

IOP Scotland Public Engagement Grant Scheme

FAQs

What type of projects do you fund?

The Institute of Physics in Scotland is looking to fund projects that raise public awareness of and engagement with contemporary physics; inspire and enthuse public audiences, especially those not previously interested in physics; reach adult and family audiences beyond the classroom and/or develop the science communication skills of individuals, particularly physicists.

We offer grants up to £2500 to applicants in Scotland.

For more information on the kinds of projects we fund please check our eligibility criteria or have a look at the projects we have previously funded.

What type of audiences should I engage?

The IOP is committed to inspiring and influencing those that are underrepresented in the field of physics: Black Caribbean young people, young people with disabilities, girls and women, young LGBT+ people and young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

More broadly however, we are also looking for projects targeted at any audiences who aren't already engaged with physics or have low science capital.

If you are looking to fund a project for school children while at school or on a school trip, please look at our school grants scheme.

Who can apply to the grant scheme?

We welcome applications from individuals and organisations in Scotland.

You do not have to be a member of the Institute of Physics to apply - we encourage applications from any physicists with an interest in public engagement. We also encourage those in the arts, community and media sectors who may have an interest in or link to physics, to apply. We will happily give guidance and advice on how to incorporate physics into your project in these cases, if needed.

Should I involve physicists in my project?

We highly recommend working with physicists to ensure accurate scientific content.

How can I find/recruit physicists?

If you are not sure who to contact, we will be happy to put you in touch with enthusiastic physicists from our network of members.

If you would like us to put you in touch with someone, please email the IOP Scotland Team, at scotland@iop.org and include where you are based and what field of physics you are interested in.

Should I pay participating physicists?

We like to encourage the physics community to get involved with public engagement as a part of their ordinary work, and there is mutual benefit in a physicist communicating their work to a new audience.

We would expect organisations to cover physicist's travel and subsistence expenses associated with the project, which the public engagement grant can allow for.

If you are working with professional science communicators, you may cover their fee with up to two-thirds of the total grant funding requested. For example, if your total grant request is £1800 then you may allocate up to £1200 to science communicators.

What type of science needs to be in my project?

The IOP is looking for projects which raise awareness of physics concepts or contemporary research. We can only fund projects where the physics content is relevant to the audience and presented in a clear, accessible, and accurate way.

When should my project start/end?

Grants must usually be used within 6 months of the date of award, however due to the COVID-19 pandemic this is currently negotiable.

We are unable to send funds to successful applicants until we have received their signed award agreement and appropriate bank details. It will then take up to 30 days for the fund to be transferred to the bank account. If the project timescale does not allow for this, the application will not be funded.

Can I pay for salary costs?

You may allocate up to two-thirds of the grant to cover staffing costs not already covered by the organisation applying for the grant.

Academics salaries can only be covered if a full-time salary is not already in place.

The grant may also be spent on travel and subsistence expenses for volunteers, materials for the activity, room hire, car/van hire or other transport, festival exhibitor fees, equipment hire and in some circumstances equipment cost may be covered by the grant. The equipment must be essential to the project and if it makes up a large part of the total grant, it must have a legacy in place.

I'm self-employed, can I apply?

We welcome applications from individuals and organisations including self-employed and freelance science communicators, artists, and content producers. You may allocate up to two thirds of the total requested amount to cover your fees. You must show a demand for your project. One way to do this is to work with an organisation which is already connected to your intended audience.

How should I evaluate my project?

We will ask all our grant winners to complete an evaluation report, due one month after the completion of their project.

When thinking about evaluation of your activities and project, you should be evaluating against your project objectives. (For more advice on evaluation please visit our evaluation page.)

I would like to apply for this funding as part of a larger project, is this allowed?

Your project may cost more than the amount you request from the IOP but we will ask for evidence of how you will cover the remaining costs.

We are more likely to fund projects where the IOP's contribution is essential, and may not fund projects which can go ahead without the IOP's support.

What is the assessment process?

Once you have submitted your application, it will be assessed by a sub-committee of the Institute of Physics in Scotland Committee. If clarification or changes are required, the panel's feedback will be sent to you by the Nation Support Coordinator or Public Engagement Manager. Your response will be in turn relayed back to the panel, who will then submit a second round of assessments.

Applicants will be notified of the final outcome within 4 weeks of the initial date of application.

Can I resubmit an unsuccessful application?

You may resubmit an unsuccessful application. We would recommend that you contact us to request feedback on an unsuccessful application if you are planning to reapply.

I have previously received funding from this scheme. Can I apply again?

We will accept applications from previous applicants but there must be some evidence of the project's evolution.

This could be expanding or changing the target audience of the project, changing the subject matter or rolling out a full project after funding the pilot through our grant scheme.

What if I want to change my timeline or content after being awarded the grant?

All of our grant winners are required to sign an award agreement. It will state that an award winner must inform the IOP if the delivery-date of the project changes and that the winner must complete our evaluation form one month after the completion of the project.

Any changes to the project after the grant has been awarded must be discussed and agreed with the IOP Public Engagement Manager and IOPS Grant Scheme Panel.

Further information

Contact the Scotland Team, at scotland@iop.org for further information.