Introduction to ESF

The ESF offers funding to individuals and groups of University staff to undertake innovative teaching and learning projects that embody the University's commitment to excellence in education and will make a significant difference to the student experience at Essex. It offers funding to professional services and the Students’ Union for projects in support of education in line with our Education Strategy.

Any member of staff may apply for project funding. Applications are particularly welcomed for collaborative projects, particularly those which include a substantial amount of student involvement including as co-applicants.

£29,000 is available to fund projects in 2019-20. Project proposals may bid for up to the full £29,000. Funding may be assigned to a single large project or multiple smaller projects.

Purpose and Priority Areas

ESF is designed to address the whole education experience, to:

- Support the University’s core commitment to excellence in education;
- Support the development of a strong culture of innovation in teaching and the support of learning as widely as possible amongst University staff;
- Provide support to innovate around services delivering on the ‘whole education experience’;
- Improve the quality of our students’ experience and the delivery of services and opportunities to those students;
- Enrich the student learning experience by increasing student participation in, and encouraging student ownership of, key aspects of teaching and learning development and delivery (including but not limited to feedback and evaluation);
- Encourage innovation and effectiveness in the use of new and existing learning technologies and the development of rich and stimulating learning environments for both staff and students;
- Maximise the realisation of students’ academic potential and their graduate capabilities;
- Facilitate active reflection on and dissemination of best practice across and beyond the University;
- Enhance how the challenger values are integrated into the experience of students at Essex.

Applications for funding can be made to support innovation in any field of teaching and learning practice. They are particularly encouraged in areas which are central to the University’s Education Strategy.

Eligibility

- Any University member of staff, both academic and professional services, may apply for project funding
- Hourly-paid teaching staff who wish to bid are encouraged to apply in partnership with permanent members of staff
- Students’ Union staff (and student societies or groups with direct and explicit engagement of the Student Union)
- In the case of student-led projects, student applicants need to gain the endorsement and have the on-going support of an appropriate staff mentor as well as the Student Union.

Funding Terms

- Funding is provided subject to the terms and conditions contained within this document and the ESF Application Form.
- Funding is only available for use within the 2019-20 financial year and must be used by 31 July 2020.
- Funding is expected to be available for use from 1 August 2019, following project approval. Project funding cannot be deferred.
- The provided ESF project cost code should be used for project expenditure. Spending will be monitored against information provided in the Project Costings section of the Application Form.
- Any funds remaining at the end of the project will be returned to ESF for redistribution. You must notify Katie Finnimore and Chloe Chong if you do not expect to use all of your allocated funding.
- Overspending is not allowed without prior approval.
- Funding is provided on the understanding that tangible project outcomes are submitted / undertaken by the project managers during (or shortly after) the project. See ‘Evaluation and Outcomes’.

### Criteria for the selection of projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria for selection</th>
<th>Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An application must demonstrate that the project will:</td>
<td>Applications need to demonstrate:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relate closely to the strategic priorities of the University as a whole for education as well as those of the applicant’s department / faculty / section;</td>
<td>▪ Clear relevance to strategic priorities, including specific understanding of the Education Action Plan priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the University’s Education Strategy before writing and submitting their application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be realistic and purposeful in terms of rationale, scale, timeline and methodology;</td>
<td>▪ A clear rationale developed in response to an identifiable need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ A clear project outline, timeline and methodology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ Full endorsement by the Director of Education or relevant Head of Department/School/Section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applicants should also discuss their bids with relevant teams where the project involves areas of specialism, e.g. a member of the Learning Technologies Team if a bid is related to that area or Student Support where a bid is related to retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be demonstrably original within their departmental context;</td>
<td>▪ An innovative approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ That new education experience initiatives are being proposed rather than existing department/school/section activities for which funding is required. It is allowable for applicants to build on existing activities, including previously funded projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ That proposals are beyond those areas that a department/school/section would be normally expected to fund e.g. the salaries of existing full-time members of staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significantly improve the quality and effectiveness of student learning, experience and/or engagement at the University;</td>
<td>▪ That proposals have been mapped against relevant areas of university strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ The extent to which students are involved in planning and undertaking the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ The expected impact (how many students will benefit directly or indirectly? What is the extent of the expected impact?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include robust evaluation of the success and impact of the project</td>
<td>▪ How projected learning enhancements will be evaluated, for example by surveys before and after the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Include well-worked out and realistic plans for the dissemination of results within the University and beyond;</td>
<td>▪ How the outcomes will be disseminated more widely within and beyond the University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deliver materials, conclusions, experience or other direct benefit to the teaching and/or support for learning of the department / school / section and the University as a whole;  
- Significant projected outputs (products)
- Significant projected outcomes (changes).

Be sustainable, demonstrate long-term benefit and show the potential for scalability.  
- The longevity of the impact on students
- How the benefit of the project will be sustained after the funding and core project activity has ceased.

The decision-making process

Each proposal will be assessed by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Education) according to the above criteria.

An outcome email will be sent to the project applicant. Project funds will be released following project approval and the issuing of a project cost code.

Rules for spending

Money may be used for:

- Buying out teaching or other identifiable elements of working time to release applicants to work on the project
- Attendance at training courses or relevant conferences (to disseminate outcomes of the project)
- Travel (UK/International: standard-only and appropriate to the project)
- Employment of research assistants, students or other project workers including the funding of incentives for student involvement; where students are employed to support the project we recommend a maximum of 10 hours per week
- Administrative/clerical support
- Materials and equipment (hardware and software). Equipment requests must clearly demonstrate that they are necessary for the development of the project and that they will continue to benefit the learning environment in which the project is undertaken, i.e. not personal laptops, etc.
- Other learning resources
- Dissemination costs (e.g. organisation of seminars, websites, etc.)
- Staff costs (normally excluding permanent, full-time staff).

Money may not be used for:

- Materials and equipment intended solely for the personal use of project leaders (e.g. laptops).
- The sole purchase of equipment.

Evaluation and Outcomes

All award holders are required to:

- Where requested, provide prompt updates on project progress and expenditure;
- Provide an update (maximum 400 words) as requested for submission as part of an update paper to USG;
- Provide a project summary report (maximum 400 words) as requested for consideration by the Education Committee;
- Provide a concise final evaluation report (maximum 3000 words, ideally fewer) summarising the project, detailing current outcomes and outlining future development and outcomes, within one month of completion of their project. Investigation of students’ reaction to the innovation should be part of the final evaluation. For longer projects, interim reports may be required;
- Make a presentation to their department/school/section so that close colleagues are made aware of the project, in the form of a standard seminar paper or short presentation using alternative presentation methods (e.g. video, poster, etc.);
- Take part in a Learning and Development dissemination event or networking session in the term following the conclusion of their project where requested;
- Be available to colleagues to provide advice on the preparation of similar bids or matters relating to the funded project;
- You may be required to submit an article or ideas piece to an appropriate pedagogic journal.
Pre-submission checklist

Please ensure prior to submission that:

☐ Application forms are titled using the format: *ESF – Your full name – Your project name*
☐ All sections of the application have been completed
☐ Start and end project dates are correct, realistic and reflect the right year
☐ The expected numbers of students who will be impacted by your project is clearly stated
☐ The method of assessing impact is clearly stated
☐ Dissemination plans are clearly explained, in addition to demonstrating how your project could be adapted to other departments if successful
☐ Where a student is employed or involved in the project, working hours are reasonable
☐ Project costings have been checked and are accurate and consistent throughout
☐ Your application is supported by your Faculty Department Dean (Education) or Head of Professional Services.

Contacts and further information

Submit your application to Katie Finnmore: cfinnia@essex.ac.uk and Chloe Chong: cchong@essex.ac.uk.