of their usual role
Employing students (UG, PGT, PGR) for project roles	Equipment or hardware that a School would normally be expected to purchase in ongoing teaching/IT budgets
Paying for technical and research assistance	Travel, buy-out, or conference fees for external collaborators
Production or printing of materials	Research or learning initiatives already internally funded by the University (e.g., doctoral student scholarships) or externally funded
Specialist Software** not usually provided by the University	
Sharing and communicating project outcomes (e.g., travel, conferences, workshops, other events run internally or externally)	
Transcription, data entry, data processing costs	

Vouchers for compensating research participant contributions	
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*Please note, funds may be used to buy-out time (or buy-in additional hours where staff currently work part time) enabling current members of staff to devote themselves more intensively to the project. Any 'buy-out' of staff time must be linked to *actual* expenses of the role required in the project that will be incurred, i.e., the actual cost of hiring additional staff to cover the duties being released (which should not include teaching duties).

**Check with Information Services on which software is commonly available

Building a good budget

Here is a list of key considerations and suggestions for building a good budget:

- There is no 'Full Economic Costing' for PTAS projects
- Although the grant bids' limit is 'up to £2,500' (small) and 'up to £18,000' (regular) there is no need to match this limit exactly, please request the budget needed for your project.
- During budget creation (prior to submitting your proposal) it is important to consult with and gain advice from local HR (School-level) specialists. Things to consider:
 - Fair and transparent recruitment processes (<https://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/recruitment-guidance>)
 - Expected recruitment timelines.
 - Appropriate salary and grade levels for personnel, including oncosts or overheads.
 - Financial administration of grants (budgets, codes, processes, etc.)
- Please note that accrual (carrying forward monies from one financial year, ending 31 July to another starting 1 August) is not always possible. Your local finance officer should help with this, but you need to do it well in advance of 31 July, sometimes in June. Should you be awarded a grant you will be asked to complete a form with financial codes and at this point you may ask to split the funds over the current and next two financial years. This may NOT be possible for any 'special call' monies.
- Personnel should be listed at an appropriate salary or pay scale and be sure to include oncosts (a.k.a., employment costs) for staff and check for expected increments for future financial years.
- All student workers should be compensated appropriately noting that you **must** pay at least the national minimum wage <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Ethical review

Research involving human participants typically requires approval by a Human Research Ethics Board. Please be aware that if you are conducting research, you will likely need to apply for ethics approval using the relevant procedures in your School or College.

Adjudication of proposals

Proposals will be adjudicated by a committee usually comprised of representatives of IAD, EUSA, an assessor external to the University, Professional Support Services, and one representative from each of the three Colleges. In adjudicating proposals the quality of submissions as well as the distribution of funds from across the three Colleges and across the Professional Service areas will be taken into consideration.

All applications received will be assessed against specified criteria ensuring that those projects that get funded are of high quality. It is anticipated that each year some high-quality proposals may need to be rejected due to limited funds.

Key criteria for success

- Fully completed application form with all signatures and consultations completed (including the Principal Applicant's Head of School/Service)
- Clear and comprehensibly communicated project idea with a sound evaluation or methodology
- Feasible project within the given timeframe and resources allocated.
- Demonstrated some knowledge of the relevant and existing educational literature related to the project research or innovation
- Value for money, where outcomes of the project are broadly applied with stronger proposals reaching across the disciplines and service areas
- Project that demonstrates good practice of equity, diversity, and inclusion principles described in an equality impact statement
- Demonstrate due consideration to the roles and participation of students
- Embeddedness and longevity considered. Are the project activities embedded within existing curriculum and services? How could these activities be resourced beyond the lifetime of the PTAS grant?
- Effective sharing and communication plan for project findings and outcomes within and beyond your School

Award holders' association with the Institute for Academic Development (IAD)

Holders of the award will remain within their School and provide an important liaison function between the IAD and their School. The close association with IAD will also permit them to draw upon the advice of IAD staff during the various phases of carrying out and evaluating their project.

Final reporting

Within four months of the project finishing, the Principal Applicant and team will be expected to produce a short report which will be published on the IAD PTAS web pages. (See templates at <https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/funding/funding/ptas-reporting>)

We strongly encourage PTAS teams to provide copies or links to any final materials e.g., journal/newsletter articles, conference papers or presentations should be attached. Please let us know if it is possible for us to post these on the IAD PTAS web pages.

Sharing and communicating about your project

Award holders will be expected to share the results of their project within the School and University, but also more widely, e.g., through journal articles or through other relevant conferences, events, and communications with donors. The IAD will help facilitate the wider sharing of innovations and evidence resulting from the Scheme through the IAD website. Award holders will be encouraged to present their findings at the annual University of Edinburgh Learning and Teaching Conference, and at other University events. Upon successful completion of their project, we are happy to offer assistance to staff applying for external grants for more substantial projects. Lastly, always be sure to acknowledge the source of the funding, the University of Edinburgh Development Trust, in any public communications about your project.