

Terms and conditions of Research England QR GCRF grant

1. The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) is a £1.5 billion fund announced by the Government to support cutting-edge research that addresses the challenges faced by developing countries. The fund forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment, which is monitored by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). GCRF is administered by delivery partners, including UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the devolved funding bodies, and the four national academies.
2. The overarching aim of the GCRF as set out in the Government's GCRF strategy is 'to ensure the UK takes the lead in addressing the problems faced by developing countries, whilst developing our ability to deliver cutting-edge research'. The GCRF funding delivered through Research England (RE) – QR GCRF - has a unique role in achieving this aim, complementing the project based GCRF grants allocated by the other delivery partners. The GCRF allocations delivered by RE provide flexible institutional grants that can be used strategically to support GCRF activity funded through other delivery partners (helping to support the full economic costs associated with delivering the specific research activity) or by directly supporting valuable research that address the problems faced by developing countries that is not (and would not be) funded through the GCRF grants of other delivery partners.
3. QR GCRF allocations must be used according to ODA principles, which state that only research directly and primarily of benefit to the problems of developing countries may be counted as ODA¹. The costs may still be counted as ODA if the research is carried out in a developed country². Consequently, activity funded through QR GCRF allocations must promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective. Any benefit to the UK or other developed countries from QR GCRF activity must be a secondary consideration. GCRF activity must also comply with ODA guidelines by working

¹ Global Challenges Research Fund, UK Strategy,
<https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/research/gcrf-strategy-june-2017/>

² Is it ODA?,
<http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm>

with and supporting development in countries and territories on the list of ODA recipients produced by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)³.

4. The GCRF delivery partners that administer competitive funding calls have identified four core criteria for assessing bids. HEIs funded through QR GCRF allocations should apply the same considerations when determining which activities to fund through these GCRF allocations. These criteria are:
 - a. Activity should be focused on problems and solutions.
 - b. Activity should be underpinned by research excellence, and partners in developing countries should play a significant role in this where possible.
 - c. Activity should have a high likelihood of positive impact on the economic development and welfare needs of developing countries.
 - d. Activity should promote strong, enduring and equitable partnerships between academic communities in the UK and in the Global South⁴.
5. A key challenge for all development processes is to be sustainable. QR GCRF allocations support sustainable initiatives with partner countries in multiple ways. In particular, QR GCRF allocations could be used in the following ways:
 - a. **Capacity and capability building.** QR GCRF allocations can be used sustainably to strengthen capacity for research and innovation in the UK and developing countries by supporting excellent research and researchers to address challenges faced by developing countries. Activities should build on the strengths of the UK HEI and can involve:
 - i. Establishing or enhancing equitable and sustainable partnerships with researchers and other organisations in developing countries. We encourage HEIs to develop partnerships with a diverse range of DAC list countries – including across a diversity of geographical locations – and particularly to collaborate with the

³ Development Assistance Committee list of Official Development Assistance Recipients, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm>

⁴ Global Challenges Research Fund Strategic Advisory Group: Criteria for GCRF Funding, <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/international/global-challenges-research-fundsagcriteria-pdf/>

lowest- and lower-income countries on the DAC list while remaining sympathetic to economic geographies.

- ii. Growing people-based capacity and capability to undertake ODA eligible research across career stages in the UK and developing countries, to enable the best research to address challenges faced by developing countries.
 - iii. Investing in people capacity to support the delivery of ODA-eligible research, outcomes and impacts in the UK and developing countries.
 - iv. Increasing the engagement of the UK research community with international development challenges, particularly by enhancing expertise and focusing this expertise on the challenges faced by developing countries.
- b. **Mono-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and collaborative research activity.** QR GCRF allocations can be used to facilitate mono-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and collaborative research activity that sustainably promotes the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Interdisciplinary activity and collaboration may be within the UK or with global organisations, or may involve sustainable partnerships with organisations in developing countries. We encourage HEIs to establish equitable partnerships with collaborators in developing countries.
- c. **Generating impact from research in and beyond the sector.** QR GCRF allocations can be used to translate research into sustainable social and economic impact that promotes economic development and welfare in developing countries.
- d. **Meeting the full economic costs of eligible research funded by other delivery partners.** QR GCRF allocations can be used to meet the full economic costs of ODA-eligible research funded through GCRF awards from other delivery partners, and of research not funded by GCRF awards that still meets ODA and GCRF compliance criteria. This enhances the sustainability of ODA research activity by allowing HEIs to meet full costs.

- e. **Rapid response to emergencies where there is an urgent research need.** QR GCRF allocations can be used to respond rapidly to emergencies in developing countries that urgently require research, for example disease outbreaks or natural disasters, as long as that research promotes the economic development and welfare of developing countries.

- f. **Pump-priming activities to underpin GCRF and Newton Fund bids to other funders, including relationship building.** QR GCRF allocations may be used to enable pump-priming that will lay the ground for future ODA activity to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Funding may be used in this way to facilitate:
 - i. Networking meetings and other events to develop sustainable strategies and partnerships for future activities.
 - ii. Small pump-priming projects to generate preliminary data for future applications.
 - iii. ODA-compliant research activity on a HEI's overseas campuses as well as its UK campuses.

It is expected that the outcomes of pump-priming activities will inform more substantive research into and impact on the welfare and economic needs of developing countries. HEIs should note that using QR GCRF allocations to provide staff time or any other resources to assist in the development of bids to other funders (for GCRF or non-GCRF awards) will **not** be considered ODA-eligible activity.

- 6. To aid the Government's reporting to the OECD, RE is required to assure the Department for Business, Energy, Innovation and Skills (BEIS) that QR GCRF allocations have been spent in compliance with both GCRF and ODA criteria. To demonstrate that QR GCRF funds are being spent on ODA-compliant activity and to support the case for continued funding, RE has implemented a triennial exercise in which HEIs were required to submit a three-year QR GCRF strategy. This three-year QR GCRF strategy outlines the HEI's overarching strategy for development-related research activity, and how the institution intends to prioritise and spend QR GCRF allocations in advance of the distribution of funding over the three-year period. This exercise began in 2018 and covers funding for three years from AY 2018-19.

7. HEIs are only able to receive QR GCRF allocations for the three years from AY 2018-19 if they have submitted a strategy that was subsequently assessed and approved as ODA compliant.
8. HEIs with approved three-year QR GCRF strategies have set out the institution's overall strategy for development-related research activity and plans for the use of QR GCRF in AY 2018-19, as well as priorities for QR GCRF in the subsequent two years covered by the strategy.
9. From AY 2018-19 onwards, HEIs are required to participate in an annual monitoring exercise providing a breakdown of the previous year's QR GCRF allocation to assess ODA compliance and report their progress against their institutional QR GCRF strategies.
10. Eligibility to receive annual allocations in future may be affected by progress in delivery of the strategy, as assessed through annual monitoring. HEIs should contact RE directly regarding wholesale strategy changes or submitting a new strategy.
11. We reserve the right to ask HEIs to submit an updated institutional strategy, potentially addressing new priorities, at any time over the three-year strategy period. This would occur if the Government were to request that we demonstrate that HEIs can meet new opportunities and priorities for ODA activity, or if there were major structural changes at an HEI, such as a demerger.

Annual monitoring

12. All institutions in receipt of QR GCRF will be asked annually to report on the progress of their three-year QR GCRF strategy, including details on the breakdown of use of the previous year's QR GCRF allocation to assure ODA compliance. The annual monitoring is informed by the assessment of strategies and aligned with monitoring and evaluation processes used by other GCRF delivery partners. RE will contact institutions with the QR GCRF monitoring materials and guidelines for reporting their annual progress and QR GCRF activity spend.

13. Any part of an HEI's QR GCRF allocation where insufficient evidence of ODA compliance has been provided, and/or where there is unspent funding (underspend), will be recouped.
14. The general condition of Research England funding still applies in that we will not fund in advance of need. Funding allocations may not be transferred between academic years. If the timing of expenditure on QR GCRF activities has changed substantially, HEIs are strongly advised to contact us immediately to discuss the appropriate course of action.
15. If an institution is not achieving sufficient progress against its strategy, or is not meeting ODA compliance criteria for QR GCRF spend, RE may require institutions to undergo additional interim monitoring exercises during the following academic year's funding period; adjust future funding allocations to recoup the QR GCRF grant, and/or refuse future QR GCRF funding.
16. Divergence from a HEI's QR GCRF strategy should be reported as part of the annual monitoring exercise. HEIs who have indicated a substantial overhaul of their HEI's QR GCRF strategy or have requested to submit a completely new QR GCRF strategy are required to undergo strategy re-assessment before they can receive QR GCRF funds. HEIs should contact RE directly regarding wholesale strategy changes or submitting a new strategy.
17. RE expects to notify HEIs of their QR GCRF allocation as part of the annual recurrent grant announcement. RE expects to continue to distribute QR GCRF from 2018-19 in proportion to institutions' mainstream QR grants. Annual allocations will reflect:
 - a. Availability of funding for QR GCRF as confirmed to us annually by the Government in its grant letter to us;
 - b. Changes in the distribution of QR GCRF due to requirements to alter allocations arising from the assessment of annual monitoring returns or strategy changes.
 - c. QR funding formula distribution, following the circumstances stated in paragraphs 17a and 17b.

International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014

18. In 2014, the International Development (Gender Equality) Act was passed which ensures “*regard to the desirability of providing development assistance that is likely to contribute to reducing poverty in a way which is likely to contribute to reducing inequality between persons of different gender*”. It will be mandatory for all applications to UKRI GCRF and Newton Fund calls/competitions announced and published after the 1st April 2019 to outline how applicants have taken meaningful yet proportionate consideration as to how the project will contribute to reducing gender inequalities.
19. As far as possible, Research England will collect further information on how far universities QR GCRF strategies align with the International Development (Gender Equality) Act through standard monitoring procedures. This is not a requirement in this three-year strategy period, but future QR GCRF strategies will be required to demonstrate compliance with the International Development (Gender Equality) Act as well as ODA compliance requirements.

Safeguarding

20. Research activity funded through the GCRF may involve working with vulnerable beneficiaries. Improper safeguarding of beneficiaries is a reportable serious incident.
21. In the case of overseas research undertaken by a UK HEI, beneficiaries include all subjects of, participants in and direct and indirect beneficiaries of research. HEIs should take reasonable steps to ensure that those who come into contact with UK research overseas do not, as a result, come to harm. We expect all researchers from UK HEIs undertaking research overseas to exercise good conduct during their time overseas.
22. We expect HEIs to notify us if they become aware of any safeguarding issues or unlawful conduct related to research or researchers overseas in the context of either local or UK legislation. This applies to QR GCRF funded activity and other research activity. Abuse or improper safeguarding of beneficiaries and poor research conduct in overseas research could impact adversely upon both the research and reputation of an HEI. HEIs should contact Research England to

report such incidents or for further information on safeguarding and serious incident reporting.

Publication and transparency

23. The strategies and monitoring returns produced by HEIs for QR GCRF will be subject to ODA transparency requirements. At the very least, Research England will publish all QR GCRF strategies on its website. HEIs should also expect that monitoring returns and any analyses made of them will be shared with BEIS, other GCRF delivery partners and other ODA groups.

Abbreviations

AY	Academic year
BEIS	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GCRF	Global Challenges Research Fund
HEI	Higher education institution
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
QR	Quality-related research funding
RE	Research England
UKRI	UK Research and Innovation