

WFS Collaborative SOTL Research Project Fund Guidance 2024/5

DEADLINE for proposal submissions: Friday 15 November 2024

In brief

This new project fund offers the opportunity for collaborative research of teaching and learning to benefit predominantly international students preparing for or already undertaking degree study at any level at the University of Warwick.

All projects need to include Warwick Foundation Studies colleagues as leads working with at least one other department from across the institution.

Want to know more...?

Full details are contained in this document.

If you would like support with exploring ideas for a project, you can review the session held last year by Dr Kerry Dobbins, ADC here: [Finding your SoTL project idea-20231116_100507-Meeting Recording.mp4](#)

Note: if you do not have access, please email Joanne Scarr who will add you to the list.

If you have any initial questions about projects, please contact: Professor Nina-Anne Lawrence, Director WFS and Chair of SoTL Research Fund Panel, nina-anne.lawrence@warwick.ac.uk

Full details of requirements for submission are below.

Funding Objectives

The WFS Collaborative SOTL fund has been created to encourage collaborative partnerships between staff (and students) from WFS with those from at least one other department (normally those which receive students from a WFS programme) in order to directly influence and improve the learning experience of students.

As a department, WFS holds a strategic cross-department role as the majority of its programmes prepare or support students, mainly international students, for effective and successful academic study. Current programmes include:

- the Warwick International Foundation Programme (IFP) from which students progress to a broad range of undergraduate degrees across the institution;
- pre-sessional programmes from which students progress to a range of postgraduate taught degrees with some also progressing to undergraduate degrees,
- in-sessional which provides targeted academic skills development for those on any level of degree which is often tailored provision within specific departments.
- the Warwick Summer School and pre-university Summer School

Focus of Collaborative Projects

Within this context, the fund aims to support collaborative projects across a range of subject disciplines that will directly support the learning and teaching experience for students starting their journey in WFS and then progressing to another department. In line with the institutional education strategy, project focus could include:

- Student Engagement and Inclusion
- Digital Education/Blended Learning
- Inclusive Assessment
- The effectiveness of specific strategies and approaches
- Curriculum Design & Development
- Internationalisation
- Inclusive education
- Student outcomes
- Mapping of WFS programme one of the degrees/a group of degrees students progress onto
- Tracking of students (e.g. student experience, student performance on degree)

A proposal must clearly state which strategic area it is aiming to contribute to and how this specifically supports the delivery of programmes within WFS and the additional department(s). As the themes listed above are not narrowly defined, you are welcome to clarify in proposals how you view your proposed work fits with the strategic area you have chosen, if you consider it likely that there might be questions raised by reviewers.

If you'd like to discuss whether your proposal fits with the given themes in advance of drafting a full proposal, you are welcome to contact the Director of WFS, Professor Nina-Anne Lawrence (nina-anne.lawrence@warwick.ac.uk) or send an overview and she will provide feedback. Please ensure sufficient time is given to allow feedback to be given and submission of the proposal before the closing date.

Eligibility

To ensure projects funded through WFS relate directly to WFS's strategic vision and role within the institution, we require WFS colleagues to take on the project leadership roles. However, we encourage one of the academics from the collaborative department to take on the role of Co-lead.

Project Criteria

Projects must be formed through the collaboration with other academic or central service departments and the outputs of each project must be based on one of the above strategic themes. As a condition of the project funding, they should also meet the criteria below:

1. Project Lead/Co-lead submitting the proposal must be a current WFS member of staff.
2. Project teams are encouraged to consist of students as well as staff working in partnership throughout the life cycle of the project, with all roles being participative in nature from proposal stage to end of project to ensure that both staff and student perceptions and interests are understood and aligned accurately.
3. Project Leads should ensure active commitment to diversity and equality in the selection of student and staff partners.

4. All project teams should work or collaborate closely with a minimum of WFS and one other academic department or WFS plus a professional/student services member of staff as appropriate and link with the activities in those departments/services.
5. Proposals should clearly demonstrate alignment with WFS and Warwick's strategic priorities.
6. Proposals should demonstrate awareness of ethical implications where relevant.
7. The proposal form must include a project plan that describes the actions, timescales and resources required to deliver the project.
We can fund: student time via hourly payment, student incentives to attend focus groups via vouchers, staff time, travel within the UK if related to data collection.
We can't fund: hardware, international travel.
8. A clear description of the proposed impact of the project and outputs must be included along with a commitment to sharing/disseminating them.
9. Proposals must be endorsed by each applicant's Head of Department.

Funding

WFS has £15k of funding available for this year. Project proposals can normally bid for a maximum of £5,000 per project (with additional funding depending on the number of proposals received).

This funding is mainly to pay for student's time (please see guidance below) and general project costs. It may also be used to cover additional/replacement staffing costs.

The funding must be spent within the financial year in which it has been awarded (with each year starting on 1 August and ending on 31 July). It cannot be transferred from one financial year to the next. Therefore, it is very important that for any project activities that require expenditure spanning over more than one financial year, a breakdown must be clearly shown in the project proposal form showing the costs for this financial year (up to 31 July 2025) and any costs for the next financial year (starting 1 August 2025 to 31 July 2026), as this will require funding being awarded from two separate financial years.

Any unspent budget remaining at the end of the respective financial year(s) will be forfeited and cannot be carried over.

Project Leads are responsible for ensuring that funding awarded is spent by the end of the financial year (31 July 2025) and that all expenditure complies with University Financial Regulations and Procedures.

Any overspend of the award will need to be discussed with Prof Nina-Anne Lawrence and be met by WFS and the Co-Lead's Department.

(See section below on Student Time – funding)

Assessment of Project Proposals

Proposals will be individually assessed by the WFS SOTL Research Fund Panel to ensure they meet the required project criteria. If a project is not awarded funding, following feedback from the Panel, the Project Lead may reapply.

Proposals will be selected in accordance with the criteria listed above under Project Criteria. Therefore, when applying for project funding, the impact and scalability of the project should be considered, along with how the project could be adopted in future modules/courses and made sustainable. Also, if outputs will need updating in the future, the proposal should specify who will be responsible for updating them.

As part of the review process, the Panel will consider whether part or all of a project will require an ethical review. Please note that if the proposal is awarded funding, it is the Project Lead(s) responsibility to apply for ethical approval, that ethical approval is obtained before activities commence and ensure that any research activity related to the project is conducted in a manner consistent with established ethical standards. Please consider this before submitting a proposal and ensure the planned schedule for the project can commence and stay within the timeline given in the approval, if ethical approval is required.

Ethics applications must be submitted to the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) by Tuesday 7 January 2025.

Forms and details are available via this link: [How Do I Apply For Ethical Approval? | Research at Warwick](#)

Submission of Project Proposals

DEADLINE for proposal submissions is: Friday 15 November 2024

Project Leads are to complete an online Project Proposal Form, which includes a Project Plan section, a rationale for the project and a breakdown of costs. Please check the Financial Regulations and Procedures when planning your project and before submitting your proposal, also keep up to date with any changes. Project budgets will be tightly reviewed by the Panel.

Before submitting the proposal, the WFS Project Co-Leads must obtain approval from their line manager and the Director of Education. For those in other faculties, they must obtain approval from their Head of Department.

Useful resources

- This is an early version of a SoTL at Warwick website which is being developed by Dr Kerry Dobbins, ADC: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/academic-development/cultivate/sotl/
- [Key Characteristics of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning](#) short video. The Centre that produced this has connections with some of the most influential (US-based) SoTL scholars. They have an Intro to SoTL playlist that might be helpful: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aJ7JiR6URs&list=PLE1_tW7hM2sCqxJfiolKcOYNVo8Ng4ob6
- Resources from the University of York [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Network - Staff home, University of York](#)

Guidance on Student Time

If you are planning to include students for co-creator type roles, WIHEA currently suggests an average pay rate with Unitemps of spinal point 16/Grade 4. It is important to note that in order to calculate the project costs you should include the holiday pay and Unitemps charge in the budget section of your proposal. It is important to reflect the level of tasks/skills required fairly, so do please seek further advice from Joanne Scarr, WFS Executive Officer on appropriate rates should you feel it does not reflect fairly

For Students that take more of a project officer role throughout the project life cycle, spinal point 22/Grade 5 is suggested. Again, ensure you add in holiday pay and Unitemps charge.

If students will be carrying out other types of activity which are likely to fall under different pay grades, please do contact Joanne who will seek advice.

For Focus Group participation or should you wish to offer Students a prize or incentive to take part in a survey, there is the option of up to £15 vouchers. There is a cap of £150 for internal audiences.

Slightly higher rates may be used if recruitment to carry out the tasks has been difficult. Any such voucher provision should be in accordance with and approved by FinRegs and have the appropriate ethical clearance. If wishing to add this into your proposal please seek FinRegs approval by consulting Joanne Scarr, Executive Officer WFS, in the first instance.

When preparing a proposal and costing the time that students will work during the project, please also note: Dependent on whether the student you employ has other paid work elsewhere in the University or dependent on the length of time you employ the student for in this project, the hourly and charge rates may increase, these rates are referred to as Pre AWR and Post AWR. Please ensure, especially if you have already identified the students you wish to employ, that you explore this directly with Unitemps before you finalise your project budget.

For guidance about Pre AWR and Post AWR and any other Unitemp related enquiry please contact Joanne Scarr, WFS Executive Officer (joanne.scarr@warwick.ac.uk), in the first instance.

SOTL Approval Panel

Prof Nina-Anne Lawrence, Head of Dept & Director of Warwick Foundation Studies, Chair
Dr Susie Cowley-Haselden, WFS

Dr Kerry Dobbins, Academic Development Centre, Associate Editor Journal of Teaching and Learning Practice (JUTLP), WFS

Dr Felix Mayeya, Maths Teaching Fellow (Maths, Physics), WFS
WFS Programme Director (tbc)