



The Leverhulme Trust

Jean Cater, Assistant Director

“.... scholarships for research and education....”

Largely funding research in the UK higher education sector: *people* and their direct *research costs* not overheads or FEC



William Hesketh Lever (1851-1925)

The Leverhulme Trust Board

- Eight members of Unilever senior management from diverse, international backgrounds
- The Leverhulme Trust is an independent and autonomous charity
- Meets 4 times a year for decisive discussion to award grants
- Has experience of identifying potential and quality
- Is resistant to academic fashion
- Relies on expert peer review

Facts and Figures

- Up to £70 millions distributed as grants each year
- Across 15 funding schemes
- More than 4,000 applications received each year
- Approximately 1,500 live awards at any time
- Office staff of 14

Funding possibilities

- Research Project Grants: up to £500K and up to 5 years - at least 75% for research staff costs and up to 25% on associated costs
- Study Abroad Studentships: postgraduate study or research abroad – 1-2 years
- Early Career: 3 years for those within 5 years of a doctorate - matching funding with host institution
- Research: up to £50,000, replacement costs/research expenses – up to 2 years
- International Academic Fellowships: up to £30,000, replacement costs/expenses – up to 1 year
- Major Research: humanities/social sciences only, replacement costs – 2 or 3 years
- Emeritus: for retired academics, £22,000, research expenses, up to 2 years

Other funding

- International Networks: up to £125k and up to 3 years.
Explicit justification for why a network is the best mechanism for addressing the chosen research theme
- Visiting Professorships: 3-12 months for distinguished overseas academics to enhance the skills of the UK host institution
- Philip Leverhulme Prizes: six subject areas every year, up to £100k for outstanding early-mid career scholars
- Artists in Residence – contrasting disciplines
- One triennial major initiative:
Doctoral Scholarships (2014)
Arts Scholarships (2015)
Research Leadership Awards (2016)

How to apply...

- A **two-stage** process for Research Project Grants and International Networks
- Firstly, an **Outline** Application – c. 12 weeks to process and no closing dates. Reviewed by expert panel.
- If a positive response, an invitation to submit a **Detailed** Application (3 deadlines a year: September, December, March). Bids submitted for peer review (nominated and independent referees) → decisions taken by Trust Board). Overall c. 25% success rate.
- All other schemes have a **one-stage** application process, normally annually, with decisions delegated to expert panels and subject to due scrutiny by the Trust Board.

Particular weight is given to ...

- The **originality** of the proposed work beyond incremental development and beyond the immediate subject
- Research which reflects the **personal vision** and enthusiasm of the applicant
- The **removal of barriers** between traditional disciplines
- **Intellectual curiosity** and the willingness to take *appropriate* risks
- **Fresh directions** and departures from existing working practices of the applicant or discipline
- **The responsive** mode, where the choice of topic lies with the applicant: no preferred areas

To sum up...

- Many awards support basic, fundamental (“blue skies”) research and cross-disciplinary (or multi) projects
- A sound methodology is crucial, clearly expressed, with a clear strategy for the proposed outcomes
- Why the Leverhulme Trust? Could/would/should this work be funded elsewhere? Maybe a bid is not for the Trust!
- We rely on robust peer review by the global academic community: choose referees wisely!
- All disciplines are eligible, except medicine, but note our statement on “our approach to grant making” before you commence an application

Common errors...

- Claims to quality or significance measured by metrics/"impact"/H-indices/institutional standing
- The supposition of a hidden agenda/quota system – all eligible subjects are considered equally valid
- A failure to write in transparent terminology: avoid jargon and use language for the lay person where asked to do so!
- A overly-detailed review of the literature and a lack of a clear definition of the research idea or design - why it is of interest, what and how it will be done
- Inadequate planning: hastily prepared, poorly thought-through, mis-spelt applications

Contact details

1 Pemberton Row

London

EC4A 3BG

Tel: 020 7042 9888

www.leverhulme.ac.uk

<https://twitter.com/LeverhulmeTrust>

