

The Lincoln Policy Hub Fund: Guidance 2023-24

The Lincoln Policy Hub supports researchers within the University of Lincoln to engage with local, regional, national, or international policy communities to build deeper relationships and more innovative and impactful collaborations through the Lincoln Policy Hub Fund.

Objectives of the Lincoln Policy Hub Fund:

- To build new or enhance relations with partners at local, regional, national or international levels.
- To kick-start policy engagement activity, matching areas of timely and strategic research at the University of Lincoln with current or anticipated policy needs at a local, regional, national or international level.
- To develop skills and capacity within the University of Lincoln for effective policy engagement, in particular widening the equality, diversity and inclusion of researchers involved in policy engagement.

Funding can be applied for via either of two routes:

1. *Rapid response* – this pot supports researchers to respond swiftly to urgent policy engagement opportunities. Awards up to £1,000.
2. *Small grant mode* – to support larger or longer policy engagement projects to establish new areas of engagement or take existing engagement to the next level. Awards up to £5,000.

Applicants are advised to refer to **The Lincoln Policy Hub strategy** [Click here](#)

and the University research strategy throughout their application and ensure that objectives and outputs clearly support it.

Funding allocated via The Lincoln Policy Hub must be spent and activities concluded by the end of the University financial year – 31st July 2024. Applications from research teams, centres or groups are encouraged, although lead applicants are restricted to only one application per year.

You are eligible to apply to The Lincoln Policy Hub Fund if you meet the following criteria:

- You have identified a clear policy engagement demand that requires either a rapid response or support via the small grant route.
- For the small grant mode, applications should be led by an academic member of staff (though this can be in partnership with an external practitioner).
- For the rapid response mode, applications are welcome from researchers at PhD level and above, or professional services staff whose role involves engaging policy actors with research evidence, with approval from their line manager or Head of School.
- For both modes, lead applicants must have a UoL employment contract in place at point of application that covers the full duration of the award.
- Note that postdoctoral researchers may be named as PI if they meet the above criterion and have approval from their line manager or Head of School.
- If you have previously received policy engagement support you can apply again, though make sure you state this on your application.

Applications to the policy hub fund should be unique to this fund. By submitting applications to the policy hub, applicants are confirming that funds have not been applied for and awarded by other internal funding streams such as QR pump priming or impact accelerator funds.

Policy engagement activities could include:

- Supporting building relationships and networks with policy professionals to maximise routes to impact and facilitate coproduction of future research (including secondments and other exchange activity);
- To deliver or participate in collaborative activities with policy professionals, practitioners or other external actors;
- Supporting the translation, application, and utilisation of existing research findings or approaches for policy, for example via a rapid evidence synthesis or demonstrating the value of an approach for a policy context or challenge
- To organise and deliver stakeholder activities such as webinars, seminars, fieldwork visits etc which communicate research findings and expertise to a non-academic audience.

Direct costs (directly allocated or directly incurred, of any type) can be covered. Such as:

- Reasonable travel, accommodation and subsistence costs (as per UoL policy).
- Consumables directly related to the project, such as registration costs at events (excluding academic conferences), production of professional communication materials, room bookings, catering etc.
- Other costs such as external consultancy fees may be eligible such as stakeholder conference facilitation, editing and design support.
- Staffing costs, where staff are specifically employed to meet the policy engagement objectives of the project i.e. campus jobs or annualised hours contracts for short term pieces of work (the fund does *not* support staff buy out and there is *no* scope for external recruitment under this fund).

The following costs / activities **cannot** be covered:

- General research activity eg collection of data, fieldwork, unless specifically related to policy activity such as commissioned evaluations or evidence collection.
- Conference attendance (unless exceptionally the project has developed a strategic, targeted intervention to take place during the event aimed at establishing or strengthening a non-academic relationship or the conference is a practitioner-led event).
- Public engagement activities that do not involve a two-way exchange of knowledge (e.g., one-way dissemination).
- Staff replacement costs
- Indirect, estates and generic administrative costs.
- Costs associated with the protection of intellectual property.
- Specific equipment including hardware such as laptops.

Funding applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Alignment with Lincoln Policy Hub strategy to:
 - Enhance knowledge of the policy environment and develop skills for researchers to engage with and influence practitioners and policymakers - widening the equality, diversity and inclusion of researchers involved in policy engagement.
 - Establish a coordinated approach to public policy-focused activities across the University.
 - Promote and support policy engagement activity to external stakeholders.
- Feasibility

- Have proposed activities been well planned?
- Are proposed timelines reasonable and achievable?
- Is there evidence of contingency planning and risk management?
- Value for money
 - Includes reference to PI's existing funding portfolio – Policy Hub funding must not be used to pay for activity which can be funded through existing grants.
- Stakeholder involvement
 - Is proposed partner involvement realistic and achievable?
 - Is there evidence of existing stakeholder relationships to back up proposed activities? If not, how will new stakeholders be engaged and motivated to collaborate?
- Evidence of engagement with contemporary policy narratives, local need, and/or UoL strategic priorities
- Pathways to policy makers
 - Are pathways identified?
 - Is there evidence of planned engagement with policy makers?
 - Will the proposed activities raise the profile and/or levels of engagement with UoL's policy relevant research?

Applications and decision making

As a limited amount of funding is available each year, the number of awards will depend on the size and number of requests already granted.

Applications to the **rapid response fund (up to £1000)** will be considered as an open call and decisions will be made as quickly as possible following submission. This is to enable a speedy decision-making process for smaller applications.

For **small grant applications (up to £5000)** submissions are required by 22 November 2023. The Lincoln Policy Hub steering group will consider applications communicate decisions and feedback within 2 weeks of the panel meeting.

Any unallocated funds may be released in a second call for both routes in January 2024.

Timeline

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| ● Wednesday 17 January 2024 | Call open for submissions to both routes |
| ● Thursday 15 February | Deadline for small grant application |
| ● Wednesday 21 February | Panel meet to consider small grant submissions |

Reporting and evaluation

Recipients of The Lincoln Policy Hub Fund will be required to manage the award together with College post-award teams. Upon the conclusion of the projects, lead applicants (or team members) are required to write and submit a blog post (and if relevant a policy brief) for The Lincoln Policy Hub as well as submission of a final project report within a month of the project conclusion.