Questions and Answers about King's Climate and Sustainability Seed Fund

Where can I get more information:

Webpage: https://internal.kcl.ac.uk/strategy2026/kings-climate-sustainability

Send queries to: KCSseedfund@kcl.ac.uk or ask your Faculty Research Development Manager

Does this replace the King's Together scheme?

King's Together will be running alongside this programme. Proposals that are predominantly aligned with the climate and sustainability strategy may be moved from King's Together to this scheme, and *vice versa*. The programmes will be managed KCS together with RMID, and if you have any questions about borderline areas, please contact KCSseedfund@kcl.ac.uk or your Faculty Research Development Manager.

Do applications need to be cross-Faculty to be multidisciplinary?

We expect most of the new projects and connections supported, and all of the large awards, will be multidisciplinary to some degree. But this will not always mean 'cross-Faculty'. What is important is to bring different approaches together to gain useful new, whole-system insights or support better solutions.

Why is there no support for teaching developments?

New courses, modules, and content are vital parts of the strategy, but more time is needed to define the opportunities and gaps, and we don't expect to support teaching proposals in the first couple of calls.

Who can apply?

The competition is open to all research-active staff: permanently-employed academics and independently funded research fellows are eligible to be PIs. Post-Doctoral Research Associates are eligible to be joint PIs or Co-Is. The corresponding PI and budget holder should be an academic or independently funded research fellow with a contract with King's which extends at least twelve months after the end of the project.

Post-Doctoral Research Associates applying for KCS seed funding as joint PIs are expected to have 1) a track record of leading projects; 2) an academic or independently funded research fellow as budget holding Principal Investigator who will be fully involved in the project; 3) plans for internal dissemination and knowledge exchange activities such as research workshops; 4) clear plan to work towards applying for strategic external funding.

What costs are eligible?

We expect that awards will normally support research assistant or technician time; materials, data access, small equipment and consumables, data processing; and travel costs for King's staff or collaborators.

The applications should not include:
- Academic staff salary costs (but teaching cover may be requested where there are long periods (several terms) of extra commitment needed)
- 'Business as usual' research – extending existing projects and collaborations where the award will not substantially change future grant-winning potential
- Studentships – stipends or fees
- Overheads
- Large equipment (equipment costing over £10,000)
- Conference attendance within your current academic area
- Publication charges

How is the sustainability of the project assessed?

All the work within your project should be aligned to the King's Environmental Sustainability policy.

King's is working towards a 50% reduction in CO2 emissions from all types of business travel by 2030, and towards ceasing air travel within the UK (apart from Northern Ireland). We recognise that some projects will need national or international travel to build partnerships or conduct research, but please ensure that you replace air travel with rail wherever possible, and reduce the number of international trips.

In your application you must explain why international meetings are needed, and how you are moderating the use of air travel. King's Travel Policy can be found here, and the Sustainability Team at sustainability@kcl.ac.uk can provide advice on the most carbon efficient mode of travel for a proposed trip.

What is the success rate for the scheme?

The success rates for rounds 1, 2 and 3 were 33%, 29% and 26% respectively. According to THE[1] article, data recently released by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), 26 per cent of applications for open-call research funding to the six research councils serving universities were approved in 2022-23, compared with 27 per cent in 2021-22.

What about other partners (e.g. industry or international partners)?

We recognise the importance of industry and / or international partnerships, and recommend you get in touch with the sustainability team (KCSseedfund@kcl.ac.uk) prior to submitting your application, as a "one size fits all approach" may not be appropriate. For example, already established projects with an engaged industrial partner may require matched funding, compared with new projects seeking pilot data in order to later leverage industry engagement may only require intellectual input from partners.

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[1] **Times Higher Education, 18 Sept 2023 - UK research council success rates fall as budgets tighten**
URL: https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/uk-research-council-success-rates-fall-budgets-tighten

How should proposals be costed?

We recommend you use the standalone budget function in **Worktribe** (under the 'Projects' tab) to calculate staff costs.

If your research assistant will be spending less than six months on the project, they can be costed using the King's Talent Bank rates. HR usually prefer short term posts to be recruited in this way. If your project is six months or longer, or if you have a research assistant in mind who is on a particular salary grade on the HR scale (e.g. Grade 5 is typical for a pre-doctoral research assistant and Grade 6 is typical for a post-doctoral research assistant) you can use the HR option. For this, you should consult your local research support team or department manager who can provide these costs.

These costs should include on-costs (National Insurance and Superannuation). You can pro-rata these rates for part time or shorter duration posts. Costs can be checked and confirmed if the application is successful but only limited variations in costs are allowed, so do check these costs before submission with your local research support officer to ensure they are as accurate as possible.

Do I need to spend the funds by a particular date?

You should propose start and finish dates that are realistic and that suit you. These can span two financial years if needed. We will expect you to stick to these dates as far as possible.

What reporting will I need to do?

We expect you will keep the delivery team informed of progress, letting them know if the research development is going as expected or not, and whether spend is on schedule. After completion you will need to provide a:

- *statement of financial expenditure*: the statement should provide a summary of expenditure and include relevant financial documentation;

- *end of project report*: describing the outputs and outcomes of your project, and next steps in development of the project including details of further funding applications in development. This will need to be completed three months after the end of the project.

The team will contact you to follow up on progress about one year later as well. This information will be used in decisions about next steps in developing King's Climate and Sustainability initiative, and also shared with other responsible for research support and development, such as Vice Deans for Research.

Will funded projects be publicised?

A summary of the awards made will be shown on webpages upon the academic's permission. This aims to inform others working in these areas at King's. After completion, successful outcomes may be publicised in the same way as other projects.