MORU Public Engagement Bursary Scheme 2020-2025

Objectives of the scheme

- **Provide seed funding** for PE projects, to support small-scale projects and pilots for bigger grant applications.

- **Build capacity** by supporting researchers to plan and lead their own engagement projects.

- **Extend the reach** of MORU engagement activities to build new partnerships and target a wide range of different audiences.

- Help MORU research programmes to **achieve their engagement outcomes**.

Experience from 2018-19

We awarded 14 bursaries to professors, senior/junior researchers, PhD students

What went well:

- Many researchers led and were trained on engagement, many ideas generated, and networks expanded, new partners found

- A "surge" of PE projects – raised the visibility of PE

Challenges:

- High administrative burden (e.g. for PE team, finance)

- Needed a lot of support from PE team

- Slow to start and spend after award

First round in April 2021

Four small grants of up to GPB 2,500 (THB 102,000/USD 3,400)

E.g. workshops, panel discussions, local events…

Three larger grants of up to GBP 10,000 (THB 410,000/USD 13,600)

More substantial projects, e.g. series of workshops, geographically spread events with travel, or collaborations with content creators to produce new resources

Timeline

- Reviewed by the MORU Public Engagement Bursaries Committee (25 May 2021)

- Successful applications approved by the MORU Science & Strategy Committee (28 May 2021)

- Projects to start from June 2021 and finish by Dec 2022 (max. 18 months)

- Round 2: 31st Oct 2022
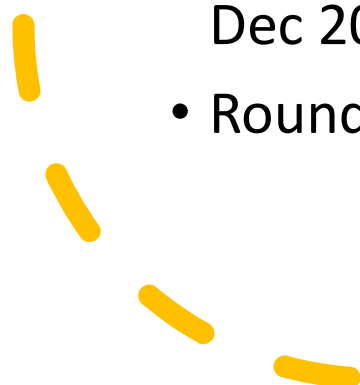
Selection criteria

- Project engages a clearly defined, non-expert audience with MORU research or related areas

- Two-way communication and participation

- Clearly defined aims, rationale and objectives

- Completion within 18 months is feasible

- Justification for the requested funds

- Evaluation plan

- Supports the MORU Engagement Strategy (https://zenodo.org/record/3510158#.YBg60eiwnIU)

Evaluation (based on Logic Model)

Quantitative:

- number of applications and awards
- amount requested and spent
- number and demographics of researchers/staff (incl. subject areas)
- number of external partnerships (any new ones?)
- audience numbers and demographics

Qualitative:

- project outputs (e.g. videos, websites/apps, artwork)
- audience feedback
- researcher feedback (informal and survey)
- researcher reflections (final report)
- PE team reflections
- success of seed fund projects

Key advice

1. Balancing capacity building (= funding many projects) with resources required for administration and monitoring of the scheme

2. Balancing capacity building and budget constraints:
   - larger awards = bigger projects
   - smaller awards = fund more projects, increase reach of the scheme

3. Need to communicate the difference between engagement and social science projects (…and what about the 'grey area'?)

Top Tips

- When drafting the timeline, think backwards from when you need the PE project reports, to include in renewal application of the core grant or annual reports to the funder

- We held a seminar (as part of the MORU science seminar series) to promote the launch of the new bursary round:
  - Two bursary recipients from the previous round talked about their projects and experience
  - Included a brief introduction to PE
  - Introduced the scheme, timeline and selection criteria