SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH INTO HIGHER EDUCATION

SRHE RESEARCH AWARDS 2024: Member Awards Guidance

a) Outline
This year, the Society is offering a number of £10,000 awards for research focused on key issues within higher education submitted under three overarching themes:

Higher Education Policy, Higher Education and Society, Higher Education Practice

The aim is to probe gaps in present research knowledge or offer new research evidence on some key issues. The Society hopes both to stimulate new research and add to the research or evidence knowledge base. These awards, however, are relatively modest and are <u>not</u> intended as equivalent to either post-doctoral projects or Research Council (e.g. ESRC) awards. They are intended to help further the aims of the Society in its research impact and public engagement for public benefit agenda.

These Awards are only open to members of the Society at the time of application and thus are part of the benefits of membership. Where a proposal is submitted by a research group or team, the lead proposer must be an individual member of the Society.

The following areas have been identified with key questions which might inform a successful proposal:
- **Policy**
- How do policy levels (system, region, institution) interact and to what effect?
- In what ways can research into higher education inform the development of government policy?
- How should we develop criteria to judge the success of national or institutional efforts to widen access and participation in higher education?
- How do students understand and respond to policy-related discourses?
- What is the significance of the changing nature of governance in universities, including the growth of private and for-profit provision?

- **Society**
- What are the roles of universities in the 21st century?
- How is the role of universities changing in relation to public engagement and how effective is this?
- What is the role of universities in the 'production of knowledge'?
- What responsibilities do universities have for the various communities and 'stakeholders' with whom they engage?

- **Practice**
- How is the nature of academic work changing?
- What are the opportunities and challenges of technological change for universities?
- Have efforts to raise the status of teaching in universities improved the 'student experience'?
- What impact have new disciplines and professions had in re-shaping the university, its research and its education provision?

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b) Selection process and criteria

The SRHE Research and Development Committee will be responsible for deciding upon the refereeing process and criteria for judging the successful proposals. A Selection Panel drawn from a range of research scholars in the field will determine the awards and their decision will be final. At this stage the Society does not take a view about which of the 3 themes set out above is of most importance to its work. The Society's commitment to capacity building in higher education and in developing a body of new research of wide application will be important factors in the selection criteria, as will be the Society's public role in underpinning research impact and in supporting public engagement and public benefit.

- The criteria set out by the Society's Research and Development Committee includes:
  - Clarity of the aims of the study
  - Relevance to the themes proposed by the Society
  - Conceptual framework for the study, and relevance to the known research evidence or literature
  - Suggested research methods or approach including ethics
  - Feasibility of the study in the terms of the timescale and funding
  - Likely impact of the study on policies or practices through dissemination.
  - Public benefit, research impact and research engagement for the public.

The Awards are intended for work of an empirical and/or conceptual nature, which have the potential to make a contribution to the field of higher education research, contribute to the work of the Society and be of public benefit. Applicants for these awards would normally be expected to be researchers in the field of higher education research and to have published in the field.

A Selection Panel drawn from the SRHE Research and Development Committee and other experienced researchers has been established to reach decisions with respect to all research awards conferred by the Society.

The Panel will convene (electronically and/or face-to face) on an *ad hoc* basis to make timely decisions in respect of the Society's Research Awards and Scoping Study Awards.

The Selection Panel will:
- Receive research proposals
- Develop a scoring pro-forma using the criteria set out by the Research and Development Committee and develop a refereeing procedure which will provide a record of the process by which successful proposals are decided
- Agree which proposals will be awarded funds according to the criteria set out by the Research and Development Committee
- Appoint one member of the Panel to be the named link person between the award holder and SRHE
- Report its decision-making processes to the Research and Development Committee following each award decision.
  The decisions of the Selection Panel will be final.

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c) Requirements from supported research projects

Recipients will be required to produce the following:

i) **Reports:**
   - An interim report of 1,500 words (normally after 6 months)
   - A final report on completion of the research of approximately 4,000 words (normally after 12 months).

ii) **Two nominated outputs:** (6-12 months after submission of final report)
   - one for an academic audience (such as a journal article or book chapter)
   - one for a more general audience (such as a press article, blog, or policy guide).

iii) **Additional requirements:** (6-12 months after submission of final report)
   - contribute a short article for the SRHE member newsletter, SRHE News
   - provide a presentation or other contribution to a SRHE network or similar event
   - produce a paper/presentation for the SRHE Annual Research Conference.

Projects will be expected to start within 3 months of the outcome being notified to successful applicants.

d) Application procedures for SRHE Research Awards The online application form is available from https://srhe.ac.uk/research/research-scoping-awards/

Applicants are requested to detail the scheme of research, proposed methods, time plan, budget, proposed outcomes and outputs, and research benefits for the understanding of higher education and for the Society. The details of two referees and a brief Curriculum Vitae are also required to support each application.

Applicants will also be asked to address any ethical issues arising from their research proposal as part of the application process. All award holders will be required to demonstrate that they have conformed to any institutional (and/or professional) requirements concerning ethical approval. Where an applicant is successful but does not have any institutional designation they may be asked to provide further information with respect to ethical protocols.

All applications for the Research Awards must be completed using the on-line form by 1st September 2024. Supporting CVs and references must preferably be uploaded with the application (otherwise e-mailed to srhe@srhe.ac.uk) also by 1st September 2024.

For joint applications, referee details are only required for the lead applicant. Referees should not also be applicants themselves for these awards, nor be currently serving members of SRHE Governing Council/SRHE Standing Committees. Previous Award Winners should not reapply for a period of 3 years since their award.

e) Outcomes

The outcomes for all Research Award applications will be communicated via e-mail to the lead applicant by **2nd December 2024.** In this e-mail, SRHE will also endeavour provide some brief reviewer feedback on all applications received.

f) Funding

Funds will be awarded in two stages; an initial award of up to one half of the funds with the remainder to be awarded on successful completion of the project including receipt of reports and other requirements as detailed. Monies may be withheld if reports are not submitted or if within such reports there is insufficient evidence that agreed milestones have been achieved. All monies will be dealt with by SRHE office.

g) Duration

A project may be suspended for a limited period (but normally for no more than one calendar year) under certain exceptional circumstances such as ill health, pregnancy, bereavement or change of employment. In the event of non completion the Society will retain the right to withhold payment and seek reimbursement of any monies paid under the terms on which the awards are made.

h) Further information

Applicants wishing to discuss any aspect of their proposal or seek advice on eligibility should contact srhe@srhe.ac.uk , Tel +44 (0) 207 427 2350, Address: SRHE, Society House, Regents Wharf, 8 All Saints St, London N1 9RL