

Innovation Seed Funding Call Guidelines

Scope

This funding aims to foster new collaborative projects across the academic and industrial sector and drive novel and exciting research and innovation. Applications must focus on a topic that belongs to or is for the benefit of life and health sciences with a strong data or digital element.

Funding can be used for research costs or facilities access, it cannot be used to employ staff. The amount requested must be match-funded through cash or in-kind contributions from industry. Projects should have significant consideration for sustainability post-award and show demonstrable potential for securing further funding. This scheme can be for a new project within a new or existing industry-academia partnership but is not for continued funding of existing projects.

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to innovation centres and similar organisations where appropriate when developing their application.

You can apply for £5,000 - £10,000 and we hope to award around 3 projects.

Eligibility

- This call is open to the following SULSA members only: University of Aberdeen, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier University, University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, Heriot-Watt University, University of the Highlands and Islands, James Hutton Institute, Robert Gordon University, University of St Andrews, University of Strathclyde, University of the West of Scotland.
- The lead applicant can be a Senior Postdoctoral Researcher that has secured more than £50,000 from independent research funding (as a PI or Co-I, not including fellowship salary costs) or a Principal Investigator that has secured less than £500,000 from independent research funding.
- There must be an industrial co-applicant with agreed match funding as cash or in-kind contributions. Industrial co-applicants can be from outwith Scotland. Other collaborators are welcome, please reference them in the main body of the application.
- All applicants must have at least 12 months remaining on their contract from the application deadline (if this is not the case we will consider applications where a letter from your line manager stating that your contract is likely to be extended)

Funding Information and Conditions

- Projects must have a strong Digital or Data element to them and be in or for the benefit of life and health sciences.
- The funding aims to seed new collaborative projects between industry and academia.
 - For new collaborations, we recommend an MoU (memorandum of understanding) is in place or in the process of being drafted, but this is not an essential criteria.
 - Existing collaborative partnerships can be funded but the collaboration must not have received any external funding to date.
- Funding **can** be used for
 - Research consumables
 - Facility Access
 - Research costs (shipping etc.)
 - Travel i.e., between host institution and industry partner
- Funding **cannot** be used for
 - Salaries
 - Attendance at conferences
 - Equipment (hardware or software)
- Match funding from the industry co-applicant can be extended to in-kind contributions, or be a combination of cash and in-kind. In-kind contributions may include consumables, use of lab facilities, or industry staff time.
- Applications that support the development of students, technical or research staff will be looked upon favourably.
- We encourage applications to be multidisciplinary and collaborative. This may include multiple universities (nationally and/or internationally) or engagement with innovation centres or similar external organisations.
- Applicants who are Postdoctoral Researchers must have their application signed by their PI to demonstrate their support.

Judging Criteria

Applications will be reviewed in two stages, first for scientific quality by a review team comprising experts from across SULSA's membership, and secondly by The Data Lab for their commercial feasibility. The following will be considered during the review:

- The novelty, innovative nature and need for the project
- Impact and commercial feasibility of project
- The collaborative strength of the project
- Engagement of external organisations and/or development of students or staff
- Potential to leverage further funding
- Sustainable and impactful outcomes

Use of Generative AI

- SULSA does not encourage the use of generative AI in applications but permits the use of such tools for language refinement, editing and formatting, in alignment with [UKRI's Policy](#).

Key Dates

- **Call Opens:** Monday 26th October 2026
- **Application Deadline:** Monday 11th January 2027 at 5pm
- **Applicants Informed of Outcome:** w/c Monday 25th January 2027
- **Funding End Date:** 29th February 2028

Submitting Your Application

Please submit your application (**a single PDF**) to jill.inkster@glasgow.ac.uk at SULSA by **Monday 11th January 2027 at 5pm**.

Notification of Outcome

Successful applications will be notified by email by late January 2027.

Payment of Funds

If successful, funds will be transferred to the host institution of the lead academic applicant. Funds must be spent within 12 months of the date of transfer. Upon request funds can be divided up between applicant's host institutions.

Awardee Reporting

You must provide the SULSA administration with project updates and outcomes at 3 months and 12 months post-award. If this project leads to a published article, or leverages grant funding, please contact the SULSA administration to make them aware.

These grants are partly provided by the Scottish Funding Council and must therefore comply with constitute Subsidy Control (previously State Aid).

SULSA Funding Eligibility Key

Please refer to our funding eligibility key for all SULSA funding calls:

SULSA FUNDING ELIGIBILITY KEY

