



Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland

Announcement – February 2017

Changes to Research Grant Schemes

The Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland is in the process of reviewing its grant portfolio as part of a general strategic planning exercise. This has led to some immediate decisions concerning our research grant schemes.

1. Research Incentive Grants We are pleased to announce that, for the next academic year (2017-18), we shall be expanding our Research Incentive Grants (RIGs) scheme in two respects. Firstly, we shall be increasing the maximum value of grant that can be applied for from £7,500 to £10,000. Secondly, we aim to increase the number of awards we make each year by about 25% – corresponding to around 17 additional grants. These changes reflect the comments made by the community in our recent survey of applicants and grant recipients – recognising the value of this scheme, its competitiveness, and the increased impact expected from somewhat larger grants.

(NB. These changes will only come into effect for the grant round with the 15th September 2017 deadline – **not** the March 2017 round.)

2. In order to fund the expansion of the RIGs scheme, two currently running research schemes will be terminated:

- i. The Carnegie Centenary Professorships. This scheme, which supports visits by top research leaders from overseas to Scotland, was set up to mark the centenary of our Trust in 2001. Since that time the Scottish universities have benefited from visits by 36 leading figures – stimulating numerous new collaborations and valuable interactions. The Trustees have concluded that, 15 years on, it has served its purpose and, with the strong international profile of the Scottish research community, future visits of this nature can be left to the universities and research groups concerned.

Consequently, there will be no call for proposals this year onwards. However, it should be noted that visits by those international researchers who were awarded Professorships last year (and before) will be continuing, as planned.

- ii. Collaborative Research Grants. Over recent years, this scheme has proven particularly attractive – offering up to £50,000 for joint research projects. Unfortunately, the financial resources of the Trust are limited and we have been able to award only nine grants each year. Over the last three years application numbers have averaged over 100, making the success rate very low. The Trust is concerned about the impact on the community, and its own administrative capacity, of such a scheme under which very considerable effort is expended by applicants, in most cases, for very little benefit. The Trustees have concluded that the funding devoted to this scheme should be allocated instead to the RIGs expansion.

The current (2017) Collaborative Research Grant round will therefore be the last one.

Other Changes

Carnegie Cameron Bursaries

The Scottish universities have already been informed of the decision taken by the Trust, concerning the Carnegie Cameron Bursaries.

These Bursaries support students wishing to progress to master's study in the Scottish universities. Each year 100 fee assistance grants of up to £4,000 have been made available for the universities to distribute to worthy candidates. However, the Scottish Government has announced a loan scheme providing up to £5,500 towards postgraduate taught programme fee payments, plus an additional £4,500 towards living expenses.

The Trustees have discussed the implications of this development. It was noted that, while to some students the difference between a grant and a loan can be seen as quite significant, the potential financial barrier to undertaking postgraduate master's study has been considerably reduced by this policy change and the role of the Trust now needs to be reviewed.

It has been concluded that the Carnegie Cameron Bursaries scheme will be suspended, in the first instance, for the academic year 2017-18. During this period, the Trust will explore ways in which we may identify able students for whom funding remains a problem and consider options for providing future financial assistance. Comments and suggestions from the universities in the context of this review would be welcomed.

Undergraduate Student Support

Undergraduate Tuition Fee Grants The Trust is continuing its scheme of awarding grants to Scottish-educated students whose tuition fees, for various reasons, are not being paid on their behalf by the Scottish Government. The Trustees are particularly keen to ensure all students in this category, with limited financial means, are aware of this scheme and we shall be working closely with the universities to increase the number of such students we can assist in this manner.

Vacation Scholarships Our Vacation Scholarships scheme is being strengthened. These awards aim to support able undergraduate students who wish to gain research experience by undertaking summer projects ahead of their final year. The Trust recognises the value of extended projects and the need, for some students, to be employed throughout most of the vacation period. Consequently, it has been decided to extend the maximum permitted duration of these Scholarships from the current 8 weeks up to 12 weeks. This change will come into effect next year (Summer 2018).

Further details about these changes and the operation of all our schemes can be found on the Trust's website:

<http://www.carnegie-trust.org/>