ESRC–FCDO Raising Learning Outcomes follow on fund: Jan 2021

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	**Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)**
Co-funders:	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) formerly the Department for International Development (DFID)
Funding type:	Grant
Award range:	£25,000 - £100,000
Publication date:	10 November 2020
Opening date:	10 November 2020
Closing date:	21 January 2021 16:00 UK time

Last updated: 10 November 2020

Start application

Apply for funding to build on a previous Raising Learning Outcomes (RLO) in Education Systems grant.

Applications are by invitation only.

You must be named on a previous RLO grant as either a:

- principal investigator
- co-investigator
- researcher.

Named researchers being eligible is a change from previous rounds. We encourage named researchers based in the Global South to apply.

Projects can be up to two years long.

This is round five of six in the RLO follow on fund. Rounds open twice a year.

Who can apply

This call is open to any principal investigator (PI) or co-investigator (Co-I) who has held a research grant funded within the RLO programme and, from tranche five, to any researcher named in an RLO research grant. This change is made with the particular intention to facilitate submissions from applicants based in the Global South.

Co-Is or named researchers who wish to apply as a PI to this follow on fund call must have the express support of their original RLO grant's PI. The original grant can be open or closed at the point that the application(s) are made and they will be awarded as separate grant(s) to the existing/completed RLO grant.

Any researcher who has not been a PI or Co-I or named as a researcher in an RLO-funded grant is not eligible to apply. All uninvited or ineligible applications will be rejected.

The PI must be based at an established organisation with the capacity to undertake high-quality research. This means an institution that possesses an existing in-house capacity to host a grant and to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the national or international research base, and is able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research programmes.

What we're looking for

For workstreams 1-3 (impact enhancement, research augmentation, capacity building) proposals are invited for grants with a full economic cost (fEC) value of between £25,000 and £100,000 for any workstream, or for any combination of these three workstreams.

Researchers are eligible to apply for a number of these grants, on multiple occasions, however the total amount of all awarded grants linked to the original proposal must not in sum exceed £100,000. Whilst cross-grant learning (where appropriate for inclusion) will be viewed positively in workstream 1-3, it is not a requirement for these workstreams and proposals within these workstreams must stand alone i.e. they cannot be co/inter dependent.

For workstream 4 (cross-grant synthesis) proposals are invited from RLO researchers working in collaboration with other RLO grants. These proposals must also have a fEC value of between £25,000 and £100,000.

Researchers can also apply for a number of these grants, on multiple occasions, and can collaborate with different projects in these applications. The funders are keen to encourage applications to workstream 4. Therefore in addition to the maximum of £100,000 allocable per grant in workstreams 1-3, a further £100,000 may be allocated to original RLO grants against workstream 4 (this makes a maximum of £200,000 across all 4 workstreams).

Projects may be up to a maximum of two years in duration. The call has been designed so that all grants will get an equal chance to access this additional funding if and when they are ready to do so. Proposals can be submitted at any point whilst each tranche of the call is open, but will not be assessed until the submission window has closed.

Please see the 'How we will assess your application' section for assessment criteria specific to this call and to each workstream.

The full specification and other important call-specific guidance documents can be found below:

- **call specification (PDF, 348KB)**
- **Je-S guidance (PDF, 320KB)**
- **costing guidance for non-UK institutions (PDF, 91KB)**.

How to apply

When applying select:

- council: ESRC
- document type: Standard proposal
- scheme: Research Programmes
- call/type/mode: ESRC-DFID RLO in Education 2018-21 – Invite Only.

How we will assess your application

An assessment panel will meet after each call closes to assess each tranche of applications. This call will be open twice a year, in bi-annual tranches (usually opened every six months). Final funding decisions will be communicated within three months of the closing date. The earliest start date for successful projects will be approximately four months after the closing date.

Proposals which meet the eligibility, cost and duration requirements will be assessed by experts in the programme against the following criteria:

- Research agenda:
  - Is there clarity and coherence in the research design between research questions, research methods and anticipated intellectual outcomes?
  - Are the research questions clearly set out?

- Quality and appropriateness of proposed activities:

  - Do the proposed activities have the potential to ensure the research is more widely used or reaches new audiences?
  - Do the proposed activities build appropriately on activities conducted within the original research grant?
  - Is there an effective pathway for tracking impact planned?

- Project management and delivery:

  - Are the project management plans and configuration of roles and responsibilities reasonable, appropriate and credible for the given project?
  - Are the credentials of the investigators and host institutions appropriate to deliver the project?

- Value for money:

  - Are the requested resources reasonable to deliver the specific activities?

Note that cross-grant learning in workstreams 1-3 – where appropriate for inclusion – will be viewed positively, however it is not a requirement for these workstreams.

For those applications covering workstreams one, two or three or a combination of these workstreams, the following additional criteria will be considered dependent on the workstream:

- Workstream 1: Impact enhancement

  - Do the proposed activities build on and further the existing impact work of your RLO grant, to develop policy relevance and research user uptake?
  - Are there clear plans to make findings available to target audiences and to maximise research uptake?
  - Is there appropriate analysis of who the stakeholders/potential users of research outputs are, and the processes and means for engaging with them?
  - Do impact activities not only make research available/engage with audiences, but also articulate what changes these activities might make?

- Workstream 2: Research augmentation

  - Do the proposed activities explore any unexpected avenues and opportunities, which may have become apparent through the course of the grant?

- Workstream 3: Capacity building

  - Do the proposed activities develop the capacities of academics and their institutions in the country of research, by building on existing capacity building links and initiatives? Capacity building activities may also include policy makers and/or non-governmental organisation partners.
  - Is there an understanding of the local research context, and have steps been taken to enhance local research capacity?

For those applications covering workstream 4 the following additional criteria will be considered:

- Workstream 4: Cross-grant synthesis

- Do the proposed activities explore collaborative activities between RLO PIs and Co-Is to synthesise research findings around a theme?

Please see the full call specification and Je-S Guidance documents for additional information.

Contact details

Call-specific support

All queries or comments about this call should be addressed in the first instance to the ESRC-FCDO RLO email: **eddev@esrc.ukri.org**.

Je-S technical support

The Je-S Helpdesk may be contacted by e-mail: **jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org** or telephone +44 (0)1793 444164 and is staffed Monday-Thursday 08:30-17:00, Friday 08:30-16:30 UK time (excluding public and other holidays).

Additional info

Background and scope

RLO is a £20 million programme which aims to generate world-class and cutting-edge social science research that addresses key questions on learning outcomes within education systems in developing countries. The programme's aim is to enable more effective policies and interventions by providing policymakers and practitioners with concrete ideas on how to improve learning and an understanding of how these ideas will translate to their specific contexts and institutions. The research funded will increase understanding of how the achievement of better learning outcomes in developing countries is enabled and constrained by complex interactions between elements of the education system, the context in which they are embedded, and the dynamics operating within that system. Research funding has been awarded through three research calls on effective teaching, challenging contexts and accountability.

The follow on fund call is designed to support supplementary activities to existing RLO grants, which build on findings and activities achieved so far. The call provides the opportunity for RLO researchers to undertake these activities at any stage of the research lifecycle. The purpose of the scheme is to develop existing impact activities; to explore unexpected research avenues; and to build existing capacity links and initiatives. Within workstream 4 the scheme also allows PIs, Co-Is and named researchers to collaborate with each other and synthesise findings from two or more grants, around a particular theme. Researchers are encouraged to engage with the Impact Initiative as appropriate to develop and potentially support their activities.

Please see the call specification and Je-S guidance documents for full details of this call.

Supporting documents

- [call specification (PDF, 348KB)](#)
- [Je-S guidance (PDF, 320KB)](#)
- [costing guidance for non-UK institutions (PDF, 91KB)](#)

Timeline

10 November 2020
Opening date

21 January 2021 16:00
Closing date

March 2021
Assessment panel meeting

March or April 2021
Funding decision

From 3 May 2021
Grant start date