

# QUEX Institute Initiator Grant Scheme

2019 guidelines for applicants



## Background

The University of Queensland and the University of Exeter believe that the most complex of global challenges – ranging from food and water security, political instability, healthy ageing and mental health – require interdisciplinary research that spans institutions, countries and even continents. To achieve true impact, the two Universities therefore joined to create the QUEX Institute, through which our talented academic staff can work together so that their distinct perspectives and expertise can be brought to bear on global challenges. Building on a platform of active collaboration and academic exchange, we will build capacity and jointly invest in enhancing the opportunities for our researchers to work together.

In support of this vision, the QUEX Institute will offer two funding schemes each year to promote a broadening of academic and research collaboration between UQ and Exeter – the Initiator Grant Scheme and the Accelerator Grant Scheme.

The 2019 round of the QUEX Institute Initiator Grant Scheme is now open to applications, with a closing date of **1 April 2019**.

For more about the QUEX Institute, visit:  
[global-engagement.uq.edu.au/quex](http://global-engagement.uq.edu.au/quex)  
or  
[exeter.ac.uk/quex](http://exeter.ac.uk/quex)

## Objectives

Initiator Grants are intended to provide seed funding to promote joint projects. These grants are smaller than Accelerator Grants and intended to build collaborative activities which will explore research or education ideas. Examples include research visits or small workshops to formulate joint research projects or larger grant submissions, or to develop an innovative shared education program.

An Initiator Grant can be used as a stand-alone award but where possible should be seen as a step towards applying for external funding. Initiator Grants may support a pipeline of projects and research teams in preparation for the QUEX Accelerator Grants Scheme, which supports larger-scale initiatives with the aim of attracting external funding and/or producing high-level outputs. Although Initiator grants are not prerequisite to Accelerator grants, there will be an opportunity to submit a bid to the Accelerator Grant Scheme later in the year.

In summary, the key aims of Initiator Grants are:

- to support **enabling activities** that bring together academic staff with excellent and complementary expertise and capability
- to address **research questions with potential for significant impact** that could not be as effectively carried out by one partner on their own
- to facilitate **exploration of novel research concepts** to a point at which external funding can be sought
- to promote and facilitate **groundbreaking interdisciplinary research**
- to facilitate the development of new, shared educational provision leading to significant **enhancement of the curriculum and student experience**
- to demonstrate clear **added value** from the QUEX Institute.

In 2019, applications are sought from the three current themes of the partnership:

- healthy ageing
- physical activity and nutrition
- environmental sustainability.

A set of subthemes has been agreed for each of the above QUEX themes. These subthemes reflect topics or activities within the broader themes that we particularly wish to encourage and promote. Further details can be found online.

While we welcome applications relevant to any aspect of our three themes, we particularly encourage collaborative proposals in the areas of the subthemes.

## Funding details

Applications up to a maximum **£10,000/A\$16,000** are invited.

Funding will be provided to the nominated overall lead applicant, who will be responsible for management of the project, the budget for both institutions and reporting on outcomes.

Up to nine Initiator Grants will be awarded in 2019. All funded applications will be promoted via the QUEX Institute websites and must be completed in a nine-month period from the award date, after which any remaining funding will be lost. Exeter lead applicants will need to be aware that the project timeline transects financial year-end (31 July). Careful consideration will be required to project spending both before and after the 31 July. For further details, please visit the **Exeter website**.

## Eligibility criteria

The Initiator Grants will be available to the whole academic community at the Universities of Exeter and Queensland.

Eligible costs include:

- travel and subsistence
- external speakers/facilitators
- equipment and consumables (small purchases only, justifiable in line with project deliverables)
- venue and catering costs
- directly incurred costs of non-academic (research or technical) staff time. Where research or technical costs are proposed and are also part-time funded by another grant / source of funding, please check the terms and conditions of any pre-existing contract to ensure that there are no conflicts of interest.

The following items are **not** eligible for funding under this scheme:

- academic salaries
- student fees/tuition
- indirect costs and overheads
- publication costs
- costs associated with internal research facilities.

## Application process

Lead applicants should discuss their application with the appropriate QUEX Theme Lead at their home institution in advance of submission.

Applicants must complete the Initiator Grant application form in conjunction with their counterpart(s) at the partner institution. An overall lead applicant must be nominated for each application, to whom Initiator Grant funds will be transferred if successful.

**Applicants should ensure that activities are planned and scheduled to enable completion within nine months. No extensions will be possible.**

Applications should be submitted to **both** institutions at the below email addresses by **5pm (GMT), 1 April 2019**.

**Exeter:** [QUEX@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:QUEX@exeter.ac.uk)

**UQ:** [globalstrategy@uq.edu.au](mailto:globalstrategy@uq.edu.au)

All applications will be jointly assessed and shortlisted by each University's Stage One Review Panel. Shortlists will be submitted to the QUEX Institute Strategy Board for final funding decisions. Lead applicants will be notified within the specified timeframe (see **Key dates**, right).

## Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed via a competitive selection process using the following criteria:

- quality of initiative/activity
- strength of anticipated outcomes and benefits
- potential of the initiative to promote collaboration based on mutual synergies
- contribution to advancing the QUEX Institute
- alignment with QUEX theme(s) and subthemes
- alignment with the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**
- perceived value for money of the initiative.

Please refer to the appendix for further information regarding the assessment criteria.

## Feedback and resubmissions

Please note that feedback is not provided for Initiator Grant project applications. Resubmission is by invitation only. Please refer to **Pitfalls and top tips** on the following page to assist with preparing your submission.

## Key dates

Date	Activity
18 Feb 2019	Calls for applications issued
1 April 2019	Application deadline
1 May 2019	Applicants notified of outcome
1 Feb 2020	Project completion deadline
1 April 2020	Report submission deadline

## Grant acquittal and reporting

Awardees must agree to comply with all terms and conditions related to the receipt of funding including deadlines and procedures for acquittal of funds and reporting on outcomes.

Awardees will have up to a maximum of nine months after the award date to utilise the funds. Funds that are not utilised within the specified period will be withdrawn.

Upon completion of the project awardees will have a maximum of two months to submit a brief report outlining the successes and outcomes of the project. Report forms will be provided to Project Leads.

This report will be used by the QUEX Institute for the follow up of potential opportunities and reporting on outcomes, and will potentially be highlighted on the QUEX Institute, The University of Queensland and University of Exeter websites.

If a funded project includes international travel, award-holders must abide by the official reporting, insurance and registration requirements as outlined Exeter and UQ policies.

**Exeter:** [exeter.ac.uk/finance/policies/expenses](http://exeter.ac.uk/finance/policies/expenses)

**UQ:** [ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/9.45.05-travel](http://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/9.45.05-travel)

## Contacts

Please contact your home institution contact if you would like any additional information.

### The University of Exeter

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### The University of Queensland

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## Theme Leaders

Applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant QUEX Theme Lead at their home institution to discuss their submission and its alignment with the theme.

Exeter	UQ
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### Healthy ageing

#### Dr Iain Lang

Senior Lecturer in Public Health and Lead for Communications

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#### Professor Catherine Haslam

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Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences

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### Physical activity and nutrition

#### Dr Joanna Bowtell

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### Environmental sustainability

#### Professor Ian Bateman

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## Pitfalls and top tips

1. **Added value: failing to articulate, and therefore persuade the panel, of the added value of your partnership.**

Ask your team – *what can be achieved as a QUEX Institute collaboration that could not be achieved as a single institution?* Your answer needs to be strongly and clearly articulated in the application, and evidenced where appropriate.

2. **Step change: failing to envisage and articulate the potential step change that can be achieved through your project.**

This connects to **#1 Added value** - linking the added value of your partnership to the step-change made possible by the unique resources available through the QUEX Institute *i.e. what will you do differently: academics, infrastructure, training, external partners etc?*

3. **Leveraging external funding and other tangible outcomes: panel members need to be persuaded of the application's value for money. They are looking for clear anticipated outcomes and realistic, cost-effective plans and leadership to achieve them.**

Articulate specific details of any potential external funding sources that can be leveraged (amounts, submission deadlines). Provide the same level of detail for other anticipated outcomes e.g. publications, industry links, staff development etc. Provide details about managing the project itself, how you will achieve the project goals in the time and with the funding available.

4. **Sustainability: applications fail to articulate how the momentum and successes achieved will be sustained in the longer term.**

Outline a clear sustainability plan. Consider and articulate issues such as ongoing partnership meetings/communications, future links with industry or other external partners, leveraging further funding, expanding the network, raising the profile and influence of the group both internally and externally.

## Appendix: Detailed assessment criteria for initiator grant scheme

This guidance has been drawn up to assist applicants when completing their Initiator and Accelerator Grant Scheme application forms. The purpose is to explain what type of information and evidence is required to satisfy the assessment criteria.

Assessment criteria	Evidence required
<b>Quality of initiative/activity</b>	How well the application has been considered and planned, and the strength of its potential for taking forward a development or collaboration. Are the goals stretching but achievable? Using data to substantiate, the bid identifies the need for and value of the proposed research and how this ties in with University of Exeter and The University of Queensland research objectives. Include supporting details on how the project would be significantly enhanced as a result of it being undertaken through the QUEX Institute rather than by an individual academic or institution.
<b>Potential to expand upon existing or newly identified collaboration</b>	Evidence of strength and potential of the relationship. How can the group and its work develop beyond the project? What mechanisms will be used to ensure ongoing communications and interaction? Clear sense of potential trajectory for the project and the relationship.
<b>Advancing and sustaining the QUEX Institute</b>	Communicates how the project relationship would contribute to sustaining and strengthening the QUEX Institute.
<b>Strategic fit</b>	Clear information on how the proposed research would enhance the development of one of the established themes and subthemes.
<b>Alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals</b>	Does the project align with one or more of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to provide a blueprint for achieving a better and more sustainable future for all? If so, state the goal/s and explain how the project will aim to advance the goal/s.
<b>Value for money</b>	Is the proposal offering value for money? Is it communicating strong evidence of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a unique research opportunity that is in line with the QUEX Institute's purpose</li> <li>• mobilising a new or already interested, but perhaps disparate, research group, or disciplines, to come together and collaborate for the purpose of step change quality research</li> <li>• project management capabilities of the proposers -reassurance that, if funded, the project will run on time, to budget and deliver against agreed aims, activities and outcomes</li> <li>• tangible and quantifiable outcomes and impact for the benefit of the institutions as well as the more immediate group</li> <li>• the potential to publish high quality papers, influence policy, and leverage external funding as part of the QUEX Institute</li> <li>• sustained development of the QUEX Institute and collaborative research in the longer term.</li> </ul>
<b>Anticipated outcomes and benefits</b>	Specific reference to outcomes and benefits that are anticipated to be a direct result from this project, with timetable. How likely are these? How significant?
<b>Leveraging funding (desirable but not required for Initiator Grants)</b>	Clear details of how the project aims to leverage external funding as a direct result of this award.
<b>Impact (desirable but not required for Initiator Grants)</b>	Communicates how this project will create impact in a way that will benefit both the University of Queensland and University of Exeter. What is this potential impact (internal/external) and when might it be felt. Examples of impact could include leverage of external funding/measures of academic esteem such as publications/ raised profile of the research and the QUEX Institute both internally and externally with industry, local communities and government.