

**ESRC TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAMME: FUNDING FOR  
SUPPLEMENTARY USER ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION AND  
IMPACT ACTIVITIES (Revised Scheme, June 2006)**

**Information for Applicants**

The engagement of users at all stages of the research process and the achievement of impacts upon policy and practice which will lead to significant enhancements in learning outcomes are key features of the Teaching and Learning Research Programme. The development of the Programme's Communication and Impact strategy, in consultation with Programme participants and the wider research policy and practitioner communities, has therefore been a key priority for the Directors' Team and Steering Committee.

During the Programme's first two funding periods, 2000 to 2005, Phase I and II award-holders were able to bid for supplementary funding to support new / additional / extended project user engagement, communication and impact activities. However, as the programme has grown to support a very large number of different investments the amount of funding available became inadequate to support all those individual projects that might wish to apply for supplementary awards. Thus in November 2005, the TLRP Steering Committee, agreed that a new scheme should be introduced. This paper describes the new scheme.

If there is any doubt about the suitability of an application under the new scheme, please consult an appropriate member of the Directors' Team before applying.

The new scheme shares many of the features of the previous scheme but is intended to be more flexible in backing new ideas and sources of energy. In particular, it is intended to support *collaborative* impact activity. It will also enable the Programme Directors' Team and/or Steering Committee to play a more proactive role in encouraging, stimulating and resourcing the development of activities that are considered to be particularly important for adding value to the Programme. Such priorities might be specified in terms of supporting cross-sectoral, thematic or UK national integration and promotion of TLRP findings. The new scheme is open to applications from those who have been funded by the Programme and others who may be nominated by the Director.

As with the previous scheme, engagement of users will be very important. Other criteria for selection will be: clarity of aims and budget, innovation, practicality and value for money. In this new scheme, insofar as funding is limited and an equitable spread of resources is sought, it is expected that applications will involve collaboration between a minimum of two TLRP investments.

In normal circumstances, the maximum budget should not exceed £15k per initiative. This will allow quick decisions to be delegated to a sub-committee of the TLRP Steering Committee. It will also allow the limited funds to be more widely spread. However, bids up to £50,000 might be entertained but would need to be considered by the whole Steering Committee that meets on fixed occasions three times a year. Full Economic Costing procedures (FEC) will not normally apply to these awards and an overhead will not normally be paid.

## **A new scheme within the Programme's overall Communication and Impact Strategy**

This scheme is part of the Programme's overall Communication and Impact Strategy which was devised in 2000 (see: <http://www.tlrp.org/manage/admin/caip.html> ) and reviewed in 2002 (see <http://www.tlrp.org/manage/admin/outputreview.html> ). These two statements continue to be excellent platforms from which to consider whether ideas for communication and impact activities cohere with overall Programme strategy. It is not felt that these plans need fundamental review although the future challenge is to make the most of what is being produced. To this end, five new priorities were identified in 2006:

1. To organise, produce and present TLRP outputs more effectively for different audiences;
2. To improve the attractiveness of the website and accessibility of outputs;
3. To focus some aspects of our media strategy by major sectors and themes;
4. To focus some aspects of our communication strategy for each UK nation;
5. To improve co-ordination of our communication and media resources.

The new supplementary communication and impact scheme fits especially well with the third and fourth of these but potential applicants might consider how their proposed activities might also strengthen the other elements.

### **Key Features of the Scheme**

1. This scheme has been established to support supplementary user engagement, communication and impact activities directly related to the research being undertaken as a part of the Programme which will contribute to the achievement of the aims of the TLRP Communication and Impact Strategy. It is intended to support new opportunities for user engagement or impact which could not be foreseen at the time of application for an initial award, to pursue new ideas which have emerged during the conduct of the research or in discussion with user / practitioner groups and to support new forms of collaborative impact activity by groups of projects. Where appropriate, it is also intended to support the Directors' Team in playing a pro-active role in stimulating the enhancement of user engagement, communication and impact activities. Applications may be for entirely new activities (e.g. creation of new networks of influence and communication; development of transformative products such as new teaching materials or learner support systems; innovative and interactive uses of ICT; etc.) or for the extension of existing user networks or communication / impact activities beyond the scope outlined in the original proposal to ESRC.
2. Proposals involving collaboration between a number of different Teaching and Learning Programme investments are required. The Programme Office will be pleased to assist with facilitating such joint approaches and may be proactive in doing so.
3. Proposals involving innovative approaches to user engagement, communication and impact are especially encouraged. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate that

- they have consulted with relevant 'user' groups (practitioners, policy-makers, managers etc) in the development of their application.
4. Proposals submitted in partnership / collaboration with appropriate policy / practitioner bodies / groups are also strongly encouraged. Partnerships across the nations and regions of the UK will be particularly welcomed.
  5. Applications will be accepted from researchers funded under all phase of the TLRP. However, applications which involve collaboration with researchers, policy makers, managers or practitioners not currently involved in the Programme are also welcome.
  6. Applications may be made at any time to 31/12/08 subject to the availability of funds within the Programme. Proposals may be for activities to be conducted during the lifetime of current awards or for activities after the end of current awards. In the latter case, the management and support arrangements (offices, ICT, etc.) proposed will need to be clearly identified.
  7. Applications under this scheme should normally be up to £15,000, although exceptionally larger applications up to £50,000 may be considered. Normal ESRC *Research Funding* rules regarding the eligibility of costs will apply. However, Full Economic Costing procedures (FEC) will not normally apply to these awards and an overhead will not normally be paid.
  8. Applications for activities proposed in the original application to the ESRC will not be considered. Applicants must clearly state in their application how the proposal would add value to their existing activities. They are also required to confirm that funding for this was not included within the original proposal approved for funding by the ESRC and that funding for this could not be found from within the existing award cash limit.
  9. Applications for additional *research* activities or communication activities targeted primarily at the academic / research community are not eligible under this scheme.
  10. A report of 1000 words on activities and outcomes will be expected prior to payment of the final invoice.

### **Submission and Assessment of Applications**

Applicants are advised to consult an appropriate member of the 'TLRP Directors' Team about their proposal before applying.

It is important to refer to the ESRC Research Funding Guidelines, when completing the application form. Please note that all costings must be fully detailed and justified on the form but that FEC and indirect cost payments for staffing will not normally be apply.

Application forms can be downloaded from the TLRP website (<http://www.tlrp.org/manage/documents/IMPACTS2APPSFORM.doc>) and, once completed, should be emailed to Sarah Douglas in the TLRP Office ([sarah.douglas@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:sarah.douglas@ioe.ac.uk)).

Applications below £15,000 will be assessed by a subgroup of the TLRP Steering Committee including the Programme Director. It is normally hoped to notify applicants for these awards of the outcomes of their application within 8 weeks of receipt. Decisions on applications requesting funds above £15,000 will be dealt with in Steering Committee meetings which convene three times a year.

Applications will be considered on their individual merits rather than in competition with each other. Criteria for assessing applications will include:

1. Clarity of aims;
2. Nature of proposed collaborations between research teams, and the leadership and management of the initiative;
3. Innovative approaches to user engagement, communication or achieving impact;
4. Extent of consultation with / involvement of user groups;
5. Potential contribution to the achievement of the aims of the Programme's Communication and Impact Strategy and potential to add value to existing Programme activities;
6. Practicality, with a clear schedule of activities;
7. Likely effectiveness of the proposal in terms of enhancing user engagement in the research, achieving effective communication and achieving impacts on policy or practice which will enhance learning outcomes.
8. Value for money

### **Issuing of Awards and Reporting Requirements**

Awards letters will be issued by the TLRP Office on behalf of ESRC. Claims for expenditure should be made to the TLRP Office and may be made twice during the period of the award. The final claim will be paid following receipt of a final report on activities and outcomes.

A final 1000 word report on activities and outcomes should be submitted to the TLRP Director and will be reported to the Steering Committee.

Applicants will be expected to collaborate fully with the Programme Director / Director's Office in the normal way and to keep the Director fully informed of progress. A member of the Directors' Team should be invited to any major events organised as a part of the award and sent copies of any significant outputs from the award.