*September 2020*

**Wellcome Trust – The University of Edinburgh**

**INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC SUPPORT FUND (ISSF3)**

**APPLICATION GUIDANCE 2020/21**

1. **THE ISSF AWARD**

The Wellcome Trust's key objectives for the Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF3) are ‘to enable universities … to invest in areas that are of mutual strategic importance to Wellcome and the individual institutions. These are within and across medical and clinical sciences, public health, social sciences and medical humanities’.

1. **HOW IS IT FUNDED?**

The award is funded by the Wellcome Trust and the University of Edinburgh (central University, the College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine and the School of Biological Sciences.)

1. **COMPETITION DEADLINE**

Thursday 17th December, 5pm (Outcomes announced early February 2021)

1. **KEY REQUIREMENTS**

* Applications are to be **ranked and submitted by** Directors/Heads of CMVM and SBS Research Institutes or for other schools in CSE and CAHSS, by the College Deans of Research – for application limits see 5 below.
* Only applications of clear strategic importance should be submitted.
* There will be a strict limit on the number of applications submitted – see 5 below.
* Each application requires a brief statement of support and short CVs of each co-applicant (sections 21 and 22 of the application form). Please give ample notice to those concerned. For applications where a Director/Head of Institute is the lead applicant, the Head of School (Dean or Head of School in CMVM) should complete section 21. Failure to include a statement of support will adversely affect your application.
* Applications are expected to be ranked, batched and submitted by Directors/Heads of CMVM and SBS Research Institutes or for other schools in CSE and CAHSS, by the College Dean of Research.

1. **MAXIMUM NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS PERMITTED**

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| **Research Institute / College** | **Maximum number of applications** |
| College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine  Edinburgh Neuroscience  Institute of Genetics and Molecular Medicine  The Roslin Institute and R(D)SVS  The Usher Institute  The Queen’s Medical Research Institute  Other CMVM Groups (submitted by CMVM Dean of Research) | 5  5  5  5  5  2 |
| College of Science and Engineering  School of Biological Sciences:  Institute of Cell Biology  Institute of Evolutionary Biology  Institute of Molecular Plant Sciences  Institute of Immunology & Infection  Institute of Quantitative Biology, Biochemistry and Biotechnology | 5  5  2  5  3 |
| Cross College  Institute of Regeneration and Repair:  Centre for Regenerative Medicine (CMVM and CSE) | 5 |
| Other Schools within the College of Science and Engineering | Up to 5 application to be submitted via the College Dean of Research |
| College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science | Up to 5 applications to be submitted via the College Dean of Research |
| CMVM and CSE College level | Up to 3 applications – where these do not fit into any of the above categories e.g. college-level activity, training etc. |

1. **STRATEGIC AREAS TO BE FUNDED**

The Wellcome Trust and the University of Edinburgh have agreed that ISSF3 awards should be in the following strategic areas and applications for an award should fit within one or more of these:

1) Support for early career researchers

Support for early career researchers/Chancellor’s Fellows/clinical lecturers of the highest promise, towards Wellcome Trust or other prestigious fellowship or grant applications. Applicants will usually be independent investigators rather than researchers employed in well-funded research groups (these awards are not intended to support the early career researcher’s supervisor). Typically awards will be:

• pump priming grants to generate key pilot data for fellowship and grant applications or, less commonly, to complete key data for high impact publications.

• research leave fellowships which are available for Clinical Lecturers to allow them to take up to 6 months away from clinical training to focus on research deliverables

• exchange grants to learn a new technique or collaborate, especially to prepare for a fellowship application

• momentum awards to maintain research activity, e.g. by employing a technician, during disrupted periods e.g. parental or sick leave.

2) Support for mid-career investigators

Support for mid-career investigators towards Wellcome Trust or other major prestigious fellowship or grant applications.

3) Support for interdisciplinary projects

Response-mode pump-priming awards in these categories are highly flexible and are intended to enhance applications for major research grants, including programmatic and infrastructure awards and Wellcome Trust Investigator awards. Principal applicants will be academic staff and new collaborations between independent investigators, especially in different Schools/Colleges, are encouraged. These funds are not intended simply to supplement well-funded groups, and applicants must explain why the award is needed quickly and why it cannot be obtained as a conventional external grant.

ISSF3 will also fund interdisciplinary workshops to encourage new collaborations and develop research networks. Proposals are encouraged for workshops that bring together investigators from multiple Research Centres/Institutes/Schools to address a common theme.

4) Equality and diversity support

Momentum awards, described above, are not limited to early career researchers, and may be awarded to academic staff whose research progress risks being delayed by potentially disadvantageous circumstances, including but not limited to parental leave. Applications will be handled in confidence.

5) Support for commercial translation

A significant proportion of ISSF3 is intended to advance projects arising from University of Edinburgh research with high potential for commercialisation, usually in readiness for follow-on funding/collaboration. These pump-priming awards recognise that rapid progress is often important for example to exemplify a new patent or to provide proof-of-concept funding in advance of a translational grant application. Applicants should provide a clear case for the unmet need, intellectual property protection and route to market for their invention and, as above, must explain why funding is required quickly and cannot be obtained from a conventional external grant. They should liaise with the Centre’s Business Development team in working up their proposal.

Please note that ISSF3 funds support a Translator-in-Residence, Dr Andrew McBride, who is a scientist with experience in translational project evaluation and management and outsourcing. Please contact [a.mcbride@ed.ac.uk](mailto:a.mcbride@ed.ac.uk) for assistance.

6) Support for open research and DORA principles

ISSF3 is supporting a project to develop resources to share biomedical research data, and employs a researcher for this purpose. The team will consider supporting exemplary projects to maximise the exploitation of research and enhance its reproducibility.

7) Support for public engagement

Previous ISSFs supported a number of investigator-led public engagement projects. For ISSF3, Wellcome have encouraged an approach which emphasises embedding public engagement into projects. We therefore encourage proposals which incorporate training in public engagement with or without the delivery of a public engagement project. It is important to describe how the quality and reach of the activity will be measured.

8) Support for international/UK inter-institutional collaboration and global challenges research

ISSF3 will support pump-priming awards for projects with high potential for follow-on funding/collaboration for research on global challenges, for example from Wellcome Trust or RCUK GCRF. Applications are also encouraged for exchange visits and international workshops that will establish new collaborations.

9) COVID-related work

Applications relating to COVID research including its impacts on diversity and equality.

**7. HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION**

* 1. Please name your application file:

Institute initials-lead applicant’s Surname-initials

e.g.:

IQB3-Brown-AB

IGMM-Smith-JR

or for CAHSS and CSE other than SBS:

CAHSS-Jones-A

CSE-Smith-A

etc.

* 1. Type ‘ISSF3 application’ in the email subject line.
  2. Staff in the School of Biological Sciences should submit their application to: [Richard.Yardley@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Richard.Yardley@ed.ac.uk) on the deadline as advised by him.
     1. **AFTER SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION**
* You should receive an email acknowledgement of your application within two working days of submission. If you do not, please contact Lorraine Jackson, CMVM Office, email [Lorraine.Jackson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Lorraine.Jackson@ed.ac.uk)
* The ISSF Committee aims to meet within six weeks of the application deadline and applicants will be notified of decisions by email as soon as possible thereafter.
  + 1. **ISSF GOVERNANCE**
* <https://www.ed.ac.uk/medicine-vet-medicine/research-support-development-commercialisation/issf/issf-governance>
  + 1. **REPORTING ON AWARD OUTCOMES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**
* Ongoing ISSF funding from the Wellcome Trust depends on the reporting of successful outcomes from awards. Should your application be successful, 12 months after your award you will be asked to complete a pro forma on outcomes emanating from the award.
* You will also be asked to acknowledge the ISSF in any publications, etc. emanating from an award.
  + 1. **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

***Pre-application***

1. **Can a postdoctoral researcher be lead applicant?**

No. The application must be led by a member of staff who is an independent researcher, above postdoctoral researcher level.

1. **Can a previous award holder be lead applicant?**

Applicants who have received an ISSF award within the last three years must demonstrate successful outcomes of the past award (especially external funding) in order to apply for a further ISSF award.

1. **Can non-UoE staff apply?**

External collaborations are welcome, but the lead applicant must be a University member of staff.

1. **What is the typical value of an award?**

The value of awards varies significantly. Award amounts requested vary from <£10k to up to £40-50k, and occasionally in excess of this. Costs must always be justified. Applications for sums in excess of £40K would be expected to represent a significant opportunity and/or provide leveraged funding and/or cost recovery. Leveraged co-funding is a distinct advantage. The Committee also makes smaller awards for pump-priming/one-off initiatives and activities.

1. **Do awards pay fEC or staff time?**

fEC is not payable. Staff time/salary costs for University of Edinburgh staff on long-term contracts cannot be charged to an award.

1. **Will an award fund equipment?**

The ISSF fund should not be seen as an equipment fund. However, equipment that is essential to a project may be funded. It is expected that requests for expensive items of equipment should be accompanied by at least 50% matching or leveraged funding and a full cost recovery plan.

1. **Will an award fund travel costs?**

Travel costs may be funded if e.g. a short visit is vital to a project, to learn a vital skill or e.g. for a public engagement project. Such costs must be justified. Conference attendance and publication charges are not funded.

***Post application***

1. **When are outcomes announced?**

Normally within six weeks of the application deadline.

1. **If my application is unsuccessful, can I appeal?**

The ISSF Committee’s decision is final and appeals will not be considered.

***Post award***

1. **Can an award surplus be re-purposed?**

Unspent funds should reported so that these can be returned to the central ISSF fund.

1. **My project will take longer than indicated in my application**

Please email details to [ISSF@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ISSF@ed.ac.uk)

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**Enquiries**

Lorraine Jackson, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine

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Email: [Lorraine.Jackson@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Lorraine.Jackson@ed.ac.uk)

**WELLCOME TRUST STRATEGY, POLICIES AND POSITION STATEMENTS**

* <https://wellcome.ac.uk/about-us/our-strategy>
* <https://wellcome.ac.uk/funding/managing-grant/policy-and-position-statements>