

## **RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2020-2021**

*This application form is for research and research-related projects; there is a separate form for staff development projects, available from Human Resources.*

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Most FT academic staff at the RNCM are contracted (and therefore already paid) to undertake research; some PT staff also have research in their contracts. RNCM Research Grants are intended to support individual projects by providing financial assistance. Many research activities are eligible, including visits to archives and presentations at conferences. Funding can be sought for giving oral presentations, speaking at round table events or – at the discretion of the Committee – posters. Funding will not normally be provided for conference attendance. In certain circumstances full-time members of staff can apply for funding to support the development and writing of a bid for external funding. This funding may include the costs of temporary cover by another member of staff for teaching and/or other duties, a part-time member of staff to take on the role of research associate, and/or to pay an expert mentor external to RNCM.

1.2 The College recognises ‘research’ to encompass a wide range of activities. The college is committed to fostering a dynamic culture of research throughout the College that recognises, supports and disseminates relevant work by staff in all areas of its activities, including the creation, performance, production, history, theory, and psychology of music.

1.3 RNCM follows the Arts and Humanities Research Council’s definition of practice-led research:

Creative output can be produced, or practice undertaken, as an integral part of a research process as defined above. The Council would expect, however, this practice to be accompanied by some form of documentation of the research process, as well as some form of textual analysis or explanation to support its position and as a record of your critical reflection.

Proposals must define a series of research questions, issues or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research; specify a research context for the questions, issues or problems to be addressed; specify research methods for addressing and answering the research questions, issues or problems (see below and [www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/guides/research-funding-guide/](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/documents/guides/research-funding-guide/)).

1.4 Outputs of research may include, for example, monographs, or peer-reviewed journal articles; editions, compositions; electronic data, including sound or images; performances (live or recorded), films or broadcasts; or exhibitions. Teaching materials may also be an appropriate outcome from a research project as defined above. However, it is important to understand that in order for creative practice to constitute ‘research’, there needs to be a clearly articulated and documented research context to the project that sets out a research question or questions and the aims of the research; specifies the context of the research project in terms of what other research has been done in the same area by the researcher or others; specifies the research methods used to address the research question; and

finally, shows how the research process itself has, or will be documented and demonstrated.

- 1.5 Impact. Funding of research by Research Councils, and by the RNCM, also depends on a clearly demonstrated plan for maximising the impact of the research outcomes on relevant beneficiaries beyond academia. The potential beneficiaries will vary hugely depending on the nature of the research, but it is important to understand that impact is not simply that people have experienced the output (for example, heard your new piece or read your book) but that it has led to a *change* or *benefit* to the activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, or practice of an audience, a community, an organisation or individuals; and it can happen locally, nationally or internationally. Impact needs to be evidenced, so the section of the application that describes your plan for impact needs to propose ways in which you might capture and evaluate evidence of impact.

## **2. Explanatory notes on completing the form**

- 2.1 The RNCM Research Committee is happy to receive applications from both part-time and full-time College staff for research grants to support personal and / or collaborative research projects and (where appropriate) research-related projects. Postgraduate research students may apply to the Research Committee with support from their supervisory team as evidenced by the signature of the primary supervisor. The committee will also consider applications from recent PhD graduates (normally up to a year after final submission).
- 2.2 With the support of their line managers, members of staff who are eligible to apply for external research funding as Principal Investigators (normally only those on permanent, full-time contracts) may apply for a short period of remission from teaching and/or other duties *specifically* to develop and write a grant application to an external funding body (see 2.4 below), and the cost of temporary cover by another member of staff as necessary. They may also apply for funding to pay a member of part-time staff acting as a research associate in the development of the grant application in addition to fulfilling their normal roles, at the same rate of pay, subject to the approval of their Head(s) of School, and/or an expert mentor external to RNCM.
- 2.3 If your application is for support for a new research project, and in any case if you are applying for more than £300, you must first discuss your planned application with either the Director of Research (DR), or the Associate Director of Research (ADR), who will provide advice on whether to go ahead with an application. They will also advise on such matters as reporting the aims, methods, and outcomes of the project and how it is likely to be disseminated; planning its timescale and calculating the breakdown of costs; developing your case for the potential impact of your research beyond academia; capturing and evaluating evidence of impact and finally, what proportion of the overall funding required can be requested from the Research Fund.
- 2.4 The Research Committee will look favourably upon applications that demonstrate that external funding has been sought, preferably in advance of but at least in parallel with your application for an RNCM research grant. There are numerous external funding bodies (e.g. AHRC, British Academy, Leverhulme Trust, RVW Trust etc.) that support research and research-related projects. Funding opportunities are advertised regularly by the Research Department; further advice on funding is available from the Research Management Team: the Research Manager (research@rncm.ac.uk); the Research Administrator, Rachel Ware (research@rncm.ac.uk), DR and ADR. The application process for most external funding is usually rigorous and requires considerable investment of time and energy, especially in

making the best possible case for your research project. The Research Team is here to help and support you with everything from planning and editing to costings, but you will need to be pro-active in seeking this help.

- 2.5 Please note that the following costs will not normally be met by the Research Fund:
- a) Performers' (including conductors' and accompanists') fees
  - b) Commission fees for composers
  - c) VAT
  - d) Subsistence costs.
  - e) Training and courses (these fall under the remit of the Staff Development Fund, and application should be for these to Human Resources).

NOTE: if your research project requires the participation of performers, you should endeavour to use RNCM students or staff where possible; if it is not possible, provide an explanation in Section 10 of the form.

- 2.6 Please download the form from Moodle, save it as a Word document, complete it by typing into the form or pasting text from another program (e.g. Notepad, Excel) and submit it via email to the Research Administrator at [research@ncm.ac.uk](mailto:research@ncm.ac.uk).

2.7 Applications for grants of up to £300 will be considered by the Chair of the Research Committee (DR) and can be approved by Chair's Action. Applications for grants of between £301 and £1000 can be considered by the Research Management Team, which meets every month and reports to the Research Committee. Applications for grants over £1000 must be considered by the Research Committee, which meets termly. Applications must be submitted by the deadline (usually two weeks before the next Research Committee meeting), so it is essential that you arrange a meeting to discuss your application well in advance of this deadline to allow you time to write your bid well and to assemble the necessary financial information. You may be asked to respond via email to queries about your application raised by members of the Research Committee in advance of the meeting or attend the meeting to answer members' queries in person.

- 2.8 DR or ADR will provide feedback after the meeting. The application may be (a) approved without revisions, (b) approved with minor revisions, (c) rejected as currently formulated, in which case you will be advised to revise and re-submit the application and (d) rejected.

- 2.9 If you are successful in your application for a research grant, then you are required by the RNCM to include the following short sentence in all publicly disseminated outputs: "This X has been supported through research funding from the Royal Northern College of Music" [for X you should substitute recording, performance, critical edition, book, article, website, event, etc.]. In the case of collaborative projects, the following text should be used: "Y's contribution to this X has been supported through research funding from the Royal Northern College of Music" [for Y you should substitute your name].

The RNCM invites applications for the following categories of grant:

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
Up to £300	£301 to £1000	£1001 to £2500	£2501 to £5000	Over £5000

## **Assessment Criteria**

The assessment criteria are applied with increasing rigour in relation to the amount of grant requested. The level of quality and importance and value for money demanded of a Category D grant is, for example, significantly higher than that expected for a Category B grant. Category E grants will be approved only in exceptional cases, where the value to the College, in accordance with the assessment criteria below, is sufficiently explicit.

### **1. Quality and Importance**

- the significance and importance of the project, and the contribution it will make to enhancing or developing creativity, insights, knowledge or understanding of the area concerned
- the coherence and appropriateness of: the research question or question that it seeks to address; the context, methodology and feasibility of the research process; and the intended means of dissemination of its outcomes
- the appropriateness, significance, and feasibility of the research within the context of the RNCM and the fulfilment of its Strategic Plan

### **2. Value for Money**

- the extent to which the likely outcome of the research will represent value for money, and in particular the relationship between the funds that are sought and the significance and quality of the projected outcomes of the research
- whether the resources requested are reasonable in the context of the proposed research

### **3. Applicant's Research Profile and Relation to Future Plans**

- the quality and importance of the applicant's work to date, and the contribution of the application to his/her medium- and long-term research plans
- the applicant's ability to monitor the project and bring it to completion
- if relevant, whether named participants have the appropriate experience and expertise

### **4. Timescale of the Project**

- whether a realistic timetable is presented in which the project's aims and objectives can be achieved

### **5. Quality and Appropriateness of Dissemination**

- the appropriateness, effectiveness, and means of dissemination and the potential wider impact of the proposed research.