

# Bidding for UK Centre for Bioscience Funding

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## A quick note on terms:

Institution – refers to your College or University.

Department – refers to the “unit” in which you are based within your institution, for example school, faculty, group or division.

## Introduction

This is an introductory guide to bidding for UK Centre for Bioscience funding. It is aimed at individuals or teams intending to apply for funding from the Centre, particularly those unfamiliar with the bidding process and criteria for awarding funds. This guide is intended to support you in drafting bids, thereby improving your chances of success in the funding process.

All Centre funding is provided on the basis of competitive bids. Your bid will therefore be competing with others from institutions across the UK. This guide covers bids for funding for teaching and learning projects (Departmental Teaching Enhancement Scheme, Teaching Development Fund and Mini-projects); it does not consider the Teaching Award, case studies, or the Student Award.

To greatly improve your chances of being funded your bid must:

- Present a case for why the research or resource is needed
- Benefit the student learning experience;
- Show awareness of other work in the area;
- State its objectives clearly and concisely;
- Demonstrate likely benefits outside your department;
- Provide a sound and realistic project plan;
- Show evidence of commitment to the change;
- Document proposed embedding and evaluation mechanisms;
- Provide a clear budget;
- Address sustainability issues when project funding ceases;
- Give value for money;
- Fall within the disciplines covered by the Centre, see [www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/about/coverage.aspx](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/about/coverage.aspx) for a full list.

## Why does the Centre offer funding?

The Centre supports teaching in HE to improve student learning across the biosciences. Part of our work involves the development, support, evaluation and dissemination of good practice in bioscience teaching. By offering funding for learning and teaching projects we can support effective teaching practice and disseminate the outcomes of pedagogic research projects or resources, on a national basis, benefiting a larger number of staff and students.

In all cases the Centre is seeking to fund projects which will be of general interest or benefit to the whole or large parts of the bioscience teaching and learning community.

- Teaching Development Fund and Mini-project bids will not be funded if they benefit only a single institution or a specific locality
- Departmental Teaching Enhancement Scheme projects will initially only benefit one institution but we would expect the project outcomes and lessons-learned from the process to be of interest to the wider bioscience community.

Outcomes of Centre funded projects have included:

- evaluations of learning and teaching practice;
- case studies;
- good practice and teaching guides;
- trials of new technologies and techniques;
- development of web resources; and
- the roll-out and embedding of a new practice into a department.

The Centre advertises funding in a variety of ways: via e-mail updates sent to the Centre's mailing list; through mailings sent to Bioscience Representatives and Centre members; in the Bulletin (our newsletter) and on our website. Visit [www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/) for information about all current funding opportunities.

If you would like to join the Centre and receive e-mail updates and the Bulletin please register online at [www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/network/joinreg.aspx](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/network/joinreg.aspx)

As a general rule the Centre only offers funding for applications received in response to specific calls and, due to limited funds, does not generally provide funding for unsolicited proposals.

## Who is eligible for Centre funding?

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Because of the way the Centre is funded, our grants are intended for individuals and teams in UK bioscience HE (i.e. based in institutions in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland) . We can consider bids from non-UK institutions if they are a collaborative bid involving a UK institution. Likewise we may consider applications from non-bioscience units, but would want to see clear links with the biosciences and evidence that bioscientists are interested in, and involved in the proposed project.

We do not ask that your department or institution has a minimum number of bioscience HE students and projects do not need to initially involve or affect a minimum number of students. Teaching Development Fund projects funded previously have involved groups of students as large as 300 and as small as 8. For the larger departmental grants we would expect a project to impact on a large number of students across a department, if only a small proportion of the students in a department were involved this would not represent good value for money from our perspective.

Funding is open to projects based in a single department or institution, although one of the criteria of Centre projects is that project partners or critical friends from other institutions are involved.

**Partners** are integral to the project and are based in different organisations or institutions

**Critical friends** are also based at different institutions but are not integral to the work of the project; they are intended to give an outside view of the project and its outcomes to ensure transferability.

## What funding is available?

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Three main funding streams are available from the Centre:

- **Departmental Teaching Enhancement Scheme (DTES)** – up to £15,000 for projects that effect change over a whole department. Advertised in October / November, an initial expression of interest must be submitted by mid January; projects with the potential to be funded are then asked to submit a full bid by the end of March.
- **Teaching Development Fund (TDF)** – up to £4,000 for projects that effect change over an individual's teaching practice, for example within a practical class. Submission deadlines vary.
- **Mini-projects** – occasional focussed funding of £3,000 or £4,000 (depending on the call) for projects within specific areas or themes, such as e-learning or entrepreneurship. Submission deadlines vary.

As mentioned previously, all funding opportunities are advertised on our website; further details are available from: [www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/)

## What can funding be spent on?

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Funding can be used for anything necessary for the completion of the project. We would anticipate funding is mainly used to buy out teaching time. Funding may also be used to pay for, for example;

- administrative support;
- an IT specialist to write code for a programme;
- a student to work on the project or;
- a consultant.

Funding has also been used to pay for staff training, where it was necessary to complete the project, attendance at conferences (where project work has been presented), and consumables. Software is occasionally funded where it is not a common application.

Funding cannot be used to pay for overhead costs and, unless it is an exceptional circumstance, cannot be used to purchase computer hardware.

## How is funding paid?

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For TDF and Mini projects funding is paid in full once the project has been completed, a final report submitted and the agreed project outputs received by the Centre.

For DTES projects 50% of the funding is paid at the start of the project, 25% halfway through and the remaining 25% on completion of the project, once the final report has been submitted and agreed outputs received by the Centre

We do not expect to see matched funding from your department or institution. For DTES projects 25% of the total cost of the project has to be funded by the department in which it is taking place, so, for example, for a project costing a total of £12,000, the Centre would fund £9000, the department the remaining £3000.

## The right ideas

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What sort of projects are funded? The ideas and basis of the work must be applicable to a wide section of the HE bioscience community or provide results that will be of interest to other institutions. Calls for applications may list specific areas and types of projects of particular interest to the Centre and may also identify projects unlikely to be funded.

First and foremost your proposal should be based on a good idea. It must observe the criteria set out in the call, offer real benefits to your own institution and interest and / or benefit the wider community, and demonstrate knowledge of the field and other work that has already been carried out.

The bid criteria ask that; “with reference to the literature and other work, you establish a case demonstrating a need for the project within the bioscience community”. So where can you find out more about the needs of the bioscience teaching and learning community and also track down supporting literature and other work?

- What issues and challenges are you currently facing in your department? Do colleagues at institutions across the UK face the same issues?
- Have a look at the past and current projects funded by the Centre at [www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/projects/](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/projects/)
- The Bulletin ([www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/bulletin.aspx](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/bulletin.aspx)) and Bioscience Education ([www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/journal/](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/journal/)) contain articles about previous learning and teaching research outcomes and current issues.
- The Centre’s Pedagogic Research Resource List brings together links and references for a number of other journals and publications that look at learning and teaching research in the biosciences. The list can be downloaded from [www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/ftp/events/salford07/referencelist.pdf](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/ftp/events/salford07/referencelist.pdf)
- Our event reports provide another way in which you can find out more about current issues, and developments across the bioscience learning and teaching community, see [www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/reports.aspx](http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/reports.aspx)
- Other Subject Centres also offer funding for teaching and learning projects. Links to all Subject Centre websites are available on the home page of our website, or alternatively you can use the search function on our home page to search all their websites.
- Details of past and present teaching and learning projects and news and information about current issues can be found in a variety of other places, three examples of which are; Higher Education Academy ([www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk)), TechDis ([www.techdis.ac.uk](http://www.techdis.ac.uk)) and the JISC ([www.jisc.ac.uk](http://www.jisc.ac.uk)).

For a general introduction to pedagogic research (Ped-R), including the evaluation of learning and teaching projects see:

- Getting Started in Computer Science Education Research, by Mike Joy, Shanghau Sun, Jirarat Sitthiworachart, Jane Sinclair and Javier López, available from the Information and Computer Sciences Subject Centre ([www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/pedagogical/cs\\_research/](http://www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/pedagogical/cs_research/)); and
- Centre for Bioscience Ped-R wiki ([hebiowiki.leeds.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Getting\\_Started\\_in\\_Bioscience\\_Education\\_Research](http://hebiowiki.leeds.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/Getting_Started_in_Bioscience_Education_Research))

## **What might be the project outcomes and outputs?**

Some projects will produce a report or evaluation of teaching practice, some will produce teaching resources, examples from past projects have included:

- Briefing papers
- Case studies
- Teaching guides
- Teaching resources – e.g. a CD ROM
- Course materials – e.g. practical schedules
- Conference papers



- Web material – e.g. interactive website, online quiz
- Workshop sessions – e.g. for a department

However, a resource may not be the final outcome. Many bids funded by the Centre are for pedagogic research projects, where the final outcome is an evaluation of a specific teaching practice or method introduced into a course or module, rather than a resource.

The outputs of your project will depend on its nature, but as a condition of funding all projects must:

- write a project abstract;
- produce an article for the Bulletin (the Centre newsletter);
- submit an article to Bioscience Education (the Centre's online journal of teaching and learning) and
- produce a project poster (based on a template provided by the Centre).

## Why aren't bids funded?

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Bids miss out on funding for a variety of reasons, the most common (in no particular order) are:

- the project or its outcomes are not transferable, or are of interest to only a single institution
- no consideration has been given to the evaluation of the project
- the project is not taking place in one of the disciplines covered by the Centre
- the work is not novel or original and the project is repeating or overlaps significantly with previous or existing work
- the project is reproducing an already available resource
- there is little or no justification for the project (i.e. why does the bioscience community need this?)
- the bid contains no reference to the literature and previously conducted work
- the methodology (how the work is actually going to be done) is lacking in detail
- it isn't clear or hasn't been explained how the work would be embedded
- it doesn't appear the resources generated would be made available to the bioscience community
- the project appears unsustainable after Centre funding ends

All bids are competitive, and Centre funding is limited, in many cases the reason for not funding a project has simply been that other bids met the funding criteria more fully.

## Completing your bid application

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All bids for Centre funding must be submitted on the appropriate application form, both as an electronic document and a signed paper copy. The electronic copy (normally submitted by e-mail) must be with us by the closing date; the signed copy must be with us on the closing date or within a few days of the closing date (please contact us if the paper copy will be late). Funding applications are evaluated against the criteria described on the application form and the accompanying webpages. Your bid will be evaluated by: the Centre Director, Centre Manager, Academic Advisors and if appropriate, the C & IT Manager.

It is essential to have the backing of your department for the project. This may involve demonstrating how the proposal builds on previous work conducted in the department, illustrating how the work may be integrated within the department or showing you have commitment from other staff, for example by identifying any staff who will be involved in the project and briefly summarising their experience. Your bid must have the signature of your head of department before we can consider it for funding. If your work requires ethical approval we would expect this to have been sought in advance of submission.

Your proposal should have a realistic project plan, with achievable milestones and deliverables. You also need to explain how partners and critical friends will contribute to the project and the specific expertise they will bring.

You must complete a short budget, detailing how the funding will be spent and the bid must offer good value for money. The funding offered is the maximum amount for which you can apply. Do not hesitate to submit applications for smaller amounts of funding if that is all that is required; as Centre funding is limited this can enable us to fund more projects. Likewise, if your project requires the full amount of funding, apply for the full amount.

## **How do we evaluate value for money?**

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Value for money does not mean “cheap”; we are looking for what the likely impact of the project might be for the funding requested. So the budget, the final outcomes, the transferability of those outcomes, relevance to the bioscience learning and teaching community, the potential for the project continuing after the project money has gone will all be taken into account.

We provide feedback to all applicants, both successful and unsuccessful. We may also ask for a bid to be re-submitted if a project has potential but the application needs revision or more detail in specific areas, in which case, feedback on where the bid needs to be improved will be given.

## **If your bid is successful**

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Support is available to all funded project holders for the duration of the project. Each project is given a named contact within the Centre (usually an Academic Advisor) to answer questions and provide support relating to the project. Contacts will try to arrange at least one visit to the project holder during the project so they can respond to any issues relating to the project and perhaps see a resource or activity “in action”.

The Centre is highly involved with the dissemination of the project outcomes. All projects have a webpage on the Centre website which contains an edited version of the final report and downloadable copies, or links to, any electronic resources generated. Hard copies of resources are also distributed at Centre events and on request.

We may also ask you to present your work at one of the Centre’s Professional Development Events and the project posters are displayed at Centre events.

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In addition to this guide all Centre funding calls are accompanied by criteria and information on the application form to assist you in completing your bid. If you have any questions when completing a bid form please contact the Centre on [heabioscience@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:heabioscience@leeds.ac.uk)

## **We look forward to receiving your bids!**