

2021 Crick Partnership Networking Fund

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

The Francis Crick Institute Partnership Networking Fund (NF) **supports networking events within the partnership** (Crick, UCL, Imperial and King's). It supports staff and students from the Crick and university partners to establish and develop connections across disciplinary boundaries, to lead to fruitful research collaborations and advance the mission of Discovery without Boundaries.

Objectives of the Crick Partnership Networking Fund

The Networking Fund has been introduced to:

- Create and promote a range of new networking events for the Crick and HEI researchers to build professional networks within the Partnership and beyond their own discipline through joint events.
- Support interdisciplinary researchers to make connections, share and develop ideas that could be potentially included in joint research funding applications.
- Encourage applications that cross disciplinary boundaries, particularly at the Clinical and Physical Sciences interfaces.
- Foster the use and building of skills for those directly involved in these funded initiatives (e.g. communication and organisational skills, leadership, etc.).

These projects should primarily benefit the Crick and partner university staff and students, but networking events could include external contacts from other universities, industry, policy or other organisations where appropriate.

Given the challenges associated with holding in-person networking events due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in the short-medium term, most events will need to be held **online**. While not ideal, there are some advantages and tools that can be used to enhance online meetings:

- Hosting international speakers with no travel costs
- Showcasing research using online poster sessions
- Offering opportunities to network through a dedicated virtual networking platform or breakout rooms
- Attracting more attendees from the partnership and beyond

Desired Networking Fund proposal outcomes

Applicants are asked to demonstrate how the funding will be used to promote **networking through events** that adhere to the principles set out above.

Supported events may include, but are not limited to:

- Networking events such as workshops, seminars and symposia;
- The establishment of new networks to promote the exchange of ideas, best practice, and other research goals;
- The development of communication activities e.g. development of webpages, news forums and case studies, for interest groups which may be time restricted (i.e. clinical staff);
- Public engagement activities and events

Projects are expected to **build links between the Crick and its partner Universities**. Please note that applications where the sole purpose of the award is to help funding events already scheduled and fully organised (e.g. event booked and advertised, finalised programme, etc) such as large meetings and symposia, are unlikely to be supported, unless the award is specifically used for a designated part focused on networking.

In addition, due to the competitive nature of the scheme, if you request funding for a large meeting, it is strongly advised to apply to a call with a deadline at least four months before your event, to allow appropriate time to organise it.

Funding and eligibility

Funding

Decisions on the funding of projects will be made by the Networking Fund Committee.

A maximum of £3k can be applied for each project; however, the Committee may decide to fund projects in part.

Please note that applying for additional funding (e.g. sponsorship) is strongly encouraged.

Awards can be used to support activities up to **18 months from the decision date** and will be allocated **on an invoice basis**.

Eligibility

- The Lead Applicant can be a graduate student (PhD or masters) or staff member of one of the Crick partners (Crick, UCL, Imperial, King's)
- If the Lead applicant is a student, Postdoc or LRS staff or similar role, they must be endorsed by the group/team leader
- Proposals must involve **networking activities** that will engage applicants/co-applicants **from the Crick and from at least two of the Crick partners** (UCL, Imperial, King's), **at the application stage**. It is generally expected that the planned events would **reach out to all partners** and not only the ones involved in the application
- Proposals can have reach beyond the partnership, including internationally, and can involve collaborators, partners and/or audiences as the lead applicant deems appropriate.
- Projects can involve the engagement of other stakeholders, such as from industry, government, charities, or other research organisations.
- Funding will generally be prioritised for new events or significant expansions of existing events. However, previously funded projects can be considered if supported events have been successful in reaching the audience and meeting the NF objectives.

Funding can be used to support **online event costs** described below:

Eligible Items	Covered costs
External speaker/ facilitator fees	Rates for speaker external to the partnership e.g. private consultant, training/ meeting facilitator, etc.
Online technology (e.g. virtual platform/software, IT support etc)	Expenses for videoconferencing technology e.g. event management software licencing, online survey fees, technical assistance etc.
Prizes	Expenses to cover awards and prizes e.g. best iPoster or talk
Other meeting-related costs	Any other reasonable expense incurred by the event

Ineligible costs include salaries, experimental research-related expenses and indirect and estate costs. Any queries about eligibility may be directed to solene.debaisieux@crick.ac.uk.

Initially, we expect events will be held online. If face-to-face events can resume and you want to change the format of your event, **please contact us** to discuss the organisation and costs.

Event venue

When face-to-face events resume, awardees are encouraged to choose a venue at the Crick and/or a university partner (UCL, Imperial or King's College). Please contact us (solene.debaisieux@crick.ac.uk) or the Crick Events team events@crick.ac.uk to find out more about planning and charges.

How to apply

Please complete the Application Form provided. One optional supporting document is allowed per application (no more than one page in length) that either provides images, diagrams, or more information provides details of a pilot event, to help illustrate your proposal.

Please send the completed Application Form and supporting documentation to solene.debaisieux@crick.ac.uk.

Review of the applications

Applications will be considered by the Networking Fund Committee that comprises representatives from each of the partners (Crick, UCL, Imperial, King's): The Partnership Manager and an Academic Lead, and three representatives from Crick. The Committee will be chaired by Malcolm Irving, Crick Associate Research Director. The composition of the Committee can be found on [CrickNet](#).

- A Crick representative will act as secretary for the Committee.
- The Committee will meet a minimum of three times a year but may meet more frequently as required by the programme.
- The decisions will be communicated to all applicants and a post-award guidance document will be provided to all successful applicants.

Applications will be judged against the following criteria:

Quality	<p>The NF is to encourage connections that will lead to fruitful research collaborations in priority research areas for the Crick partners (biomedical sciences and any related areas of Chemistry, Physics, Engineering, basic Life Sciences, Mathematical and Computational Sciences, and Clinical Sciences), and that have a reasonable likelihood of securing external funding in the future.</p> <p>The NF Committee will prioritise quality and/or potential of research area and proposal.</p>
Novelty	<p>Funds are intended to promote new collaborations between partners, which may include collaborations that involve external partners in addition to those within the partnership. Funding will generally be prioritised for new events or significant expansions of new events.</p> <p>The NF Committee will prioritise activities intended to lead to new collaborations.</p>
Interdisciplinarity	<p>The NF is intended to support interdisciplinary researchers to make connections, share and develop ideas and apply for research funding. Those applications that spark new connections within one discipline will be considered, but applications for activities that cross disciplinary boundaries are encouraged.</p> <p>The NF Committee will prioritise activities that cross disciplinary boundaries.</p>

Achievability	Clear and realistic objectives and timelines with a clear plan for delivery of the project and the right expertise involved to make the project a success.
Legacy	<p>It is hoped that activities supported using the NF will lead to successful collaborations, including through the existing programmes and mechanisms for Crick partnership collaboration (e.g. staff secondments, sabbaticals and satellite groups; joint PhD studentships or funding applications; Clinical Research Fellowships; symposia and seminars).</p> <p>The NF Committee will prioritise activities that demonstrate how funds will support longer term collaborations within the partnership and beyond.</p>
Skills	<p>Funds may be used to support activities that foster the development of generic skills for those directly involved in these funded initiatives (e.g. communication and organisational skills, leadership, etc.).</p> <p>The NF Committee will encourage activities that would support the development of those students and/or staff involved.</p>

Accessing funds and reporting

Award management

- Funding will be available for **18 months from the award date** and accessible for the planned duration of the approved project. Please note that any funds remaining after completion of the approved project will be returned to the NF budget.
- All costs incurred by the events will be paid on an invoice basis i.e. **costs will have to be paid in advance and will then be refunded using the NF award. Please note refunds will be approved on the basis of the originally planned and approved events and costs.**
- For applicants from outside the Crick, **contact details of the lead applicant/co-applicants' Department administrator must be provided** on the application form, in order to facilitate the refund process.
- For expenses incurred at the Crick, refunds will be processed internally. For expenses incurred at partner universities, awardees will have to invoice the Crick and/or fill an external expense claim form depending on the type of expense incurred by the events. Refunds will be processed based on the receipts provided. More information on the refund process will be provided in the post-award guidance.

Reporting

- Awardees are encouraged to document their activities in some way e.g. by photography or AV, feedback survey, to capture the process and the outcome, which may be shared with the wider Crick partner community.
- The awardees will have to provide a brief final report at the end of the funding period to summarise achievements from their project, including Fund expenses.

If you have any query, please feel free to contact solene.debaisieux@crick.ac.uk.