

## **DBAA Funding Call Round 1 – Evidence Gathering**

### **Key dates**

16th May 2025	Webinar
30th May 2025	Applications close
Early June 2025	Applicants notified of outcome
June 2025	Legal agreements sent out and transfer of funds
June/ July 2025	Focus groups take place and recordings shared

### **Overview**

The Developing Business-Aware Academics (DBAA) project brings together academics, researcher developers, industry, non-profits and policy makers to inspire collaborative and impactful research that addresses today's most urgent societal and environmental challenges. As part of the project, we are building an evidence base to inform the design of initiatives that will offer doctoral and early-career researchers from all disciplines the knowledge, skills, and networking opportunities to engage effectively beyond academia.

We are inviting applications for grants of up to £2.5k (VAT inclusive) to run focus groups **exploring the barriers to, and enablers and motivators of, engaging beyond academia** for doctoral and early-career researchers in a range of different contexts.

We are looking for a spread of institution types (e.g. research-intensive, non-research-intensive, small and specialist) and geographical location.

### **What can the funding be used for?**

The funding can be used to support running a focus group of approximately 2 hours (including a break) for up to 30 PGRs and ECRs from across a range of disciplines, in groups of no more than 10. This may include:

- Room hire
- Refreshments
- Equipment hire (e.g. dictaphones)
- Staff time (e.g. researcher/ facilitators and note takers, if employed specifically to support the focus group)
- Reasonable travel expenses for any participants whose normal place of work or study is not the university where the focus group is taking place (in line with usual institutional policies)
- Incentives (i.e. vouchers) for PGR participants

Focus group questions will be provided by the DBAA project, and the activity has received ethics approval from the University of Exeter Business School Research Ethics Committee. Applicants to the fund should check with their own research ethics team whether they require any additional ethics approval internally.

Recipients will be expected to run their focus group as soon as possible after legal contracts have been signed to enable the return of the raw data back to the DBAA project for analysis and inclusion into our wider evidence base.

Awardees will be able to utilise the opportunity of having convened the focus group to use a section of the session to ask any additional questions of participants that would be useful in their own contexts. The DBAA project does not require this data, and so it should be recorded separately, and participants should be informed that this data is not being collected on behalf of the DBAA project. If this data is to be used for research purposes, awardees will need to obtain ethics approval from their own institution.

### **Who can apply?**

Academics, researcher developers and professional services teams supporting doctoral and early-career researchers, who are based at HE institutions in England eligible to receive Research England funding, are invited to apply.

Networks and consortia can support applications to run focus groups across a range of different HEIs, but each individual focus group must relate to a single HEI so that the data is institution-specific.

Please detail in your application how you will advertise and recruit to your focus group, who will facilitate it, and where it will be hosted. We would also like to understand your own motivations for holding a focus group in your institution, and how you think the data gathered would help to diversify our evidence base.

If you would be interested in hosting a focus group, but anticipate that resource constraints or a potential conflict of interest at your institution may prevent you from securing appropriate administrative and/or operational support (even with funding), please contact us for a conversation. We are keen to include insights from all types of institutions with research-active staff.

### **How to apply?**

Please apply via the Developing Business-Aware Academics funding call [MS Form](#) by 30th May 2025 at 12 noon.

If you need this in any other format, please contact [DBAA@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:DBAA@exeter.ac.uk) and we'll do our best to help.

### **Selection Criteria**

The selection panel will award funding based on the following standardised selection criteria:

1. Overall credibility that the proposal will deliver on the objectives of the call, demonstrated via a robust plan to market, recruit to, and run the focus group.
2. Suitability of the proposed host institution to broaden our evidence base due to its geographical location, type, and/or size.

Applications will also be reviewed against University of Exeter's EDI and related policies, (available at <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/departments/inclusion/policiesanddata/policies/>), to ensure that the awards and subsequent research activities are free from unfair discrimination.

### **Recruiting and running the focus group**

Any advertising of the focus groups beyond the host institution's own internal communication channels should use wording and images that are consistent with DBAA project branding and objectives, and will require prior approval by the DBAA team.

Focus groups should last in the region of 2 hours (including a break), and include up to 30 PGRs and ECRs from a range of disciplinary backgrounds, in groups of no more than 10. Please bear in mind potential attrition/'no-shows' when marketing and planning the event, and aim for at least 20 participants in total.

Each focus group should be run by an experienced facilitator, who will be required to give attendees a brief description of the research being undertaken and provide an information sheet and consent form at the beginning of the session. Attendees will need to sign and return this to the facilitator prior to the start of the focus group discussion.

Each participant will be given a numbered card, and participants will record this on their consent form. During the focus groups, a note taker will be required at each table to note the order in which participants speak, so that their contributions can be traced via the recording in the event that a participant decides to withdraw their data after the session.

Questions will be provided by the DBAA team, and will explore the barriers, enablers and motivators for PGRs and ECRs engaging beyond academia. Themes will include:

- Challenges in engaging with non-academic organisations
- Drivers of engagement
- Incentivising engagement
- Existing support mechanisms
- Cultural and structural change

If participants or facilitators feel distressed by anything they discuss, it is the responsibility of the lead applicant to signpost them to their institution's wellbeing services.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Awardees will be required to upload audio-recordings of the focus groups to a DBAA SharePoint site before deleting them from any portable devices and local drives. The DBAA team at University of Exeter will transcribe and analyse the data, and then share findings with awardees and via publications.

Awardees will also be required to scan and upload the consent and EDI monitoring forms of each participant, before destroying these forms as confidential waste.

A short financial report, detailing what the funding was spent on and whether any funds remain, will also be required. A template will be provided, and any unspent funds will need to be returned to the DBAA project at the University of Exeter.

Awardees will be required to keep the following supporting evidence:

- Accurate, up-to-date records of receipt and expenditure of the fund. University of Exeter and Research England may request to review these accounts and records and to make copies of them.
- All funded projects must comply with the Terms and Conditions of Research England Grants available [here](#).

## **Payments**

Due to the size of these awards, payment will be made in full on award, including any VAT payable, once legal agreements have been signed. Awardees will be required to invoice the University of Exeter referencing the budget lines in the application, including the PO number provided by the DBAA team (University of Exeter) on the invoice. Any VAT payable should be included separately on the invoice, but the total amount payable should not exceed the funding awarded, which is VAT inclusive. Invoices will be paid within 30 days of receipt in line with the University of Exeter's standard terms. We ask for a finance contact in the application form to facilitate this process.

## **Legal agreements**

Applicants will be asked to provide contact information of their institution's legal team on the application form. If an applicant is successful, the University of Exeter's legal team will draw up an agreement, and this will be sent to the legal team at the counterpart institution for review and signature. The agreement will need to be signed by both parties prior to any transfer of funds. Successful awardees should notify their legal contact upon confirmation that their application has been successful, so that they are expecting contact from University of Exeter.

## **Intellectual Property**

Any IP arising from the data will be owned by the DBAA project at the University of Exeter.

## **Data Sharing & Ownership**

A data sharing agreement will be included in each legal agreement. The DBAA project, University of Exeter, will own the data generated during the focus groups. Awardees will be required to transfer the data to the DBAA team securely after the focus groups have taken place. The process for collecting and sharing the data will be explained in more detail to successful applicants.

DBAA will share the final anonymised transcripts with the relevant lead applicant, once available.

## **Ethics**

This research has been reviewed by the University of Exeter Business School Research Ethics Committee and received a favourable review. The review reference is 8770117. The Business School Ethics Committee may be contacted by email via the Co-Director, Steven Boyne, [S.Boyne@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:S.Boyne@exeter.ac.uk), and Senior Research Ethics Officer, Dr. Ashley Luckman [A.Luckman2@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:A.Luckman2@exeter.ac.uk).

Applicants to the fund should check with their own research ethics team whether they require any additional ethics approval internally.

Any additional questions that awardees decide to ask attendees might also require separate ethics approval from their own institution. The DBAA project does not require access to or ownership of this data.

DBAA will provide an information sheet, consent form and optional EDI monitoring questionnaire to awardees, which each focus group participant will need to complete at the beginning of the session.

### **Additional requirements**

1. Lead applicants and facilitators (if appointed) will be required to attend a 1-hr information session about running the focus group. If facilitators have not been appointed by the time of the session, it is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure they are fully briefed prior to the focus group.
2. Awardees must ensure that the work is acknowledged as being supported by Research England. Both the DBAA project and Research England logos should be visible on presentations, signage, websites and printed materials related to the focus groups.
3. Awardees must comply with the Terms and Conditions of Research England Grants available here: <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/RE-031224-TermsConditions2023To2024.pdf>.
4. Awardees must not publicise the results of the focus groups, or use them in their own research, without explicit prior consent by the DBAA team at the University of Exeter.