Community Fund Application Guidance 2024/25.

The ERA Skills Community Fund provides financial support for organising events focused on energy or net-zero themes, aimed at developing doctoral and post-doctoral researchers. Along with funding, the ERA team offers training and mentoring to ensure high-quality events. Events must focus on energy or net-zero and be open to all ERA Skills researchers across the partnership, not just those from the applicant's own university.

Application Deadline:
Monday 25 November 2024.

How We Will Assess Your Application

Applicants will be expected to demonstrate a commitment to researcher development in areas relevant to **energy** or **net-zero**, aligning with the goals of the **ERA Community Fund**. The specific criteria we will assess are outlined below:

1. **Clear Development Goals**
   You should clearly explain how receiving the award will support your own professional and researcher development, as well as how the event will benefit your growth as a leader in the energy or net-zero field.

2. **Quality and Relevance of Training**
   We will assess the quality and relevance of the training and skills development opportunities your event will offer to doctoral and post-doctoral researchers. The event should provide meaningful learning experiences aligned with energy and net-zero topics.

3. **Proposed Impact and Outcomes**
   Your application should outline the expected impact of your event, including the key outcomes you aim to achieve for participants and the broader research community. The event should have a clear purpose and the potential to make a positive contribution to researcher development.

4. **Support from Host Organisation**
   We will consider the level of support you have from your host organisation, including any resources, mentorship, or guidance they will provide to ensure the success of your event.

Full details of the funding call can be found on our website: www.era.ac.uk/skills/funding-opportunities/.

Please apply via the On-line ERA Community Fund Application 2024/25 form.

We recommend drafting your answers in a separate document using the guidance below, then transferring them to the online form after reviewed by your supervisor, line manager, or supporting member of staff. The ERA Skills manager is available to provide feedback on your draft proposal; please email it to Lennie Foster (L.A.Foster@lboro.ac.uk) by **12 noon on Friday 8 November 2024** and **before** completing the online form.

General Advice:

- **Be Specific:**
  The more detail you can provide in your application, the better. Vague statements about the event or your goals will not score as highly as specific, well-thought-out responses.

- **Demonstrate Enthusiasm:**
  Show your passion for the energy or net-zero sector and explain why this opportunity is important for your development. Enthusiasm combined with clear planning will strengthen your application.

- **Focus on Impact:**
  Remember that this funding is about creating real, lasting impact. Be sure to think about how your event will benefit not just you, but also the wider community of researchers and stakeholders.

Application form Guidance.

Question	Guidance
Name:	Please write your full name.
Email Address:	Please use your email address that ends in **.ac.uk** if possible.
Institution:	The institution where you are currently employed and/or studying. People based at the following institutions are eligible to apply for this funding: • Aston University • University of Birmingham • Cranfield University • Keele University • University of Leicester • Loughborough University • University of Nottingham • University of Warwick • British Geological Survey
What best describes your current role	Options include: • Doctoral Researchers (e.g. PhD or EngD student) • Post-doctoral Researcher • Other – please state
Outline of Activity / Event (150 words max):	Provide a concise description of your event in less than 150 words. This will be used to promote your event, so ensure it is engaging and clear. Include the following key details: • **What:** What is the event about? Briefly explain its purpose and focus. • **Why:** Why should people attend? Highlight the benefits and relevance to energy or net-zero themes, and how it will support researcher development. • **Where:** Where will the event take place? Indicate if it will be virtual, in-person, or hybrid. If necessary, the location can be adjusted post-award.
Development Goals (150 words max)	**What We're Looking For:** Clearly explain how this award will support your professional growth as a researcher in the energy or net-zero fields. We are looking for applicants who have well-defined development goals and who can show how running this event will enhance their skills, leadership, and career progression. **Tips for a Strong Application:** • Outline specific personal and professional goals that will be achieved by organising the event. • Explain how the experience will help you build leadership skills and networks relevant to energy or net-zero sectors. • Show ambition by linking the event to your long-term career aspirations in research or industry.
Quality and Relevance of Training (150 words max):	**What We're Looking For:** We expect your event to provide high-quality training or skills development opportunities for doctoral and post-doctoral researchers. The content of the training should be directly aligned with energy or net-zero themes, offering relevant and practical knowledge to participants. **Tips for a Strong Application:** • Clearly describe the training sessions or activities you will offer at the event. • Highlight the relevance of the training to the energy or net-zero sectors, and ensure it meets the needs of early-career researchers. • Demonstrate the value of the training by explaining how it will help participants develop skills that are in demand.

Question	Guidance
Proposed Impact and Outcomes (150 words max):	**What We're Looking For:** Your application should outline the anticipated impact of the event, both for participants and the wider research community. We're looking for events that will contribute to researcher development in tangible ways and offer clear, measurable outcomes. **Tips for a Strong Application:** • Explain the expected outcomes of the event for participants, such as increased knowledge, improved skills, or new collaborations. • Describe how the event will benefit the wider ERA partnership or contribute to advancements in energy or net-zero research. • Include ways to measure the event's success, such as feedback from participants or the development of new research partnerships.
Support from Host Organisation (150 words max)	**What We're Looking For:** Your host organisation plays a key role in the success of your event. We will assess the level of support provided by your host, including any resources, mentorship, or guidance that will help ensure smooth delivery. **Tips for a Strong Application:** • Provide clear evidence of the support you will receive from your host organisation. This could include use of facilities, administrative assistance, or access to guest speakers. • Mention any mentors or advisors who will help you plan and deliver the event.

What help would you need from the ERA Skills Team (150 words max):	The ERA Skills team is here to help you make your event a success. Below is guidance on how to request support for your energy or net-zero-focused event, including what we're looking for in your request and tips for ensuring a strong, well-prepared submission.
	1. Identify the Support You Need
	What We're Looking For: A clear understanding of the specific type of support that will best help you in organising your event. Whether it's mentoring, training in event management, help with sourcing speakers, or securing additional funding, identify what you need to make your event successful.
	Tips for a Strong Application:
	• Review the types of support we offer (mentoring, peer reviewer training, workshop design, event management, etc.).
	• Think carefully about where you would benefit most from guidance or additional resources.
	• Be realistic about your needs—if you're unsure, contact the ERA Skills Manager (Lennie Foster, L.A.Foster@lboro.ac.uk) to discuss what might be helpful for you.
	2. Prepare a Clear Request
	What We're Looking For: A well-defined and specific request for support. Your request should focus on the kind of help you need from the ERA Skills team.
	Tips for a Strong Application:
	• Clearly specify the type of support you need. Example requests include:
	    ○ Mentoring on event management to improve organisational skills.
	    ○ Help with finding expert speakers in net-zero technologies.
	    ○ Training on designing engaging workshops for early-career researchers.
	• Include any specific challenges you anticipate, so we can better understand your needs.

Question	Guidance
Maximum number of participants:	Specify the maximum number of delegates for your event, considering room size and catering costs for in-person events (excluding speakers and facilitators). This number can be adjusted post-award with ERA team approval.
Proposed Date:	State the approximate date of the event to the nearest month, this can be adjusted post-award with ERA team approval. If there is a deadline that it needs to happen by include this information here. If you know the exact date and it is not flexible, please state this.
Amount of money requested:	Please write the amount to of money you require to the nearest £10.
Approximate amount of matched funding:	Matched funding may be in the form of an in-kind contribution. You **do not** need to get costings for this application, we only need approximate figure; you can use the following to work out your in-kind contributions: Senior Academic £100 Academic £75 Post-Doc £35 Support Staff £35 Admin in university £20 CEO Industry £150 Senior Industry £100 Junior Industry £50 Admin Industry £20 Room hire £500 Printing £0.05 per A4 side Colour printing £0.10 per A4 side If your matched funding is actual monies, we may ask for a Letter of Support if your application is successful.

Budget breakdown (150 words max):	Please provide a brief breakdown of how you plan to allocate the funds from the ERA Community Fund. While we **do not require official university costings**, a clear outline of your anticipated expenses will help us understand your plans. Here's an example for guidance:
	 • **Venue Hire:** £500 -in-kind.
	     This cost covers renting an appropriate space for the event. This is an **in-kind contribution** from the host organisation.
	 • **Catering:** £400
	     This amount is for refreshments and meals for delegates. Additionally, there is an **in-kind contribution** from sponsors of £250 to help offset catering costs.
	 • **Speaker Fees:** £300
	     This is the honorarium for guest speakers or facilitators. However, there will also be **in-kind contributions** from academics within the network who will serve as speakers or panel members, adding significant value to the event.
	 • **Materials and Resources:** £200
	     This cost is for printed materials, handouts, or workshop supplies.
	 • **Travel and Subsistence:** £1000
	     This amount is designated to cover travel and subsistence expenses for delegates, ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder participation.
	 Total Costs: £2,650
	 Amount Requested from the ERA Community Fund: £1,900

Question	Guidance
Do you have support of you supervisor or line manager?	It is essential that you have support from your supervisor/line, however they do not necessarily need to take an active role in designing and delivering the event. Please talk to them **before** submitting a proposal. Options include: • Yes • No • Maybe
Supervisor's/line manager's name:	Full name of your supervisor or your line manager (if you are a post-doc this is likely to be the PI on the grant you are employed on).
Supervisor's/line manager's email address:	Provide your supervisor's or line manager's university email address, it should end in .ac.uk.
Who is supporting you to design and deliver this event?	Name **all** the people and/or organisations that are supporting you to design and deliver this event (this can be adjusted post-award). We expect that each application will have at least one member of staff from their university supporting the event. Please make sure you have included their time in the matched funding section above. This may include: • Your PhD supervisor/s • An academic at your institution • A society or group you belong to • A learned society • A member of support services • A researcher developer manager (or equivalent at you institution) • A technician • A post-doctoral researcher • A fellow PhD student
Name of lead university staff member supporting your event:	Full name of the university staff member who is supporting your event. We strongly suggested that you ask them to review your application form before submitting it.
Email address of lead staff member supporting your event:	Please provide the university email address of the main person who will be helping you deliver this event. This person should be a member of staff at your institution.