**SME and Other Client Engagement Fund**

**Guidance for applicants**

The scheme aims to encourage more work with businesses and other partner organisations, with preference given to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs[[1]](#footnote-1)\*). The fund will contribute £5k towards a fully costed project for a minimum of £10k that will be delivered before 31 July 2019.

What are the intentions of the scheme?

1. To encourage academic engagement with SMEs, and other client organisations.
2. To make it financially easier for client organisations to work with the University.
3. To create relationships that have the potential for future projects.
4. To develop relationships that will lead to sustainable income and impact from contract research and consultancy, facilities hire or commercialisation of the University’s Intellectual Property.

Eligibility

The scheme is open to all academic staff who are developing collaborative projects with partners new to the university, where the partner is prepared to at least match fund the university contribution, and the applicant can demonstrate a return in terms of current or future income, beneficial partnership advantage, and/or research or other clear impact.

Applications can be for research, consultancy, hire of facilities, or IP commercialisation.

Teaching-related activity is not eligible for funding through this scheme.

Outputs desired

1. Project with clients new to the University.
2. Evidence of sustainable income and impact.
3. Evidence of enhanced reputation with business
4. An end of project report/ case study of progress and results achieved and follow up activity.

Conditions for award

1. The project must be with an eligible partner. Preference with be given to projects with SMEs.
2. Businesses or enterprises of any type will be considered. However, for organisations which are not SMEs, there must be a very clear case for the award in terms of a pathway to expected benefits.
3. This scheme is for first time engagement with a client organisation. They should be based in the UK and should not have worked with MMU in the past 3 years ie, no financial transactions.
4. You should be able to demonstrate potential for a continuing relationship with Man Met.
5. All new customers will be subject to due diligence checks by Finance before the proposal can be approved. It is unlikely that very small companies will pass the checks so as a rule you should consider organisations with a turnover of £5m or more.
6. Where a discount has been applied the payment schedule is 50% upfront.
7. The customer should not have received more than €195k state aid in the past 3 years (the customer must complete a state aid declaration).
8. All spending to be completed by 31st July 2019.
9. Applications must be in one of the following categories: Contract Research, Consultancy, Facilities Hire, IP commercialisation, or public engagement.
10. Delivery of an end of project report two weeks after end of project (template from RKE).
11. All clients must opt in to receive further communications from the university.

Eligible expenditure

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| --- | --- |
| Eligible Costs | Ineligible costs |
| * Marketing, digital campaigns, market research
* Travel and accommodation to named clients for a specific RKE purpose
* Travel and accommodation expenses for named clients to visit the University for a specific RKE purpose.
* Present at relevant industrial or business conferences
* Exhibit to attract client organisations
* Hire/ purchase of equipment\* and facilities
* Temp staff to support business engagement projects
* Expert staff to facilitate delivery of a service
* Product/ service testing
* Digital service development
* Product/service refinement services
* Expert staff to facilitate delivery of a service
* Staff to back-fill academic time required for commercialisation work
 | * Laptops, I-pads, cameras and phones are excluded. Equipment must be technical, specialist or scientific equipment necessary to facilitate business engagement.
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| MAXIMUM VALUE OF AWARD | £5000.00 |
| NUMBER OF AWARDS IN THIS CALL | N/a  |

Selection criteria and assessment process

Awards will be made against the following criteria:

* Quality of the proposal and link to university research and knowledge exchange priorities
* Potential to lead to impact
* Potential for a beneficial business relationship
* Meets an unmet market need
* Potential for sustainable income/ generation of surplus

Applications will be reviewed monthly by the Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange.

NB Applicants should work with their Faculty Business Development Manager and prices quoted should be based on FEC costing. Please check the VAT position, it is likely that VAT will be payable on the price. If the company cannot pay FEC then up to £5000 may be used to discount for up-front payment. Any discounts applied must not contravene state aid regulations. (ie the recipient company has not been in receipt of ‘de minimis’ aid that exceeds 200,000 Euro in any rolling 3 year period).

All applications should be approved by the Head of the relevant University Research & Knowledge Exchange Centre, and Faculty Head of RKE.

1. \* An SME is defined as an organisation employing no more than 250 people, with an annual turnover of up to €50m. It should not have a relationship with other enterprises which means that together these enterprises exceed the ceilings. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)