**Aspect Social Science** **Innovation Fellowship Programme**

Introduction

Expression of interest deadline: **13 June** Application deadline: **27 June 2022**

**Are you a social scientist who is passionate about innovation** and wants to encourage others to get involved?

Do you have experience of **working with or creating innovative businesses** orare you **seeking seed funding to start your own** social science-led venture?

Do you have experience of applying your expertise and creating impact for your research through consultancy?

Are you keen to link with other academic advocates for social science innovation, promoting business engagement, commercialisation and entrepreneurship for the social sciences both within the University and externally?

We are **looking to fund creative and enthusiastic Fellows to be ambassadors or demonstrators of innovation** to help drive an inclusive, supportive culture of innovation among social sciences researchers and support staff at the University of Edinburgh. The Innovation Fellowships will **run until 31 March 2023**. They will be supported by Edinburgh Innovations and engaged with the [Aspect](https://aspect.ac.uk/) network of universities and organisations working together to support socially responsible innovation, entrepreneurship and research commercialisation in the social sciences, humanities and arts.

Background and purpose

In the current research funding climate, innovation is becoming an increasingly important component of research activity. The role social science research can play in creating socio-economic impact through working with businesses and creating new ventures is not widely understood and appreciated.

By funding a cohort of Fellows whose main objectives are to a) advocate for innovation, b) demonstrate innovation pathways, we hope to create a step-change in innovation activities in the social sciences, making it easier for researchers to engage in innovation and to make it a more valued part of research. This is a great opportunity for someone to get involved at this stage of our journey, especially those keen to develop leadership, change management and advocacy skills and to consolidate and share their learning. Proposals are therefore sought from researchers to lead and facilitate culture change and demonstrate innovation practice within their schools; with the aspiration that innovation becomes an increasingly valued and recognised activity for social sciences researchers.

* Fellows will be expected to organise and/or lead activities to inspire and influence colleagues within the University and externally.
* Funding can be used to seed fund your own business idea or innovation project provided you incorporate activities to share your journey or lessons learnt. This is a flexible opportunity, and we welcome creative approaches.
* The new Fellows will work closely with those identified by some of our Aspect partner universities (Oxford, Glasgow, Cardiff, and Sussex) to form a cohort of Innovation Fellows. They will lead the development of a network of those interested in sharing good practice, and ideas around innovation across the Social Sciences.
* Administrative support will be provided by Fiona Pilgrim at Edinburgh Innovations and Aspect’s Innovation Network and Events Co-ordinator.

Responsibilities of Innovation Fellows

* **Advocate for innovation**, research commercialisation, business engagement and/or entrepreneurship at school and/or college level.
* **Accelerate and/or demonstrate your own or others’ commercialisation and innovation journeys.**
* Help **drive an inclusive, supportive culture of innovation and enterprise** in your school, college and the wider University.
* Provide academic input and **leadership into thinking around innovation** and new initiatives including communities of practice.
* **Liaise and network with others with an interest in innovation** in schools, colleges and beyond the University.
* **Contribute social science relevant case studies and content** to the [engage](https://www.ed.ac.uk/edinburgh-innovations/for-staff/engage) online training programme and/or events and activities (e.g. workshops, training, seminars, podcasts, vlogs) to other appropriate programmes and platforms.
* Attend Aspect academic cohort meetings (c. every 6-8 weeks) and events (approx. 5 over the course of the year)
* Meet regularly with the cohort from across the partner HEIs for specific sessions, which may include; professional development, the 'research ventures' programme, and evaluation, including potentially contributing to the Aspect annual event, and producing materials for the Aspect partnership (e.g. podcasts, vlogs, etc).

This call is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) ‘Commercialising Research of the Social Sciences’ (CRoSS) scheme. The primary aim of this scheme is to build the capacity and capability of social science researchers and knowledge exchange professionals to identify and support opportunities for commercialising output from social sciences research.

The CRoSS scheme sits alongside [ESRC Impact Acceleration Accounts](https://www.ed.ac.uk/node/103546/) round 2 funding 2019 – 2023 managed by the Edinburgh Research Office’s Knowledge Exchange and Impact Team.

Eligibility

Social scientists, (those whose research has a social science component of 51% or above), from any college and school are welcome to apply.

* We encourage applications either from individuals, or from small teams where a named Fellow works closely with a Research Assistant and /or other specific colleagues to plan and deliver their activities.
* **The named Fellow must be a current employee of the University (a Fixed Term Researcher or a permanent member of academic staff), and have the support of their school.**
* Fixed Term Researchers applying to be a Fellow must have a contract that runs for the duration of the Innovation Fellowships Programme.
* Social Science PhD students are not eligible as applicants but can take part in projects as assistants**.**

Funding available

**Innovation Fellows may apply for up to £5k.** It can be used for direct costs and seed funding, including but not limited to;

* RA time related to engagement/impact activities that support innovation with business (either with new or existing partners)
* Developing and delivering training or event activities and materials
* Developing the proof of concept of an innovative process
* Developing the business case or skills to commercialise social science research
* Temporary project assistance and consultancy

This can also be used to fund salary or buy-out, depending on contractual circumstances. Funding cannot be used to fund new research. You will be required to provide a costing and short justification of your spend within your application.

**Activities must be completed and all grant money spent by 31 March 2023.** At the end of the period Fellows will be required to report briefly on how the award money has been used in the form of a conversation focussing on learning, outcomes, and future plans. Award-holders may also be contacted beyond the end of their project to provide additional information as required by ESRC reporting

Fellows will also have access to an additional events budget, where necessary, to deliver events and training to communities of practice.

Application process

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| **Stage** | **Deadline** |
| **Expression of interest** | As soon as possible before **13 June 2022** |
| Short [online form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=sAafLmkWiUWHiRCgaTTcYa6LkenFh8tDrSxGCnhIETlUN0g2WVRMSFZIODhRNVVBSVEyWVI2N0JXMC4u). Non-committal, designed to get a sense of demand.  The Edinburgh Innovations Team will check suitability for the scheme. | |
| [fiona.pilgrim@ei.ed.ac.uk](mailto:fiona.pilgrim@ei.ed.ac.uk) will respond to discuss proposal and work with applicant and the School to develop the application including approximate costings. | |
| **Full application deadline** | **27 June 2022** |
| A panel drawn from the EI CAHSS account team will shortlist and select applications. Applicants may be invited for interview week of 27 June if further information is required. | |
| **Selection and notification of award** | **By 1 July 2022** |
| Once awarded, the application will be processed by the School and ERO and uploaded to WorkTribe, and funding released. There is no need for applications to go through this process before award. | |

Assessment criteria

* Evidence of commitment to innovation, external engagement and/or enterprise
* Clarity of how the funding will be used to increase social science academics’ understanding of and engagement with innovation
* Clarity of how the funding will be used to accelerate or demonstrate your own or others’ commercialisation and innovation journeys
* Capacity to deliver the planned activities and their potential to reach and influence colleagues through new or existing networks, platforms and forums
* Value for money and justification of resources required.