

Innovation in Surgical Education

Proof of Concept Funding Application (Series H2/2023)

Launch date: Wednesday 27 September 2023

Deadline: 12.59 pm Monday 8 January 2024

Background

Innovation in Surgical Education Proof of Concept Funding is designed to incubate, harness and promote creative initiative in the education and training of surgeons and the wider surgical team. It provides an opportunity for surgeons, medical practitioners and/or providers of clinical education tools, equipment and software to promote enhancement of surgical education.

Through this funding, the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCS England) intends to support projects intended to drive new initiatives in surgical education through its training offer. Funding can be used to cover the direct costs of carrying out the work including laboratory/clinical costs, equipment, imaging and costs associated with pilots such as venue costs but excluding direct staff costs or tutor/faculty time.

The funding is aimed at organisations and must be led by a member or fellow of RCS England, including the Faculty of Dental Surgeons. Applicants can apply for up to £5,000 (GBP) to support a project or pilot of an idea to either:

- enhance an existing RCS England course or learning experience, or
- form a new offer for its portfolio.

In either case, the outcome of the work should be enhanced surgical education and complement the existing portfolio and our strategic priorities.

Outputs and Outcomes

The projects or pilots funded should enable RCS England to improve an existing course or develop something new to complement its existing offer and thereby enhance its surgical education portfolio. All funding will be documented, and the results analysed to identify potential improvements and developments. The focus could be for a whole course or learning experience or a single session/activity within a course.

In some cases, further testing and evaluation may be required which may be eligible for further funding. It is possible that further support could be granted where scope is identified for additional work for a more significant improvement.

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Application Process

Informal Queries

Informal advice may be sought from Melissa Ashford: mashford@rcseng.ac.uk

Application Deadline

Applications should be submitted by 12.59 pm Monday 8 January 2024

Shortlisting

In the interests of transparent shortlisting, we will be removing identifiable information such as your name and that of your employer ahead of the shortlisting process.

Applications will be shortlisted against the following core and optional criteria – you will be assessed against each core criteria and one of the optional criteria:

Core or Option	Area	Weighting	Guidance
Core	Digital technology and techniques	30%	<p>This is about using new digital technology and techniques to improve the learning process. For us, it is important that we start with what we are trying to achieve then match the technology to support the learning. It is not simply promoting the technology or technique but using it to deliver the aims of the training with stronger outcomes for the participants.</p> <p>It could include, but is not limited to, augmented and virtual reality, data modelling and artificial intelligence.</p>
Core	Pedagogy and Learning Approaches	25%	<p>This is about identifying new learning approaches and or an application of an existing techniques delivered with a fresh surgical education perspective.</p>
Core	Promoting new clinical technology	20%	<p>This is about using new clinical technology to improve the learning process. It is not simply about promoting the new technology but using it to deliver the aims of the training course with stronger outcomes for the participants.</p> <p>It could include, but is not limited to, remote laparoscopy kits, robotics and 3D printing.</p>
Select one of these options			
Option 1	Engaging wider surgical team	25%	<p>This is about developing or updating our offer to better include the needs of the wider surgical team. We are especially keen to see applications where the whole surgical team is being taught in a collaborative approach.</p>
Option 2	Increasing Accessibility	25%	<p>This is about changing the way that participants access the course and therefore increasing the opportunities for more surgeons and others to attend and benefit including</p>

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Core or Option	Area	Weighting	Guidance
			less than full time workers, those with caring responsibilities and global participants. This could be about taking some or all of the content online and/or via remote delivery and/or the development of toolkits to be sent to participants to support their learning.
Option 3	Increasing Sustainability	25%	This is about reducing the carbon footprint of a training course through the development and/or increased use of reused, recycled or renewable components and/or materials.

Shortlisting Outcome

We anticipate a two-week turnaround for the shortlisting period and will endeavor to be in touch with all applicants the week of the 22 January 2024.

if successful, you will be notified, and your application will be progressed to the final stage. If your application is referred, you will be notified and you will be eligible to apply again later.

Final Stage

This will be an interview process conducted via MS Teams. We will aim to hold these interviews in the last week of January 2024 and first week of February 2024.

During the interview, you will be asked about your submission and will have the opportunity to outline:

- why you think that it is innovative and necessary.
- who and where you think the target audience is.
- why the pilot project is necessary – what benefits, risks and issues are being tested.
- how it can improve our surgical education portfolio.
- the development programme and costs - including milestones and delivery targets.

Final Outcome

If successful, you will be notified, and your application will be approved for funding. If your application is referred, you will be notified and be eligible to apply again later.

To apply for the programme:

Please follow this link: [Microsoft Forms](#)

If you are filling in this form as part of a team, please ensure that your team members also fill in this form regarding equal opportunities data as part of your application: [Microsoft Forms](#)

Please see below information on the Terms and Conditions and our Learning Strategy.

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Terms and Conditions

(to be accepted by all successful applicants if a formal offer is made)

Introduction

The Royal College of Surgeons of England, RCS England, is offering a limited amount of proof of concept funding to support the development of innovative surgical education. The aim is to incubate, harness and promote creative initiative in the education and training of surgeons and the wider surgical team. It provides an opportunity for surgeons, medical practitioners and/or providers of clinical tools, equipment and software to promote enhancement of surgical education. Through this funding, RCS England, intends to support projects designed to drive new initiatives in surgical education through its training offer.

Eligibility Criteria

Lead applicants must be members or fellows of RCS England including the Faculty of Dental Surgeons. Membership can be for any paying grade. They must also be members of the RCS England Expert Advisory Network which is free of charge to join.

Lead applicants must have a formal relationship with the organisation applying for funding.

Strategic advisors of the Expert Advisory Network are not eligible to be a lead applicant.

Conditions of Funding

Proof of Concept funding is given on the understanding that the applicant and any others involved in the work agree to accept these Terms and Conditions and any amendments issued during the course of the funding cycle.

Extent of Funding

Applicants can apply for up to £5,000 GBP (five thousand pounds Sterling) to support a specific project designed to either enhance an existing RCS England course or form a new offer for its portfolio. In either case, the outcome of the work should be enhanced surgical education. The funds will be made available across multiple rounds in a year. For this funding round, a maximum of three successful applications will be funded.

Right to Not Fund

RCS England reserves the right to not fund applications including to the extent that no funds will be offered in any funding round.

Whilst every attempt will be made to offer constructive reasoning for such a decision, RCS England reserves its right to reserve such reasoning.

Timescale and Final Report

The work should be completed, and an interim report submitted by 30 July 2024. A final report to the College is due by 30 October 2024.

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Formalising the Offer

Successful applicants will be sent an offer letter, along with a copy of these Terms and Conditions. The offer letter sets out what is expected to be delivered by the project, timescales and cost and will require signature of the lead applicant and the organisation.

Accepting Funding

Successful applicants should demonstrate their acceptance of these Terms and Conditions by counter signing the offer letter and returning it to mashford@rcseng.ac.uk. They should also include details for the funding payment.

Financial Arrangements

Once the offer is formalised and accepted, the payment will be made. Receipts for incurred costs should be submitted along with the final report. Any unused funds, or those which are not regarded as legitimate, should be returned to RCS England.

Legitimate Costs

Funding can be used to cover the direct costs of carrying out the work including laboratory/clinical costs, equipment, imaging and costs associated with piloting such as venue costs but excluding direct staff costs or tutor/faculty time.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

Intellectual property ownership should be made clear within the application. If successful, the applicant assures RCS England that all and any IPR is either owned by themselves or has the owner's permission. Such permission should extend into potential use by RCS England within its learning portfolio on a zero fee basis.

In terms of any and all material/equipment/content/IPR created from this funding rests with RCS England. The applicant agrees to irrevocably and unconditionally waive, in favour of RCS England, any moral rights conferred on them by the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988. This waiver shall extend to any licensee or successor in title to such copyright.

Promotion and Publicity

The funding project and RCS England have the right to promote and publicise this work. For RCS this includes, but is not limited to, the Expert Advisory Network, publication, conferences and seminars.

RCS England also has the right to stop all publicity and promotion and withdraw such permission from the funding winner. Whilst every attempt will be made to offer constructive reasoning for such a decision, RCS England reserves it right to reserve such reasoning.

Liability

RCS England limits its liability to the value of the award made.

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Data Protection

For the purposes of the Data Protection Act 2018, the applicant gives their consent to the holding, processing and accessing of personal data provided by them to the College for all purposes relating to the performance of this agreement. The information will be held by the Learning Department of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. The College has protective measures in place to ensure against loss and unauthorised access to data. The information kept by the College will be available to members of staff within the Learning department, and will not be shared throughout the wider organisation unless instructed otherwise. The College's privacy policy can be accessed here: <https://www.rcseng.ac.uk/privacy-policy/>.

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RCS Learning Strategy

June 2023

Strategic Aims

- 1) Reinforce our position as a leader in surgical education and use our influence to develop and shape surgical education to meet the current and future needs of the entire workforce
- 2) Develop the highest quality learning offer, in collaboration with leading national and international partners, to improve accessibility and enhance the relevance and impact of the learning experience for the whole surgical workforce. Pilot innovation in technology and practice in our Bjorn Saven Centre for Surgical Education and roll it out nationally and internationally.
- 3) Create communities of excellent in surgical education, generating collaboration, growing a sense of belonging across the surgical team and recognising the essential multidisciplinary expertise required for high quality surgical education including Faculty, Subject Matter Experts, Staff, Clinical Leads, Participants, Patients and Council.

Enablers

To achieve our strategic priorities our learning offer must be:

Learner-centred

Learning has direct relevance and impact, adds value and professional development to improve surgical care and patient safety.

Evidence-based

Learning content and design follow best practice and are based in contemporary educational theory.

Enhanced by technology and innovation

Technology and innovation add value to the learning experience by increasing accessibility, reducing costs and enabling learners to better meet their needs and improve patient care.

Equitable and inclusive

Active steps are taken to ensure access, content, assessment mechanisms, faculty and development groups are free from bias and reflect the diversity of the workforce. Unnecessary barriers are removed to ensure that no individuals or groups are unfairly disadvantaged. Inclusion is promoted and groups targeted to ensure the breadth of representation across the full surgical workforce.

Sustainable

Investment in Learning products and resources improves the offer tangibly, positioning our Learning offer as self-sustaining, high quality and evolving. Active steps are taken to reduce impact on the environment whilst balancing impact on learning outcomes

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