Important Background Information and Application Guidelines to the Principal's Teaching Award Scheme

Background Information

Targeted at teams rather than individuals
Proposed projects should usually involve teams of staff 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 as well. Staff and groups of staff applying for funds would have to obtain the approval and strong support of their Head of School.

Interdisciplinary / cross-School proposals are also welcomed.

Eligibility
Teams of staff with learning, teaching and student support roles and responsibilities may apply for the award. The expectation is that they hold a contract that covers the period of the award applied for.

Themes and topics
We would particularly value bids which focus on curriculum innovation and/or student-staff collaboration and we continue to encourage bids that demonstrate student involvement in the project itself; This could be, for example, where undergraduate and/or PGT students are active participants in the bid teams or will be involved later in developing and shaping the project. Student involvement should go beyond simply collecting data from students, they should have a clear say in how the project goes forward. As with previous rounds of PTAS we still value the involvement of PGR students in the PTAS process.

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

Length of award
The award may be offered over one or two academic years. There are budget implications for finance, please ensure you check the budget guidance. Applicants are asked to clearly indicate on the application form whether they wish the award to extend into a second year.
Level of funding
Individual projects are funded at the levels of £5000, £10,000 or £15,000.

How funds may be used
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 either the pedagogical research project or the programme/curriculum development project, to pay for assistance with the project, and to cover incidental costs such as production of materials, software needed for data analysis data, etc. Any ‘buy out’ of staff time must be linked to actual expenses that will be incurred i.e. the actual cost of hiring in additional staff to cover the duties being released.

Note that preference will be given to proposals that are not directed at buying out teaching time but rather provide release from administrative or other duties.

The fund should not be used to bid for equipment and hardware that the School would normally be expected to purchase as part of their ongoing teaching and IT budgets. The adjudicating committee will decide if any request for funds is proportionate and reasonable.

Postgraduate students’ involvement as research assistants to projects provides them with an opportunity to develop needed expertise in teaching, learning and assessment in their subject area while pursuing their postgraduate studies. Normally it will be expected that postgraduates are included as researchers on the projects being proposed.

The funds may also be used to support the award holder through provision of relief from other duties and other ongoing support as described above.

Requests for funds to disseminate project outcomes (e.g. at conferences) can be included within bids, though the adjudicating committee will decide if the request for funds is proportionate. There is no separate fund for dissemination.

Assessment/adjudication of proposals
Proposals will be adjudicated by a committee usually comprised of representatives of IAD, EUSA, the Support Services, Vice Principal or Assistant Principal, an external assessor and one representative from each of the three Colleges.

In adjudicating proposals the quality of submissions as well as the distribution of funds across the three Colleges and two types of projects will be taken into consideration.
Value for money will also be a consideration, as will transferability (i.e. the likelihood that the work in your area could be transferred across other subject areas in the University), sustainability (i.e. that where an initiative may run in further academic years, that it is clear how this could be funded beyond the lifetime of the PTAS grant), and further impact.

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

**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 on the advice of IAD staff during the various phases of carrying out and evaluating their project where time permits us to do so.

**Project evaluation**

Within four months of the conclusion of the project, the award holder will be expected to produce a short report. (Link to template) Copies of any dissemination material 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 PTAS web pages. Project reports will be published on the IAD web pages.

**Dissemination**

Award holders will be expected to disseminate the results of their project. This should include dissemination within the School and University, but also more widely e.g. through journal articles or through other relevant conferences and events (such as those organised by the Higher Education Academy [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events)) We will help facilitate the wider dissemination of innovations and evidence resulting from the Scheme through the IAD website. Award holders will be expected to present their findings at the annual PTAS Forum. Upon successful completion of their project, we are happy to offer assistance to staff applying for external grants for more substantial projects.

**Ethical review**

Research involving human participants typically requires ethical approval by a Human Research Ethics Board. Please take note of the relevant procedures in your School / College.
Guidelines for writing the proposal

Two different kinds of proposals are invited:

**Research Projects** are those which focus on researching particular dimensions of teaching, learning or assessment in a given course or programme. Proposals may be geared at reaching a better understanding of how students in courses, programmes and/or subject areas learn or at comparing the influences of different learning activities or environments on student learning. Although the main part of the proposal is a detailed outline of how the study will be conducted, these proposals need to include a section that indicates the implications of this research for learning and teaching in the university.

**Innovation Projects** are those which introduce and evaluate a particular educational innovation. This may include, for example, the design or redesign of courses, the development of certain methods in existing courses, the development of revised assessment practices, etc. Although the main part of the proposal is a detailed outline of how the planned course or strategy will be developed and implemented over time, meet students' needs, link up with the learning objectives, etc., these proposals need to include a section that outlines how the impact of the proposed innovation will be evaluated.

Both, ‘Research’ and ‘Innovation’ proposals should:

- Demonstrate some knowledge of relevant literature with regards to the specific aspects of teaching, learning and/or assessment to be studied and, if applicable, knowledge of innovative practices currently developed or already in place elsewhere.
- Outline the project to be carried out, and show coherence between different elements of the project.
- Show how the project will be embedded within the teaching, learning and assessment practices of the School(s) involved.
- Outline how the project results will be disseminated and the possibilities for ongoing impact on the student experience within and beyond the School.
- Consider the possible impact on equality and diversity. Further guidance and information on relevant policy and procedures can be found here: [http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment)
- Be signed by each team member as well as the Head of School.
Proposals should include:

- A half page abstract/summary that, in case of a successful application, can be used to advertise the project on the IAD website.
- A detailed outline of the proposed project with appropriate references (3-4 pages, single spaced, font size 12 - see full specific guidelines for proposal outline below).
- A one page budget justification indicating what the money will be used for including an explanation of how the research assistant will be involved and what he or she is meant to learn from this involvement.
- As clear an indication as it is possible to give or estimate regarding the likely number of project participants and / or numbers impacted by the initiative.
- Background on the applicants (written by the applicants themselves) indicating the necessary knowledge, skill, and enthusiasm to carry out the proposed project (max 1 page).

Specific guidelines for proposal outline (must not exceed 4 pages, that is 2000 words, including references)

For Research projects, this section should include:

1. A succinct background to the proposed work, including your rationale, theoretical and/or conceptual basis and reference to relevant prior work;
2. The aims and objectives for the project;
3. Details of your methodology (type of data, sample, data collection methods, ways of analyzing your data), including an outline timetable for the work;
4. How you plan to disseminate the outcomes of the project within as well as beyond your School;
5. Details of the implications of this research for learning and teaching in the university

For Innovation projects, this section should include:

1. A succinct background to the proposed work, including your rationale and reference to relevant prior work;
2. The aims and objectives for the project;
3. Details of how the planned course or strategy would be developed and implemented over time, meet students’ needs, link up with the learning objectives, etc.,
4. How you plan to evaluate the impact of the proposed innovation;
5. How you plan to disseminate the outcomes of the project within as well as beyond your School.

Templates for Reports due at the end of projects are available on the PTAS web pages.
Acknowlegdement

We gratefully acknowledge that the funding for the Principal's Teaching Award Scheme is provided by the University of Edinburgh Development Trusts. Without this ongoing support 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 Development Trusts.

In addition, funding for projects focused on online and distance learning, and lecture capture is provided by Information Services.