



UBBI-USP Seed Fund Application Guidelines

Background

The University of Birmingham (UoB) and the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) signed an agreement in April 2024 to renew the Strategic Partnership Collaboration between the two institutions.

The agreement recognises the strong institutional, academic and executive-level relations that have been cultivated over the last decade. It outlines a commitment to further develop a special, long-term and broad collaboration based on principles of sustained reciprocity and mutual benefit, supported through a newly-established joint seed funding programme.

The joint seed fund shall enable the Universidade de São Paulo's and the University of Birmingham's faculty and researchers to identify complementary strengths, facilitate the use of synergies, and promote the development of outstanding future projects in research and teaching. The seed funding calls shall be open to all faculties while interdisciplinary research projects will be encouraged.

Criteria

The UBBI-USP Seed Fund supports collaborative engagement between UoB and USP with the following priorities:

a. Implementation Grants to support and strengthen existing faculty-faculty relationships leading to clearly defined outputs.

Priority will be given to activities that have the potential to:

- Progress joint research priorities;
- Connect world-leading researchers;
- Enhance our institutional research profiles through collaborative publications;
- Build productive, impactful relationships with leading academic, scientific, cultural and policy communities in the region;
- Evolve into jointly-submitted proposals to external funding agencies for sustained support of collaborative research activities.

b. Initiation Grants to encourage wider faculty involvement and expand institutional engagement. We invite funding applications from colleagues interested in developing new research relationships. Priority will be given to:

- Applicants who can clearly demonstrate that they have established a potential area of collaboration with UoB/USP counterparts;
- Activities with the potential to extend beyond individual links to wider – i.e., 'research group to research group' – collaborations;
- Projects with the potential for sustained and enlarged collaborative activity.

Guidelines

There are no restrictions on the forms of activity undertaken with UBBI-USP funding, providing they meet the criteria outlined above.

Funds from each partner shall be spent for the expenses of its own academics and PhD students, and expenses shall be allocated to mobility purposes (airfare, per diems, travel insurance, accommodation, visa and/or immigration permits) and/or event logistics costs for running an event or workshop at UoB or USP, based on each party's financial policies.

The fund is available to support planning visits, workshops and exchanges with the partner institution for the purpose of developing the strategic partnership.

Observations:

- Grant funds must not be used to pay for scholarships, teaching, salaries, or tuitions, and must not cover direct staff support for projects.
- Purchase of permanent material and infrastructure should not be included.

Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Academic projects to extend UoB-USP academic networks and research outputs, joint conferences, workshops, symposia, collaborative experiments and co-authored publications;
- Curriculum innovation and development of joint teaching and learning initiatives;
- Civic and cultural relationship-building to enhance our status as 'engaged' universities;
- Trilateral activities that link research projects into wider UoB-USP strategic regions – including, for example, countries in Africa, Latin America, China, India, and Europe.

Applicants are encouraged to apply for reciprocal visit funding in order to broaden networks and cement engagement.

Applications that can demonstrate potential for relationships to become sustainable beyond the proposed project and initial seed funding term are strongly encouraged, whether through faculty and department commitment or the likelihood of externally leveraged grants and awards.

UBBI seed funding will be allocated locally, with UoB paying the travel and accommodation costs of UoB teaching staff, researchers and doctoral students travelling to USP, and the costs of activities occurring at UoB; and USP paying the travel and accommodation costs of USP teaching staff, researchers and doctoral students travelling to UoB, and the costs of activities occurring at USP.

UBBI-USP seed funding will be subject to relevant financial policies of the institution providing the funding to its faculty or units.

Note: The maximum funding available per project will be up to £15,000 in total, with half coming from each partner¹.

¹ For USP, the equivalent to its amount - £7,500 in Reais (R\$), upon conversion made based on the sale price of the Pound sterling, published by the Central Bank of Brazil, referring to the date of publication of the results of the Joint Call for Seed Funding, with no change due to any exchange variation.

Application Process

Applications must be submitted by one senior or junior faculty/researcher of USP and by one of UoB, both of whom will be named Principal Investigators (PIs)².

Additional participants of the respective project teams may be professors, PhD candidates, and post-doctoral researchers³. The funding scheme is open to all academic fields. Activities may focus on one discipline or be of interdisciplinary character.

Proposals for the UBBI-USP Strategic Collaboration Seed Fund must be submitted in English by Principal Investigators on both sides simultaneously in PDF format (one file & one email). Please see the [Application Form](#) for details.

Applications must be made using the UBBI-USP Strategic Collaboration Seed Fund [Application Form](#). Each Principal Investigator must submit the same proposal to the scientific coordination of their home institution, including the following information:

- a) Identified UoB and USP Principal Investigators.
- b) Purpose and timescale of visit/programme activity.
- c) Anticipated total cost and itemised budget for the proposed activities.
- d) Academic rationale for support:
 - i. What is the strategic importance or added academic value of the collaboration for your home department and University?
 - ii. What are the anticipated shared outcomes and benefits for the collaboration?
- e) Anticipated means of sustaining the collaboration. What funding is available from other sources and what potential is there for future external investment?
- f) Executive Officer of the Unit / Head of College or Faculty Dean approval. Email confirmation of this support will suffice, and should be saved in PDF format and attached with the application.

Applications should be submitted by email by both PIs, using the UBBI-USP Strategic Collaboration Seed Fund [application form](#), to the following addresses:

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| The University of Birmingham: Mary Elliston, Global Partnerships Manager Email: m.e.elliston@bham.ac.uk | Universidade de São Paulo: USP International Cooperation Office (AUCANI) - https://uspdigital.usp.br/mundus/editalintercambio/publicoListar?nivpbcao=D&codmnu=3144 (Call #2034) |
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Further information can be found by contacting Mary Elliston, Global Partnerships Manager, at the University of Birmingham (m.e.elliston@bham.ac.uk) or by contacting the USP International Cooperation Office (AUCANI) at the Universidade de São Paulo (international.networks@usp.br).

BRIDGE Strategic Leads and Contacts:

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| University of Birmingham | Professor Robin Mason Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) |
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² USP and UoB applicants must be active professors of the permanent staff of the University; Post-doctoral researchers may be added to the team list, but are not eligible for funding.

³ Please refer to footnote #2, above.

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| | <p>University of Birmingham Edgbaston Birmingham B15 2TT Email: r.a.mason@bham.ac.uk</p> <p>Dr Erica Arthur Head of Global Partnerships Birmingham Global University of Birmingham Edgbaston Birmingham B15 2TT Email: e.d.arthur@bham.ac.uk</p> |
| Universidade de São Paulo | <p>Professor Sergio Persival Baroncini Proença Provost for International Cooperation USP International Cooperation Office (AUCANI) Universidade de São Paulo São Paulo, Brazil Email: aucani@usp.br</p> <p>Professor Sergio Muniz Oliva Filho Deputy Provost and Associate Director for International Cooperation USP International Cooperation Office (AUCANI) Universidade de São Paulo São Paulo, Brazil Email: international.networks@usp.br</p> |

Selection

The grant review panels at UoB and USP will liaise to jointly determine which projects will be funded, based on the criteria set out in this call.

Reporting

Grant recipients are required to follow the proposed project and to submit a two to three pages final report no later than one month after the end of the grant period. Periodic status updates on the progress of the project may be requested and recipients may be asked to present to the UBBI Steering Group, AUCANI and other appropriate forums (e.g., departmental/College presentations) as requested. The report should include the following information: objectives proposed and activities undertaken; project outcomes and achievements, including key findings and future plans; a brief assessment by the lead researcher of actual expenditure against planned. Grant recipients will later be asked to provide an update two years after the visit to ensure that longer term outcomes of the engagement can be measured that would not have become apparent in the first-year report.

Application Timeline 2025/26

- Applications open: 27 January 2025
- Applications close: 26 May 2025
- Successful awards announced: by 25 July 2025
- Funding available to complete project activity: 1 August 2025 – 31 July 2026