

Sphere programme – Call for Projects 2020-2021

Introduction

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Sphere programme for 20-21 is being launched later than anticipated and offers an opportunity to apply for funding for a small number of strategic projects to deliver change in EDI. The aim of these activities is to deliver new and additional actions, over and above the work that should be 'business as usual' to support EDI.

The types of activities for which funding in the range £100-500 may be requested might be specific events which allow participants to explore particular issues relating to EDI in more depth. Due to changes in our ways of working due to the pandemic, new projects will need to consider specifically the delivery of projects as a result of restrictions and social distancing. Projects might be initiatives which change the way that we normally do things in our work or study, such as a new intervention to support students; recent experiences of life during the pandemic that may have generated new ideas to explore; virtual training activities or a seminar (no physical face to face events), purchase of external resources for use in teaching.

In order to ensure that we learn from each other, and understand what works, and what does not work, we require the *impact* of all activities funded through these schemes to be described and a project evaluation form completed.

Criteria for Applications

For an activity to be funded under the Sphere programme it should align to at least one of the four University EDI themes below:

- Demonstrable equality in experience for all of our staff and students.
- Strengthen our diversity and improve inclusion across student and staff communities.
- Excellence and ambition in delivery of embedded Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- The University, Nottingham, and our Global Community.

Research projects with impact outside of the University will also be considered if there is evidence of broader value to the global community.

Review Process

Projects will be reviewed by the Sphere Programme Board which will produce a ranked list of fundable projects. The ranked lists will be submitted by the Sphere Programme Board to the PVC for EDI for final approval.

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be scored according to the following criteria:

- *Overall project innovation and case for support (score out of 5)*
- *Match with strategic themes/challenges (score out of 5)*
- *Impact measurement (score out of 5)*
- *Value for money (score out of 2)*
- *Sustainability (score out of 3)*
- *Suitable for funding under scheme/not suitable for funding*

Deadline

The deadline for applications is 12pm on Friday 29th January, with decisions to be communicated to successful applicants by mid-February. All funds must be spent by 1st July 2021.

Ineligible costs

The fund should be used for developing new ideas and initiatives and should not be used to fund anything which could be considered 'business as usual' or something which is required in order for us to fulfil our legal or regulatory obligations. Funding cannot be used for academic staff time buy-out but may be used for supporting project activities, as long as the value of the award does not exceed £500 but matched funding may be considered if included as part of the application.

Measurement of impact and success

Applicants should consider:

- How will the success of the activity be measured? This should not be onerous but be sufficient to demonstrate the activity made a positive impact. Popular and successful activities may be recommended for expansion.
- Participation rates, students and staff where applicable, should be recorded.
- If the funding is for a series of events, such as student societies, have participation rates been consistent or increasing?
- Expressions of interest for further similar events may be recorded.
- All applicants will be required to complete an evaluation impact form at the conclusion of the project and may be asked to participate in further communications activities to ensure that best practice is widely communicated.

Examples of Funded Sphere Projects 2019-2020

- Stakeholder consultation event for the development of an online tool to support people at work with chronic pain.
- Menopause and fertility support.
- Supervising students from diverse backgrounds (resource for research supervisors).
- Student led project to research and develop initiatives that would improve the integration of international students in the School of English.
- Diversifying library collections for LGBT+ History Month.

For queries relating to funding under this scheme, please contact the Chair of the Sphere Programme Board, Professor Raheela Khan (Raheela.Khan@nottingham.ac.uk).