Important Background Information and Application Guidelines for 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. Staff and groups of staff applying for funds need 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. A Principal Investigator may only hold a **small** PTAS grant once. Principal Investigators may only be leading on one PTAS project at any single point in time.

## 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 or postgraduate (taught or research) 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.

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).

## Length of award

The award may be 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 into a second year.

## Level of funding

## Regular grants are funded up to £15,000.

## How funds may be used

These 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 (note you **must** pay at least the national minimum wage https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates ) | Equipment or hardware that a School would normally be expected to purchase in ongoing teaching/IT budgets |
| Paying for technical assistance |  |
| Production of materials |  |
| Specialist Software not usually provided by the University (best to check with Information Services first) |  |
| Dissemination of project outcomes (e.g. at conferences, other events run internally or externally) |  |
| Transcription, data entry, data processing costs |  |

\* 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). Please seek HR local liaison guidance.

Please note University recruitment guidance and specify the fair process by which you will appoint staff and/or students: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/human-resources/recruitment>

You may wish to offer students the opportunity to act as research assistants for your project. Students’ involvement as research assistants 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.

## Assessment/adjudication of proposals

Proposals will be adjudicated by a committee usually comprised of representatives of IAD, EUSA, an external assessor, 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. 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 longer term impact.

All applications received will be assessed against specified criteria (see below) ensuring that those projects that 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.

## Project evaluation

Within four months of the project finishing, the award holder 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>)

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 IAD PTAS 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 Advance HE <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/programmes-events> We will help facilitate the wider dissemination 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.

## Ethical review

Research involving human participants typically requires ethical approval by a Human Research Ethics Board. Please be aware that you may need to apply for ethics approval using the relevant procedures in your School / College.

# Guidelines for writing the proposal

We are interested in receiving proposals for a variety of projects. Generally, applications tend to be either focused on research or teaching and learning innovations.

**We welcome projects** that involve 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.

We also welcome projects that 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.

**All proposals should:**

* Demonstrate some knowledge of relevant literature related 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.
* Give due consideration to the roles students might play in the proposed project.
* 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>​

* Be signed by each team member as well as the Head of School.

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

Your application should include:

1. Proposal for PTAS Regular Grants Cover Page – including your half page abstract/summary that, in case of a successful application, can be used to advertise the project on the IAD PTAS web pages and project team signatures along with your Head of School’s (or equivalent) signature.
2. A succinct background to the proposed work, including your rationale, and reference to relevant prior work (any research proposals should also include your theoretical and/or conceptual basis for the research) with appropriate references (single spaced, font size 12 advised);
3. The aims and objectives for the project;
4. For projects involving research, details of your methodology (type of data, sample, data collection methods, ways of analyzing your data), for innovation and evaluation projects, details of how the course or strategy would be developed and implemented, meet students’ needs, link to learning outcomes etc., and an evaluation plan;
5. An outline timetable for the work;
6. A one page simple itemised list of costs as your budget justification indicating what the money will be used for including an explanation of how any staff or students hired will be involved and what they are meant to learn from this involvement. There is no full economic costing for PTAS and, for Finance Officers, ‘R’ codes are not usually set up for PTAS projects.
7. Although the regular grant bids’ limit is ‘up to £15,000’ there is no need to match this limit exactly, please request the budget needed for your project.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. A clear Equality Impact statement. PTAS projects have the potential to impact all 9 protected characteristics within the ‘Equality Act 2010’ and ‘Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012’, namely : Age, Disability, Race (including ethnicity and nationality), Religion or belief, Sex, Pregnancy and Maternity, Marriage or civil partnership, Sexual orientation, Gender reassignment.

Please state in relation to these protected characteristics how you have considered (for example) whether this project will: create barriers for any groups, lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups, or contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and the fostering of good relations. You may wish to use the following two headings: 1) How this project is meeting the legislative requirement to ensure equality 2) Any adverse impacts on equality are identified here and their impact mitigated by the following. Please also ensure that written materials used in the project or as an outcome of the project are accessible to all users as per the University guidelines at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/help-consultancy/accessibility/creating-materials>

1. How you plan to disseminate the outcomes of the project within as well as beyond your School;
2. Details of the project implications for learning and teaching in the University
3. 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 including all applicants – a short paragraph for each is fine).

**Acknowledgement**

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 related to special calls has been provided in the past by Information Services, the Careers Service and the Widening Participation Strategy Group.