

BRIDGE Seed Fund Application Guidelines



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

Background

In March 2014 the University of Birmingham (UoB) and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) formed the **BiR**mingham-**I**llinois Partnership for **D**iscovery, **E**n**G**agement and **E**ducation (BRIDGE) creating a framework for continued collaboration and investment to grow the strategic partnership between the two institutions.

The BRIDGE partnership recognises the breadth and depth of faculty connections that have flourished over the last seven years. Engagement currently spans over 80 established faculty-to-faculty links in key academic disciplines.

The BRIDGE framework aims to deepen these existing collaborations and develop wider faculty networks to: build cognate research areas; expand educational exchange opportunities; and strengthen strategic aspirations for institutional engagement.

To this end, the institutions have established a joint BRIDGE Project Seed Fund to which permanent members of staff at each institution are encouraged to apply.

Criteria

The BRIDGE Project Seed Fund supports collaborative engagement between UoB and UIUC with the following priorities. Proposals in Social Sciences and Humanities are particularly encouraged, as are proposals that have identified funding for sustaining the collaboration beyond BRIDGE Funding for example via the NSF, NIH, EPSRC or other external funding bodies.

a. Implementation Grants to support and strengthen existing faculty-faculty relationships leading to clearly defined outputs.

Priority will be given to activities that have the potential to:

- Progress joint research priorities;
- Connect world-leading researchers;
- Enhance our institutional research profiles through collaborative publications;
- Build productive, impactful relationships with leading academic, scientific, cultural and policy communities in the region;
- Evolve into jointly-submitted proposals to external funding agencies for sustained support of collaborative research activities.

b. Initiation Grants to encourage wider faculty involvement and expand institutional engagement. We invite funding applications from colleagues interested in developing new research relationships with counterparts at UIUC. Priority will be given to:

- Applicants who can clearly demonstrate that they have established a potential area of collaboration with UoB/UIUC counterparts;
- Activities with the potential to extend beyond individual links to wider – i.e. 'research group to research group' – collaborations;
- Projects with the potential for sustained and enlarged collaborative activity.

- c. Teaching and Learning Grants.** We also invite funding applications from colleagues interested in developing educational relationships with counterparts at UIUC in order to enhance student learning. Priority will be given to:
- Applicants who can clearly demonstrate that they have established a potential area of collaboration with UoB/UIUC counterparts;
 - Projects which will provide distinctive educational opportunities for our students;
 - Projects with the potential for sustained and enlarged collaborative activity.

Guidelines

There are no restrictions on the forms of activity undertaken with BRIDGE funding, providing they meet the criteria outlined above.

The fund is available to support planning visits, workshops and exchanges with the partner institution for the purpose of developing the strategic partnership. The fund may also support meetings in third party locations where there is potential to develop and/or showcase collaboration.

Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Academic projects to extend UoB-UIUC academic networks and research outputs, joint conferences, workshops, symposia, collaborative experiments and co-authored publications;
- Curriculum innovation and development of joint teaching and learning initiatives;
- Partnership development to provide transatlantic mobility and internship opportunities to ensure the distinctiveness of our high-quality student experience;
- Civic and cultural relationship-building to enhance our status as 'engaged' universities;
- Trilateral activities that link research projects into wider UoB-UIUC strategic regions – including, for example, countries in Africa, Latin America, China, India, and Europe.
- Professional staff exchanges or visits that will further enhance the academic collaboration between the two institutions.

Applicants are encouraged to apply for reciprocal visit funding in order to broaden networks and cement engagement.

Applications that can demonstrate potential for relationships to become sustainable beyond the proposed project and initial seed funding term are strongly encouraged, whether through faculty and department commitment or the likelihood of externally-leveraged grants and awards.

BRIDGE seed funding will be allocated locally, with UoB paying the travel and accommodation costs of UoB staff travelling to UIUC, and the costs of projects occurring at UoB; and UIUC paying the travel and accommodation costs of UIUC staff travelling to UoB, and the costs of projects occurring at UIUC.

BRIDGE seed funding will be subject to the travel reimbursement and other relevant financial policies of the institution providing the funding to its faculty or units.

BRIDGE seed funding will not normally support staffing or research equipment costs, though such requests will be considered if a compelling argument is made.

Note: Usually the maximum amount of funding available to support Implementation grants will be £10,000 from UoB and \$10,000 from UIUC, and for Initiation grants £6,500 from UoB and \$6,500 from UIUC.

Application Process

Applications must be made using the BRIDGE Seed Fund Application Form and provide the following information:

- a) Identified UoB and UIUC Principal Investigators.
- b) Purpose and timescale of visit/programme activity.
- c) Anticipated total cost and itemised budget for the proposed activities.
- d) Academic rationale for support:
 - i. What is the strategic importance or added academic value of the collaboration for your home department and University?
 - ii. What are the anticipated shared outcomes and benefits for the collaboration?
- e) Anticipated means of sustaining the collaboration. What funding is available from other sources and what potential is there for future external investment?
- g) Head of College approval. Email confirmation of this support will suffice, and should be forwarded with the application.

Applications should be submitted online using the BRIDGE Seed Fund application form.

Further information can be found by contacting Catherine Lemon, International Development Manager, at the University of Birmingham (c.lemon@bham.ac.uk) or by contacting Dr. Sammer Jones, Director for Global Relations, at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (salehjo1@illinois.edu).

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The grant review panels at UoB and UIUC will liaise to jointly determine which projects will be funded.

Grant recipients will be asked to complete a short questionnaire highlighting their visit or activity for which the award was made, and will be asked to present at the BRIDGE Steering Committee or Interest Group, and other appropriate forums (e.g. departmental/College presentations) as requested. Grant recipients will later be asked to provide an update two years after the visit to ensure that longer term outcomes of the engagement can be measured that would not have become apparent in the first year report

Application Deadline

There will be one call for BRIDGE seed funding per year, with the following closing date:

Wednesday, 16 March 2022