

Q&As: Engaging Science grant schemes – funding pause

Why are you making these changes now?

With the launch of the Wellcome Trust's new strategic framework last autumn, we have the opportunity to reflect on our public engagement activities and explore ways we could support the sector even more. We want to take the time to look at how we can make our schemes easier to navigate, make it easier to apply for grants and reduce barriers to access so that we can support ideas from the broadest possible range of people and organisations.

Which schemes are affected?

All Engaging Science grant schemes will be paused over the summer. This means that, after July, we will not be accepting any new applications for these schemes. We will announce our new framework and reopen for applications in early 2017.

Will upcoming deadlines accept applications?

If you already have submitted an application for a current grant scheme deadline it will still be considered. There are some upcoming deadlines for current schemes, which will be the final deadlines for 2016 (see above). We will announce our new framework and reopen for applications in early 2017.

What will happen if I already have a grant from one of the schemes that are being paused?

Nothing, your grant will continue as normal until it ends. Your relationship with your current Wellcome project contact will not change and you should feel free to contact them as usual.

What about the Society Awards prelim that I have just submitted?

The funding committee will consider this as normal, with interviews in November if you're shortlisted.

How much engagement funding will be available in future?

We're as committed as ever to supporting public engagement and will not reduce the amount of funding available for engagement activities. These changes are about making sure that funding is more responsive to the needs of the sectors that we currently support.

Will you still fund arts and broadcast projects?

Yes, we will still support all of the types of projects, sectors and audiences we've funded previously, and we hope will be more accessible to new organisations and sectors.

What about the project idea I was working up for the next deadline?

Most of our schemes have a deadline coming up before the funding pause. If you were hoping to submit your project to one of the schemes that does not have a deadline before the pause we will be able to consider it when our funding applications reopen in 2017. So keep working on exciting and innovative new ideas and contact us if you have any concerns.

How long will it take to get a funding decision when applications reopen in 2017?

We don't know this level of detail yet, but one of our main aims is to simplify the application process, so we hope to be more responsive than before.

Will grantholders have any input into these changes?

It's very important to us to ensure that any changes we make will work for our communities. We will consult with a cross-section of our grantholder community over the summer to ensure any changes meet their needs and we'll keep in touch with you during the pause to keep you involved in our development.

When is the next deadline going to be?

Most of our schemes have a deadline coming up before the funding pause. We will announce our new funding framework by early 2017 and, although we don't know this level of detail yet, we will ensure you have good time to plan ahead of any new deadline.

Will public engagement funding within research grants be affected?

The Provision for Public Engagement funding will be unaffected. Existing Wellcome-funded researchers will still be able to request costs for public engagement activities within their research grants, and will still be able to apply for the Provision for Public Engagement.

Will you still fund engagement projects in low- and middle-income countries?

Yes, we will still support all of the types of projects, sectors and audiences funded previously, and we hope we will be more accessible to new organisations and sectors. In the meantime, please continue to get in touch with us about your international project ideas.