

Guidelines: Faculty of Social Sciences Research Development Fund (FSS RDF) 2026/27

Awards of up to £5,000 are available to support researchers (individuals and teams) in the Faculty of Social Sciences to develop strategic and competitive external funding bids. The Faculty of Social Sciences Research Development Fund (FSS RDF) will support research activities taking place in the 2026/2027 financial year.

The FSS RDF will contribute up to a maximum of £5,000 towards research expenses for defined research projects. This includes scoping activity for data collection such as costs for travel, accommodation, and the hiring of research assistants. It may also cover larger-scale networking activities such as holding workshops or consortia meetings with external collaborators and international partners. Stand-alone pilot studies generating data to inform a significant grant application can also be funded. Such pilot studies would hopefully also result in publishable pieces of research. **In all cases**, projects must identify and target a major external funding scheme with clear timelines and strategies for submission, ideally applications will be made within 12 months of FSS RDF project's completion and at a minimum within the following financial year (i.e. 2027-2028). Applicants must commit to submitting a grant application with a total value of at least £100,000 as an outcome of the FSS RDF project.

Applications led by and/or including University of Warwick early-career researchers¹ are particularly welcome.

Applications are also strongly encouraged to link to the Faculty's Big Questions:

1. What is the future of democracy in the face of rising authoritarianism?
2. How can societies address climate change and become more sustainable?
3. What is the future of work?
4. How can AI enhance rather than replace human wisdom and enterprise?
5. How should the economy be organised to serve society?
6. What do justice and equality mean in the 21st century?
7. How can war and conflict be prevented?
8. What are the causes and consequences of population change?
9. What forms of international cooperation can solve global challenges?
10. What makes a good education?
11. What is the future of social science?

Support from host departments is important and so all applications to the FSS RDF should include a financial (not in-kind) contribution from a Social Sciences department or appropriate internal organisation. The contribution should be at least 10% of the overall cost of the proposed project. As funding capacity is limited, the RDF cannot support all applications.

Budgets

Applicants should provide a clear budget in their applications. This should include the full costs of the project, a clear indication of contributions from other sources, particularly confirmation of

¹ ECRs are Assistant Professors and other research staff (assistants and fellows), or individuals who have already submitted their PhD thesis and are awaiting their viva (max. 5 years post-viva).

financial contribution. All costs must be fully justified and in accordance with Warwick's [travel and subsistence allowances](#).

Value for money is an important assessment criterion, and all costs should be robustly justified. Proposals including shared costs will be particularly welcome, especially in terms of support for any non-Warwick academics. It is unlikely that all such costs would be supported by the fund.

FSS RDF will not support requests for PI or Co-I time, estates, or indirect costs. These costs should not be included in the budget.

A budget template is included in the application form. Please contact your Departmental Administrator for any assistance required in developing the budget as internal costings are not supported by R&IS.

How to Apply

The application form is available to download on the [Social Sciences Research Development Fund](#) webpage and should be accompanied by a narrative CV from the main applicant (please use the template provided).

Completed application forms and main applicant CV, should be signed and emailed by the Head of Department or by a departmental representative (with Head of Department in copy) as an attachment to the Faculty resource account (fss.rdf@warwick.ac.uk).

Applications will be assessed by a Faculty panel shortly after the deadline, with outcomes communicated as soon as possible.

Assessment Criteria:

Importance	Novelty/originality Timeliness Clear strategic alignment with University's priorities (Excellence, Financial Sustainability, Reputation)/Spotlights/FSS Big Questions
Quality	Clearly stated objectives and vision Robust methodology/plan of action that can be delivered within the timeframe Value for money
Impact	Planned outputs identified Potential significance and reach of planned activities stated Clear pathway to a suitable external grant application identified Evidence of scalability beyond the funded period
Track record	Applicant(s) experience to deliver proposed programme Suitability to apply for the identified external grant application

If your application cannot wait for the next formal deadline, please contact fss.rdf@warwick.ac.uk with a brief explanation of the time-sensitive nature of your proposal and the funding panel Chair will decide whether the proposal can be considered under a rapid response pathway.

Terms and Conditions for Faculty of Social Sciences Research Development Fund (2026/07)

General

Awards are non-repayable grants (except in the case of conferences or other events which make a profit).

Application forms should be electronically signed by the applicant and the Head of Department.

Application forms must be submitted to the FSS RDF inbox by the applicant's Head of Department, or a departmental representative with the Head of Department in CC, by the specified deadline.

All funds must be spent within the financial year in which the project is awarded. No expenditure against RDF codes will be permitted after 31 July of the award year. Award holders are, therefore strongly advised to submit all invoices and expense claims by 30 June of the award year.

Appropriate ethical approval must be sought where necessary and relevant before project work commences.

There must be no significant additional space or equipment implications that cannot be accommodated within the Department(s) involved.

All decisions taken by the assessment panel are final.

Only one application may be submitted per applicant.

As the purpose of the fund is to support the development of external grant applications, submissions should ideally be made within 12 months of FSS RDF project's completion where possible and at a minimum within the following financial year (i.e. 2027-2028).

Applicants must commit to submitting a grant application with a total value of at least £100,000 as an outcome of the project.

To ensure effective use of funding, applicants should only apply to the FSS RDF once any grant applications promised as outcomes of previously funded FSS RDF projects have been submitted.

Eligibility

The FSS RDF is open to all researchers within the Faculty of Social Sciences, with particular encouragement given to early career researchers.

Applications will only be accepted from permanent or fixed-term members of staff (who have at least 12 months of their employment contract to run with effect from the start date of the project) within the Faculty of Social Sciences.

ECRs are Assistant Professors and other research staff (assistants and fellows), or individuals who have already submitted their PhD thesis and are awaiting their viva (max. 5 years post-viva).

Eligible costs

Eligible costs include direct staff costs, consumables, travel and accommodation, and all other items required for the project.

Equipment requests will not be supported other than in very exceptional circumstances. Any requests for specialist equipment should be fully justified by the Head of Department as well as the applicant.

Building and refurbishment costs are ineligible under this scheme.

FSS RDF will not support requests for PI or Co-I time, estates and indirect costs. These costs should not be included in the budget.

Applications must include a completed budget section and all costs should be justified in the application form.

Contribution

Support from host departments is important and so all applications to the FSS RDF should include a financial (not in-kind) contribution from a Social Sciences department, or appropriate internal organisation, or an external body. The contribution should be at least 10% of the overall cost of the proposed project.

The applicant's Department (and those of all co-applicants) must detail any contribution they will make to the direct costs of the project.

Epigeum Research Integrity Training

The University takes seriously its commitment towards the provision of a healthy research culture for all staff, students and research participants. Applicants to RDF are therefore strongly encouraged to undertake either the full or condensed version of the Epigeum Research Integrity Training which can be accessed [here](#). Please note that completion of this training will be reviewed when applying for any future internal funds.

Reporting Requirements

All successful applicants will be required to provide a brief report within 1 month of the end of the funding period. A template report will be provided to award holders.