

## **Research Development Fund (RDF) Open Call – Deadline for online applications is 23:59 on Thursday 24 April 2025:**

### **Frequently Asked Questions (2025)**

**1. Can I make use of research assistants through CampusJobs?**

Campus jobs can be used for very short-term assistance requiring general, non-specialist skills. Campus jobs should not be used for post-doc level or external people to conduct the work. Applicants are encouraged to avoid the use of fractional contracts for post-doctoral research staff employed on grants. Applicants are asked to ensure that development of research assistants is considered in the proposal.

**2. Which category should I use to include research assistants in my application?**

You should use the 'salary support' category.

**3. Should I include detailed breakdown of costings in the application form?**

Yes, all costs are expected to be covered by RDF funding should be included in the 'Activity Description' field of the form.

**4. Can I include costs for participant incentives in my application?**

Yes. Participant based research projects can include cost of incentives for the public, such as vouchers, as long as the University [hospitality and gifts policy](#) is followed.

**5. Can I ask for funding for researchers at another organisation?**

No, funding is only provided for UoR staff.

**6. What costs should I include in the application?**

All costs needed for the project should be included in the application. Funding can be used for specialist equipment, consumables, travel and subsistence, provided they are project specific and not able to be obtained from any other source (e.g. School or Research infrastructure fund). We will not normally provide funding for standard, non-specialist items such as laptops.

**7. Can I leave the form part way through completing the information?**

Yes. The information entered will remain until the form is submitted. Applicants can therefore complete sections of the form at different times before submitting.

**8. Are the costs associated with fieldwork (such as accommodation, subsistence, etc.) eligible for the RDF open call?**

Yes. Travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs are eligible as part of a project, as long as aligned to the [UoR Travel Policy](#).

**9. Would bench fees of externally funded PhD students be eligible costs?**

No, bench fees are not eligible costs.

**10. What is the word limit for RDF project proposal descriptions?**

Project proposal descriptions should have a maximum length of 500 words.

**11. Should I cost teaching buy-out at the sessional rate, or is it expected that staff would bid for a new-hire replacement?**

The lead applicant should propose the best way to fund the project work, which can include buy-out or salary support for replacement. The lead applicant should note the funding limits of the scheme, the total of funding needs to complete the project and the

funding criteria. It is expected that PIs will discuss different options with the Head of School to ensure the proposed option is viable within the school context.

**Please note** - the salary buy-out will be provided at academic grade 7.37, and not at the actual salary of the person seeking the buy out

**12. Is it possible for a team with members from different divisions/schools to apply for this funding?**

Yes. Applications from teams, including cross-division/theme, are welcomed. The application will require a member of the team to be identified as the lead applicant.

**13. As part of the future development my project I will need to network with specific stakeholders, can I request money for travel and catering?**

Yes, travel and events (including catering) are eligible costs in this scheme, provided these take place during the period of the funded project. Catering to be requested via [Hospitality at Venue Reading](#).

**14. Where can I get help with costings?**

Costings should be calculated by colleagues in the Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO). Please contact:

- For H&C and P&R contact Colin Bulpitt on [c.d.bulpitt@reading.ac.uk](mailto:c.d.bulpitt@reading.ac.uk)
- For AFH and Environment contact James Church on [james.church@reading.ac.uk](mailto:james.church@reading.ac.uk).

**15. If successful, when will the funding be released?**

The call provides indication of when funding decisions are made by UCRI. Funding is typically released shortly after decisions have been made.

**16. Do projects need to start at the beginning of a financial year?**

No. Projects can start at any time within the financial year. Applicants should note that funding can be spread through up to a maximum of 2 financial years (01 August to 31 July).

**17. Does the 500 words limit for the project summary also include the references, as well?**

The 500-word limit includes all text entered in the form.

**18. Can consumables costs be requested as part my application?**

Yes, consumables can be costed as part of an application.

**19. If my project requires the use of infrastructure in CAF, what hourly rates should I use in my application?**

Standard CAF rates should be used which can be provided by colleagues in Research, Engagement and Innovation Office (REIO). Any proposals proposing use of the facility should be discussed with the Director of CAF ahead of submission to ensure appropriateness of the hours and equipment.

**20. Can letters of support be added to the application?**

No. Support from stakeholders or others can be mentioned in the text but additional documentation is not required.

**21. Can funding for Open Access publishing be requested and where would it be included?**

Open Access publishing can be costed into the application only when these costs cannot be met via other available funding source - see <https://libguides.reading.ac.uk/open-access/oa-faqs>.

**22. What are the 'on costs' and must they be included?**

The 'on costs' include the costs associated with the employers NI and pension contributions. These must be included in the staff total costs.

**23. If I have external matched funding, will those funds have to come to a Reading account, or can they be administered separately?**

When there is matched funding, the overall funding for the project will not be consolidated through a single account. Instead, a code will be made available for the RDF proportion of the funding. If external match funding is provided by a company, then this would come into the University, and we would have an agreement with the company for this.

**24. I already have some funding for my project. Do I have to provide details in my application?**

You need to provide details of the level of matched funding and the source of the funding (see Section 9). In the project description, please explain how RDF funding will complement matched funding to deliver the project.

**25. How much academic time can I assign to this project?**

You cannot include academic time in this scheme. What you can include is teaching replacement as buy-out for academic staff to complete the project.

**26. Where should I include information for co-applicants?**

Information for co-applicants should be included in Q16 (project proposal) and Q17 (project deliverables)

**27. Are fixed term staff eligible to apply to this scheme?**

No. The scheme is only open to academic staff on a permanent contract.

**28. Can I apply on behalf of a project in partnership with RBFT?**

No. Projects in partnership with RBFT are not eligible for the scheme.

**29. If I have no matched funding or in-kind contribution, where should I explain the reasons for this?**

This should be addressed in the text box Q22.

**30. Will I receive a confirmation email of my submission?**

Yes