



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK
FOR THE STUDY OF SCIENCE & BELIEF IN SOCIETY

Seed Funding and Small Research Grants

2020-2021

Guidance for applicants

Please note that this grant scheme has been revised from its original format in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The scheme will operate on a rolling basis until at least 1 October 2020 when it will be reviewed.

It is open to research exploring any aspect of the study of religion and science in society. This includes, but is not limited to, research in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

INSBS understands that the current environment may present individual and institutional challenges, and appreciates that not everyone will be in a position to apply at the present time. We would like to remind all applicants that this scheme, along with two other grant schemes currently on hold (Regional Research & Events Networks and Research & Collaboration Fellowships), subject to review, will all be open for two further rounds for projects to be run in 2021 and 2022.

If you have any questions about the scheme, or the application process, please do not hesitate to get in touch with our Grants Officer, Paula Brikci (p.e.brikci@bham.ac.uk)

Summary of key information	
What is the focus of the fund?	<p>The 'Small Research Grant' Fund has been designed to support academics just starting out in their careers in the field or seeking to establish themselves further by conducting socially relevant research in this field.</p> <p>Please note, this scheme has been amended in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>

Who can apply?	Researchers at any career stage who work on the social study of science and religion in society. N.B. If you are not currently affiliated to a university, or other institution set-up to receive research grants, please contact us before applying.
How many application stages are there?	One. A Full Application.
When is the deadline for applications?	Open rolling deadline. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges this places on researchers, we have removed any set deadline for submission of applications. The rolling deadline will be reviewed again on 1 October 2020 . In the meantime, you may submit your application at any time before this date.
How much can be applied for per application?	Seed Funding: No less than £1,000 and no more than £5,000 Small Research Grant: No less than £5,000 and no more than £20,000
How many applications can be submitted?	Each Lead Applicant can only submit one application. You may also be a named partner on a Joint Partnership application, but you cannot be the Lead Applicant on more than one submission in the 2020 round of funding.
When must projects be completed?	All projects must complete within ten months of the start date. All projects are expected to complete no later than 31 July 2021 .

When will you be notified about the decision?	We will aim to be in contact with applicants four weeks after submission. Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, we aim to make the peer-review process as quick as possible and give all applicants a response ideally four weeks after submission where possible.
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Aims of the INSBS Network

The **International Research Network for the Study of Science and Belief in Society (INSBS)** supports the growth of high-quality international research examining the *relationship* between science and religion, *in relation* to cutting-edge social issues and individuals' lived experiences.

We aim to foster and support research that examines any social or cultural aspect of science, technology, engineering, mathematics or medicine (STEMM) in relation to any religious, spiritual or non-religious tradition, position or worldview, including unbelief.

The network brings together and builds links between researchers in a range of disciplines across the social sciences and humanities. Membership includes scholars from, but not limited to, sociology of religion, psychology of religion, science and technology studies, sociology of health/medicine, media and cultural studies, social anthropology, politics, the history and philosophy of science/religion and religious studies.

Our member's research interests cover a wide range of issues including:

- The social scientific and historical study of the relationship between science and religious and/or non-religious belief and identity;
- Public perceptions of the relationship between science, religion and non-religion and their respective roles in society;
- National and international comparative perspectives on the study of science, religion and belief in society;
- Past and present media, or popular, representations of science, religion and belief in society;
- The past or present roles of science, rationalism, religion and belief in national, social or cultural identity and related geopolitical narratives;
- Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of science, religion and non-religion in society;
- Research relating to any aspect of public policy that intersects with issues connected to science, religion and belief in society. This includes studies on the impact of publics' views on science and religion on policy making, and provision for religious, spiritual or non-religious communities across a range of geographies and issues (e.g. healthcare provision, educational policy, science policy, environmental policy and development policy);
- International studies of religious or spiritual communities' perspectives on the intersection, and possible relationships, between science and religion over time.

Aims of this grant scheme

There is currently a significant gap in research into the social and cultural dimensions of the relationship between science and religion in diverse global contexts. The lack of high-quality research on contemporary religious, spiritual or non-religious publics' views on science and religion, and how these views relate to individuals' day-to-day lived experience, has led to the perpetuation of a range of misconceptions and/or polarising narratives.

Foremost among these is "the conflict narrative," the tendency in public, media or scholarly discourse to frame the relationship between science and religion as necessarily negative and mutually exclusive, or to assume that science is part of a process of secularization that will gradually 'roll back' religious understandings, or knowledge. Foundational research has shown that the conflict narrative is far from being widely experienced and has started to provide evidence that interactions between science and religion also includes a spectrum of non-conflictual positions. This research has also shown that differing social narratives about science and religion can have a profound impact on how people express social identities and/or perceive other groups. These are not abstract or theoretical concerns, but live debates and questions that relate to a range of significant cutting-edge social and cultural issues globally.

It is difficult to build a better understanding of these social or cultural narratives and issues and engage with them without up-to-date robust social scientific data that examines the nuances and complexities of the relationship between science and belief. There is therefore a need to grow the capacity of researchers globally in order to undertake the research necessary to explore these societal narratives, and to provide a more comprehensive perspective of the relationship between science and religion or personal belief, across a range of religious, spiritual or non-religious beliefs within a wider variety of geographies, institutions, cultures and societies.

The majority of research projects, and researchers in this emergent field of study, have to date been based in North America and the UK. Whilst this work continues to be incredibly important in breaking new ground and evidencing the need for further development of this field of study, it has not yet provided the opportunity to consider in sufficient detail the culturally contingent nuances or diversity of positions relating to localized issues across different country contexts, publics or communities of interest.

This Seed Funding and Small Research Grant scheme seeks to promote the growth of the social study of science and religion globally, by supporting the ongoing development of an international network of active academic researchers. This will be achieved through the provision of small grants that stimulate new avenues of individual or collaborative research internationally.

We currently plan to run the seed funding and small research grant again in 2021 and in 2022 and more details will be available in due course on our website.

The Seed Grant and Small Research Grant scheme is designed to support academics to conduct socially relevant research in this field which can include, but is not limited to:

- Small scale research data collection projects
- Pilot or trial research in order to develop ideas for future larger funding
- Analysis and write up of data necessary to publish academic papers, chapters or books

Two levels of grant funding are available:

- 1) Seed Funding: No less than £1,000 and no more than £5,000
- 2) Small Research Grants: No less than £5,000 and no more than £20,000

All projects must complete within ten months of the start date. Some projects may start before others, however all projects within this round of funding will be expected to complete no later than 31 July 2021.

Priority for small research grants will be given to those who are seeking to grow their international research collaborations through this grant scheme. However, this is not an essential requirement of projects proposed within this grant scheme. **We welcome applications from academic researchers based in any country worldwide.**

We are not prescriptive about the structure of activities we would like to support in this round – however we anticipate that the types of activities to be supported could include:

- Quantitative and qualitative data gathering and sampling (which we anticipate in this round may be conducted largely online due to the current COVID-19 pandemic)
- Collaborative pilot projects, which may lead to future larger project development
- Secondary data analysis or desk-based research
- Write up of data or research for publication

In 2020, in response to the global health crisis, we realise that collecting data for any project is going to be a major obstacle. We propose to respond to this challenge by offering grants that will find a way to gather data when the opportunities to draw people together in a physical space are severely limited. We are also interested in supporting projects that utilise online technology and collaboration tools to facilitate academic exchanges to foster research collaborations, data gathering, sampling and so forth. We are open to providing support towards the cost of online tools which will enable you to collect data, such as software

licences for the relevant funding period or membership of web platforms. (Please note, such costs cannot be the sole purpose of your grant however, and your proposal must include particular outputs related to your specific research project.)

Please also note, this grant scheme relates only to research activities and not network building projects. We will be running two further grant schemes in due course, which are delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Developing Regional Research and Events Networks Fund**

This fund will provide support for projects that allow for the development of single country based and/or regional research networks or events/seminar series. Dates TBC

- **International Research and Collaboration Fellowships Fund**

This fund will provide support for early career, mid-career and senior researchers to spend time with collaborating scholars or teams overseas to develop future research projects, publications or similar research focused activities. Dates TBC

Allowable expenditure:

Research grants will be administered by the University of Birmingham and provided to awardees as sub-awards.

Permitted uses of sub-award funding include:

- Research expenses, such as research participant compensation or incentives, transcription costs, translation costs, reprographics, survey costs, and participant recruitment expenses
- Salary costs and/or teaching buyout
- Modest allowance for justifiable equipment, publication charges, software and other supplies

Funding **CANNOT** support any institutional overheads or indirect costs.

Given current global and local travel restrictions in many countries, we will be prioritising grants for this round that do not have any travel or accommodation component. We welcome grant applications that include novel ways to collect data, which might include incentives to participants to take part in interviews, or focus groups via digital platforms.

Main Criteria for the Application

There are six sections of the application form and a number of mandatory documents to submit with your application. The prompts below will help you to structure your request, and will be used to review your application and its ability to meet our strategic aims.

Part 1: Project Details

Please provide the following:

- Project Title
- Principal Investigator
- Lead Organisation
- Co-Investigator(s)
- Project Start Date
- Project End Date
- Project Budget Requested (in GBP - all grants will be paid to grantee's institutions in GBP)

Part 2: Project Summary

(Word Count 400 words)

The Project Summary should summarise your whole project and it should be written for non-specialists. It should briefly state:

- The aim of the project;
- The specific research questions the project will help to answer;
- Why the project is needed, and how it relates to the wider aims of the grant scheme/network (see pages 4-5 above);
- The project activities;
- The outputs to be produced through the project activities;
- The impact you anticipate your project will have.

Part 3: Project Description

(Word Count 1500 words)

Use this section to tell us about your proposal in detail:

- The project activities including guiding research questions;
- The need for this project;
- How the project will address the aims of this grant scheme and INSBS;
- How your project will contribute to the development of the study of the subject matter within your country/region and within INSBS.

Part 4: Output and Outcomes

Use this section to describe the project related outputs and outcomes.

Outputs: tangible products that will be completed during the lifetime of your project, such as data sets, articles, books, blogs and seminar or conference presentations. Please give details of how you will evidence these outputs as part of a final project report.

If you expect to produce an article or book, we recognise that you will not be able to secure final publication during the lifetime of your project. In which case you can provide details of what you will report on. For example, for a journal article a final draft of the paper and details of the journal to which it has been submitted, or for a book, a copy of the proposal or sample chapters and/or a confirmation letter from a publisher.

Outcomes: the expected changes or impact that will result from the project's Outputs. Some of these changes may be evidenced before the end of the grant, while others may not be fully achieved until after the end of the project, and may depend on factors beyond the project team. Outcomes should describe what the success of this project would look like for both academics and non-academics. Please include your evaluation criteria in your proposed outcomes.

For example, an online webinar to interested audiences on the results of your research (an output) may lead to a change in perceptions, among the relevant community, about the relationship between science and religion/non-religion (an outcome). To evidence this perception change you could conduct a short survey pre and post-webinar recording if individual's perceptions of the subject matter changed due to your webinar.

Please include:

- A list and outline of each Output. Where possible include expected or indicative places for publication or similar such as a specific journal, website for a blog or book series/publisher.
- A description of each Outcome and the nature of the expected impact or change as a result of this research project.
- Quantifiable short-term indicators of the Outcomes, observable by the end of the project.
- Quantifiable long-term indicators of the Outcomes, which are indicators of change or progress that will happen past the end date of the project.

Each project is expected to have a minimum of two outputs; these should also be clearly identified in the project Timeline. We expect the scale and number of outputs to reflect the size and level of funding of the proposed research project.

Part 5: Project Personnel

(Word count 1000 words)

This section should include information about the people involved in running the project, including:

- Their full contact details
- Their positions and institutional affiliation
- An institutional letter of support for this proposal from each separate institution involved, including the lead organisation.
- Please also provide a short description of each team member's role (maximum 200 words for each team member), which details each project team member' specific track record, experience, and expertise in the proposed thematic area
- What their role would be in the project, and why they would perform that role effectively
- How this proposed project will advance career/research aspirations.
- Please also provide a **2-page Curriculum Vitae** for each member of the project team

Part 6: Budget – please use the template provided on the website

- Overall amount requested in GBP
- A separate Budget Narrative that gives a detailed outline and description of each item of the expenditure in each of the budget lines in the budget template. This should include a full breakdown of how each figure in the budget was calculated.

Part 7: Additional Funding

It is not necessary to have additional funding, but where applicable please list any funding from other sources. This should list the names of other sources of funding for this project, the amount provided by each source, and whether or not each source of additional funding has been already secured, where relevant this should also be listed in your institutional letter of support. Please note, INSBS funding cannot support any institutional overheads or indirect costs.

Part 8: Timeline - please use the template provided on the website

Please provide a full Timeline that indicates all of the key project tasks and milestones (including outputs). This will be used in assessing whether your project achieves its targets, and you will be asked to refer to it in your project report(s), if your project is funded.

How do you apply?

You must apply for this funding via the application form.

Your completed application should be sent as a single PDF file which includes the following documents:

1. Completed application form
2. Project Budget
3. Project Timeline
4. 2-page CV for each applicant and team members
5. Signed letter of support from your institution(s)

Please email your completed applications to p.e.brikci@bham.ac.uk with the following subject heading:

"Funding application <Your name> <Seed Funding*> or <Small Research Grant*>"
(*delete as applicable)

What happens after you apply?

Once we have received your application, we will check it to ensure that the application is eligible and that all of the mandatory information (application form, budget and timeline) has been received and downloaded successfully. If any mandatory documentation is missing or cannot be read, we will contact you within five working days of receiving your application.

We will aim to notify you of the final decision, by email, no later than four weeks after you have submitted the full application.

If you are successful, we will send you an Award Letter, Terms and Conditions of the Award and the details of the contracting arrangements by email.

Successful applicants will need their institutions to complete the necessary documentation, providing relevant institutional details and electronic signatures as requested, before commencing the project.

If you have any questions about the scheme, or the application process, please do not hesitate to get in touch with our Grants Officer, Paula Brikci (p.e.brikci@bham.ac.uk).