INVITATION TO TENDER: Funding consultant to develop and deliver a Research Engagement Programme for academic and research libraries

Commissioned by Research Libraries UK in partnership with the Arts and Humanities Research Council

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Issue Date: Wednesday 25th January 2023

Deadline for Response: noon Friday 3rd March 2023

Interviews and presentations: Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th March 2023

Maximum commissioned budget: £20,000 (exc. VAT)

Project duration: April 2023-March 2024
(inclusive of programme development and delivery)

Introduction and context

Research Libraries UK, in partnership with the AHRC, wishes to appoint a highly experienced individual(s) to develop and deliver a highly ambitious research development programme for academic libraries. The programme will act as a second iteration of the [RLUK-AHRC Research Catalyst Cohort](#) programme for academic and research libraries, the first iteration of which has been successfully delivered by the Association of Research Managers and Administrators (April 2022-February 2023).

The second phase of the Research Catalyst Cohort programme will be delivered across the Summer-Spring of 2023-24, and will support a cohort of colleagues working within research and academic libraries to envisage, develop, and submit highly-competitive funding applications to academic and research funders. It will provide participants with a comprehensive overview of the academic funding landscape, offer a tailored programme of events, activities, coaching and mentoring opportunities to guide them through making a funding application, and enable them to share this knowledge with the wider library community (via taking a "train-the-trainer" approach). This is envisaged as a hybrid programme, and that some elements will be in person.

The first iteration of the programme (2022-23) was a direct response to the findings of a collaborative scoping study, commissioned by RLUK in partnership with the AHRC, and undertaken by research consultancy, Evidence Base, across January-June 2021. The scoping study explored the role, and potential role, of research and academic libraries as partners in, and leaders of, academic and scholarly research. This included colleagues working across a wide variety of professions and disciplines. The scoping study made a series of far reaching

recommendations, including the need for direct investment in the research capacity and capabilities of libraries. This scheme is a direct response to this recommendation.

The full report, its findings, and recommendations can be viewed here:

https://www.rluk.ac.uk/rluk-publishes-report-on-the-role-of-research-libraries-in-the-production-of-scholarly-research/

About Research Libraries UK

Research Libraries UK (RLUK) will be the client for this project. RLUK is a consortium of 39 of the UK and Ireland's leading research libraries whose purpose is to shape the research library agenda and contribute to the wider knowledge economy through innovative projects and programmes.

RLUK is here to convene its 39 members around the issues that affect them, to represent their collective voice, to support them as they face shared challenges, and to be an effective advocate on their behalf. It is these four roles that define RLUK's work and around which its membership offer is shaped. They enable RLUK to promote the research library community as a vibrant and integral element of the scholarly landscape.

RLUK wishes to actively support its members, and the wider library community, to expand their role as active and meaningful partners in, and pioneers of, academic and scholarly research. This programme is to be open to both RLUK and non-RLUK member institutions, and is to bring benefit to a broad cross-section of the academic and research library community.

Project Specification

The second phase of the Research Catalyst Cohort programme will require the delivery of a tailored series of hybrid training sessions, activities, coaching and mentoring opportunities to a cohort of colleagues working across academic and research libraries who are interested in developing their research capacity and capabilities. The programme is to provide a step-by-step overview of the research development process for colleagues who, although interested in developing their research profile, have little or no experience of applying for research council funding. It should provide an overview of the research funding landscape, including funding available from a wide variety of funders such as UKRI, Wellcome Trust, Leverhulme, and British Academy. The programme is to be delivered on a 'train the trainer' basis and those accepted onto the programme will be expected to share their acquired learning and expertise with members of the wider academic and research library community via blogs, presentations, and their contribution to training events. The ease with which attendees might share their learning with the wider community should be considered when designing the training sessions.

RLUK wishes to commission an individual(s) with considerable and demonstrable knowledge of the academic and research funding landscape, and the research process, to develop and

deliver a second iteration of this programme. This can build on, or diverge from, the first phase of the programme delivered across 2022-2023 by ARMA.

A budget of **£20,000 (excluding VAT)** is available for the design, development, and delivery of a hybrid cohort training programme to enhance the confidence and capability of colleagues working within research and academic libraries.

The individual(s) appointed to undertake this work will be required to:

- **Design:** and develop a tailored hybrid-training programme for a cohort of academic and research library staff to develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence around making research funding applications. Although predominantly online, this should include a meaningful in-person element (e.g. short research residential).

- **Contents:** Devise a programme that provides an overview of all aspects of the pre- and post-award process, including where to find funding, eligibility, formulating research questions, budgeting / full economic costings, and project reporting.

- **Format:** Devise an engaging programme that utilises various learning techniques such as online/in person workshops, events, external speakers, case studies, coaching, and mentoring opportunities. We envisage that the vast majority, if not all, of this programme will be virtual.

- **Engagement:** Work closely with colleagues at RLUK and the AHRC regarding the contents of the training programme, its features, and outcomes ahead of its launch.

- **Delivery:** Lead and deliver the training programme from Summer 2023-Spring 2024.

- **Learning materials:** To produce and supply participants with relevant learning materials including copies of presentations, crib sheets, and resources, which will aid their continued development beyond the programme itself.

- **Evaluation:** Undertake a review of the programme, including individual sessions and its results, and deliverables as a whole.

As part of this ITT, we invite individual(s) to propose a structured cohort training programme based on the features above and outline how, based on their own experience and expertise, they would tailor these to a research and academic library audience. We invite suggestions regarding the size of the potential cohort and how participants within this programme might share their learning with the widest variety of colleagues.

The proposed programme should enable participants to develop their:

- **Knowledge:** of the research and academic funding landscape, including the funding opportunities available from a variety of funders to which academic and research library colleagues might apply including UKRI, Wellcome Trust, Leverhulme Trust, and British Academy. The programme should provide details of the step-by-step process of developing a highly competitive application to a research funder and the various programmes and funds available. This should include the intellectual and procedural differences between being a Co-investigator and a Principal Investigator (PI).

- **Skills:** as active partners and leaders of research, including how to formulate a research question, and develop an application for research funding. The programme should enable colleagues to develop their skills around project management, budgeting (including full economic costing), partnership formation, and impact. Cohort members should be guided through making a research funding application, from the initial research concept, to application submission and outcome, and to reflect on how these relate to their own research interests and professional practices. Cohort members should also receive an introduction to common project management techniques, the formation of contract and collaboration agreements, and the requirements of funder reporting, should funding be successful. They should also receive an overview of how best to repurpose the contents of an unsuccessful application.

- **Confidence:** as research funding applicants, including an understanding of common application pitfalls, and how they can position their own research and professional practice for the greatest impact in funding applications. This can include via completing worked examples and the use of best practice and successful case studies.

- **Advocacy:** support cohort members to actively advocate for the role of academic and research libraries as partners in, and leaders of, research within their institutions and across the wider information and research communities.

Contractors should provide an overview of how these elements would feature in their proposed programme and any additional elements they would propose based on their own experience or expertise.

Key deliverables:

- **Key deliverable 1:** A proposal for a tailored cohort training programme for colleagues working across academic and research libraries which fulfills the requirements of the project specification. This should include a programme outline, including a summary of its learning outcomes, key features, and a proposed cohort size.

- **Key deliverable 2:** The delivery of the cohort training programme across Summer 2023-Spring 2024. The expectation is for the majority of the programme to be delivered virtually but that there should be a meaningful inperson element that enables the cohort to come together.

- **Key deliverable 3:** Collate detailed feedback from cohort participants and offer a high-level analysis of the key considerations or requirements to enable academic and research library staff to become active partners and leaders of academic research.

It is not envisaged that the appointed individual(s) will be responsible for the advertising and recruitment of the learning cohort, although there will be opportunities for them to feed into and inform this process.

Members of the RLUK Executive will provide logistical support to the programme, including web-hosting of content and promotion. The individual(s) appointed will be expected to work closely with RLUK and AHRC in the creation, delivery, and evaluation of this programme throughout.

Timetable

Below is a draft timetable of the potential project milestones for the scoping study.

Invitation to tender published	**Wednesday 25th January 2023**
Deadline for responses	**noon Friday 3rd March 2023**
Supplier interviews	**Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th of March 2023**
Contract Award	**April 2023**
Project Completion	**Spring 2024**

Budget

The maximum available budget for the delivery of this project is **£20,000 (exc. VAT)**

Evaluation Criteria

Tender submissions will be evaluated on a combination of your familiarity with the research funding landscape (50%), familiarity and experience of working with libraries/information sector (30%), and quality of response (20%).

Submissions

Please respond to this opportunity by:

- **Project specification:** Describing how you would meet the requirements described in the Project Specification including any additional approaches or methodologies you might utilise in order to guide a cohort of colleagues through the process of making a funding application to an academic funder.

- **Experience:** Providing relevant evidence of your funding experience and expertise, including details of relevant projects successfully completed in the past 2 years. This should include your experience of working with the key project audiences.

- **Key deliverables:** Provide an outline of how you will deliver the programme within the timeframe of the project.

- **Working practice and communication:** Provide an outline of how you would ensure good communication and close working with RLUK throughout the project.

- **Cost:** Providing a total price for you to deliver the project.

Key dates and contacts

Please submit your proposal to melanie.cheung@rluk.ac.uk by **noon Friday 3rd March 2023**

Please submit any clarification questions to programmes@rluk.ac.uk