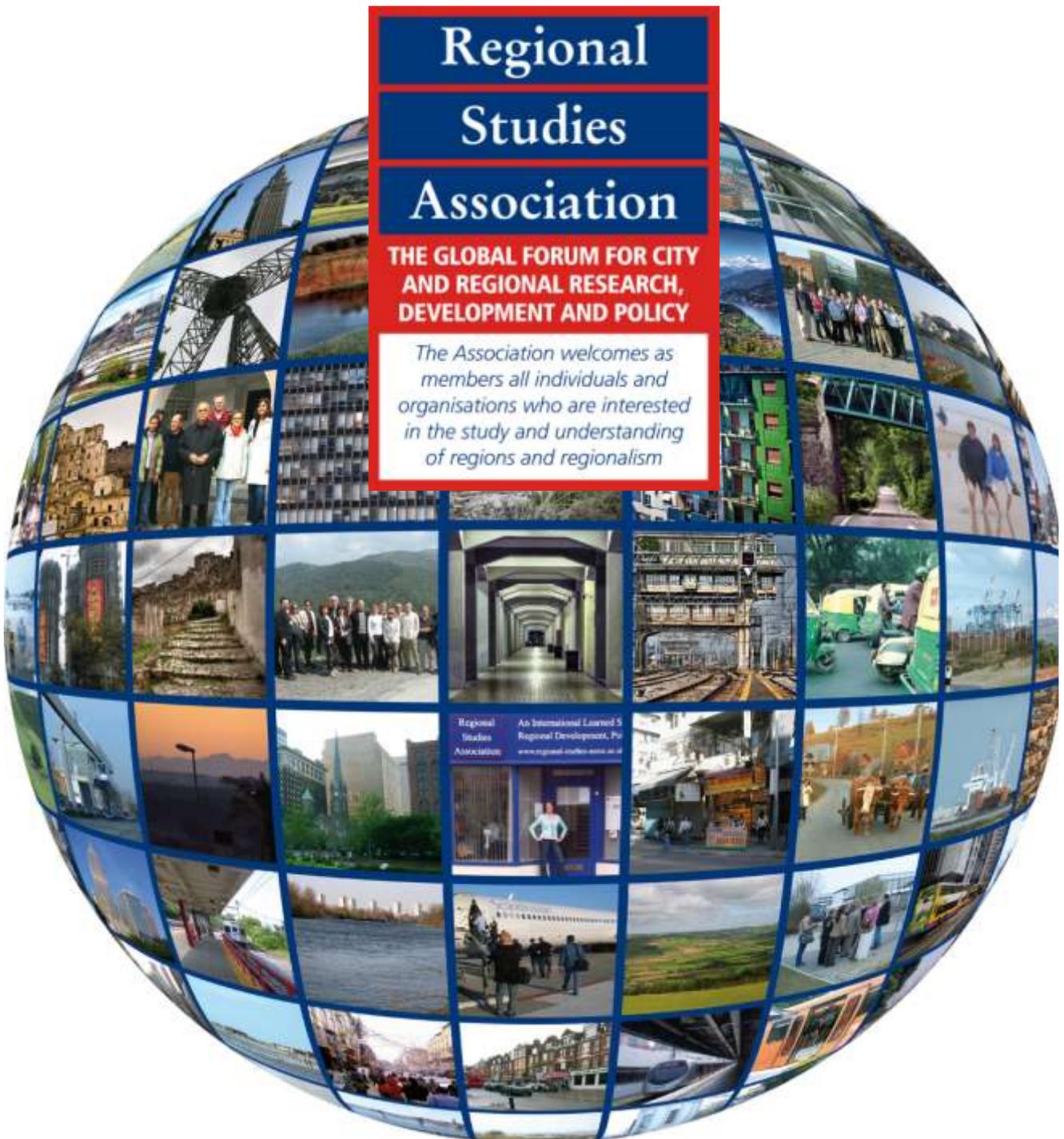


REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION

RESEARCH NETWORKS HANDBOOK



CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	p3
II.	Creating a Research Network	p3
III.	Prioritized research themes for the Research Networks	p4
IV.	The RSA's expectations from Research Networks and their organisers	p4
V.	Management and membership of Research Networks	p5
VI.	Financial management	p5
VII.	Research Network activities	p8
VIII.	Dissemination of findings	p8
IX.	Applications: new and renewal proposals	p9

This Handbook brings together the various policies, procedures and documents of the Regional Studies Association relating to Research Networks.

All comments and suggestions to Daniela.Carl@regionalstudies.org

Revised October 2013

I. Introduction

Founded in 1965, the Regional Studies Association (RSA) is a leading international learned society in the field of regional studies. Through our international membership, we provide an authoritative voice of and network for academics, students, practitioners and policy makers in the field of regional studies. Our main activities are the publication of our two journals, *Regional Studies* (10 issues p.a., print and online) and *Spatial Economic Analysis* (4 issues p.a., print and online) the circulation of our quarterly magazine *Regions*; our international conference and meeting programme and our Research Networks.

In 1985, the RSA Board agreed to introduce Research Networks (formerly referred to as Working Groups) to the Association's activity portfolio. Research Networks are formed by the Regional Studies Association's members to organise a series of events examining an issue of collective interest. (A list of current Research Networks is available at <http://www.regionalstudies.org/research>).

II. Creating a Research Network

Regional Studies Association Research Networks are formed by members interested in meeting to examine an issue of interest. Research Networks typically hold three or more meetings on issues normally of interest to members from more than one region. Research Networks produce reports on the findings from their meetings which are normally published, as a minimum in the Association's magazine *Regions* and on our website. The Association can offer grants of up to a maximum of £3000 normally over two years to members wishing to establish a Research Network.

The purpose of a Research Network is to examine an issue of interest and concern to members of the Association, normally both corporate and individual. The issue need not necessarily have a direct policy focus but the examination would normally lead to policy related conclusions. The topic will be complementary to the existing list of Research Networks.

In considering whether to apply for a new Research Network, it is necessary first to review the areas and topics interest already covered by current RSA Research Networks. You should consider if your topics could be incorporated within an existing group – and if so contact the organisers to discuss joint working. Additional funding can be available in some circumstances to fund additional activities by a group. If there is no existing or closely related Network then you will need to complete the proposal application form and send it to the RSA office via email: office@regionalstudies.org.

The application form will require the following types of information:

- Title of proposed new Research Network that is understood by the Association's audience (academics, students, practitioners and policy makers)
- Aims and objectives of the Research Network and where relevant, reasoning for any overlap with current Research Networks
- Link between the proposal and the Association's identified themes of research
- Dissemination Plans
- Proposed plan of events and activities (minimum 2, normally at least 3) with dates and location and their anticipated outcomes
- Budget

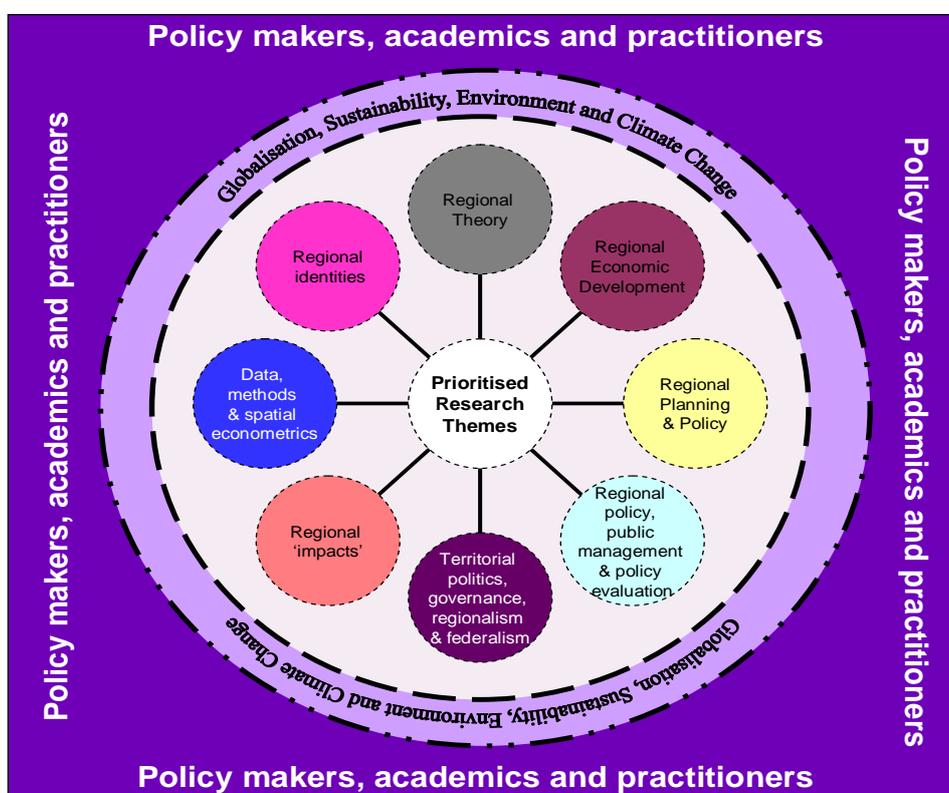
All completed applications are considered first by the Research Networks Committee who can take references on the proposals and will make a recommendation to the full Board of Trustees at their regular meetings. Submissions made three weeks prior to a Board meeting will normally be considered at that meeting. The Board may delegate to the Research Networks Committee or to one or more Trustees plus the Chief Executive any more detailed negotiation and final decision if it deems appropriate. An award letter will always be sent.

III. Prioritized research themes for the Research Networks:

The Regional Studies Association recently launched its Development Plan 2008-2013 where broad research priorities (themes) were highlighted and where leading researchers will be sought to act as theme leaders, coordinated by a Research Networks Leader.

Theme leaders will promote research activities through the Association under each theme, identifying gaps to be filled and encouraging research network proposals from researchers internationally. In the longer run, themes may well develop into communities which organise their own events and conferences and which have a home within the RSA.

In identifying the following themes, the Association recognises that the issues of **Globalisation, Sustainability, Environment and Climate Change** cross-cut the theme headings and the figure below highlights the prioritized 8 research themes:



The Research Networks aiming to work within those identified themes will be prioritized and the organisers will need to develop the relationship between their proposal and one or more of the research themes above in their application form.

IV. The RSA's expectations from Research Networks and their organisers

- The title of the Research Network should be "The Regional Studies Association Research Network on", be prominently displayed on all related materials and listed first if there is more than one source of funding;
- Organisers must be and remain members of the Association throughout the entire duration of the Research Network;
- To press release the establishment of the Research Network in relevant trade journals and in *Regions*;
- To acknowledge the financial support of the Regional Studies Association in any publicity material for events;

- To provide the Association with suitable materials to launch the Research Network, including information on the events and activities for the Association's website and make suitable links from group member's sites to the Association's relevant web pages;
- To publically acknowledge the support of the RSA, introduce the Association, its aims and objectives and orally encourage participants to join the RSA via pro-active advertising and during each event, preferably via the Power Point presentation provided by the Office.
- To invite Regional Studies Association's members to get in touch and take part in the activities by issuing an open call for attendance. (The RSA office must be involved in the circulation of this to ensure that all members are alerted but this does not preclude the organisers making additional circulation to alternative networks);
- To provide dissemination plans for the findings of the research via publication in professional journals, academic journals, books, journal special issues and trade press where relevant and to carry out this dissemination;
- All post event or activity publications should acknowledge support from the Association in a prominent manner;
- To provide plenty of notice of events and activities to the RSA office to allow time for membership and other materials to be despatched for circulation and display at meetings;
- To provide detailed participants' names and contact information (emails preferably) to the RSA office provided that this does not contravene local data protection regulations following each event;
- To provide written reports and photographs (if available) of each separate event or activity in a format suitable for publication in some form, such as in *Regions* and/or on the website;
- To provide detailed accounts, receipts and invoices for the Association office for the reimbursement of funds via the claim form;
- To press release the main findings of the Research Network through appropriate channels at the end of the Research Network's activities for one funding round (NB: Networks may apply on multiple occasions to encourage some stability of the Networks but may only hold one award at a time).

The organiser(s) should:

- Ensure that the Research Network operates within the overall policy and legal framework set by the RSA Board, including good financial management;
- Inform all the delegates of the rules of claims and reimbursement prior to the event taking place;
- Encourage presentations from Early Career and Student members of the Association;
- Encourage and co-ordinate the Network's programme of activities including consideration of participation in an RSA international or other conference via a gateway;
- Because the Research Networks are part of the RSA's overall charitable activity, the Association's name and the phrase 'The Regional Studies Association is a registered charity (No. 1084165) and a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (No. 4116288).' should appear on all correspondence and publicity material that is sent to or may be read by third party (for example on a letter to venue regarding room hire), whether in hard copy or electronic form. If you omit this information, you are committing a criminal offence and may be liable for prosecution. A legal disclaimer needs to cover any web-based communications (for example if you have your own website).

V. Management and membership of the Research Network

The Research Network must be organised and managed by Regional Studies Association members. They can come from the same region or section but are encouraged to seek collaborators from other regions and/or sections. They can be from any membership category – to clarify – the Association will consider Research Networks proposed by students and early career workers as well as those in the other categories of membership.

VI. Financial management

Grant awarded

The sum awarded to a Research Network by the RSA is currently depending upon the schedule of activity and budget. If the costs of the events exceed this sum, the organisers will be responsible for covering the extra costs.

Where a Research Network is to be co-funded the applicants should indicate the level or expected level of co-funding and details of the co-funder and any specific conditions on their award of support.

The support is never intended to allow the organisers to make a surplus from an event and to do so would not be in the spirit of the scheme. The Association will consider applications in which a nominal entry fee may be charged to attendees but prefers that Regional Studies Association members are not charged. The RSA will not reimburse invoices that exceed the sum of the award agreed in the Award Letter, expenses occurred by non RSA members (at the time of the expense and of the claim) or invoices that do not follow the accepted guidelines listed below. Any unused monies from the sum awarded will be kept by the RSA. When budgeting, please think of all possible expenditures.

Financial management

Monies awarded under the Research Networks scheme can be expended only in the following ways:

Provision of travel and accommodation bursaries to the following categories of members

- any student member of RSA
- any early career member of RSA
- any associate (retired) member of RSA
- any member working in a Band B, C or D country

For the purposes of clarity only Student and Early Career members in Band A may make a claim for expenses through the Research network scheme, members in any other category of Band A are not eligible. Any claim for expenses being made by a corporate member (Bands B, C and D only) should note that their expenses can only be refunded to the organisation holding the corporate membership.

All organisers are strongly advised to set a maximum ceiling for each participant awarded a bursary – this avoids financial shocks from unexpectedly large claims. Normally individual claims would not exceed £300.00 and around £200.00 per claim would be usual.

The RSA will only reimburse economy class transport (train, plane, bus, underground and ferry) and single rate accommodation.

Claims for subsistence will not be met (i.e. you cannot claim for food or drink)

Organisers should inform all their delegates that bursaries apply to RSA members only. *Please note that claimants' membership status will be checked prior to reimbursement.*

Meeting costs

- Monies can be used to cover the costs of meeting refreshments such as tea/coffee/biscuits, sandwich/buffet lunches, a modest evening dinner for participants. The award can cover alcohol to accompany one event dinner organised by the Research Network's organisers but will not cover bar bills of individuals and additional alcohol consumption apart from that dinner.
- Where it is impossible to avoid such charges monies may be used to hire meeting facilities. The Association normally expects these to be made available by universities without charge.

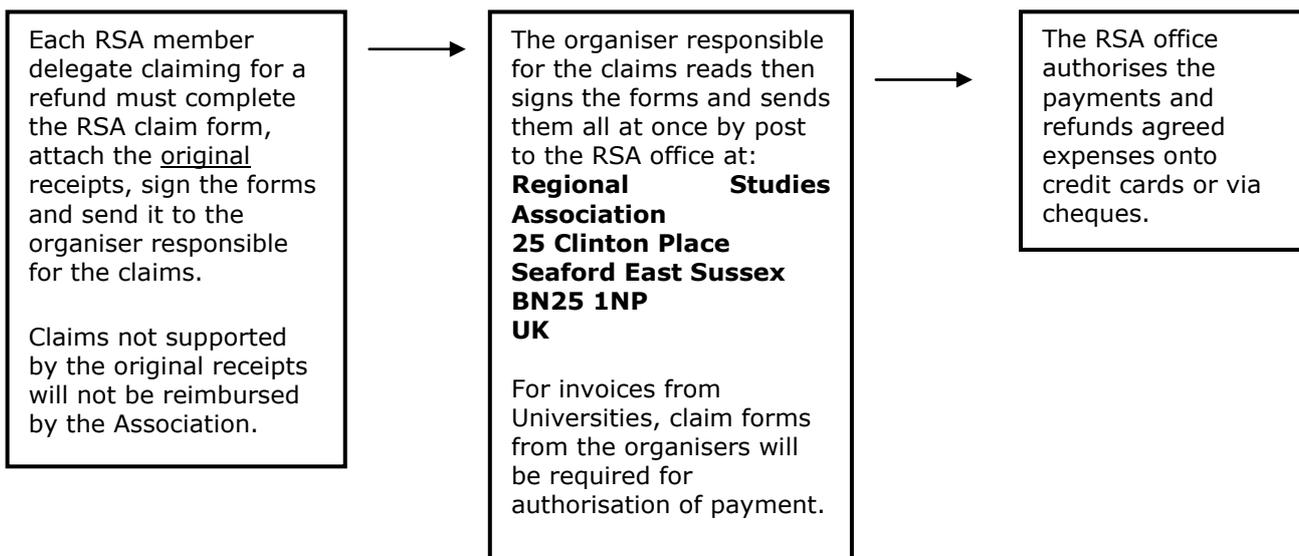
- The monies may be used to hire audio-visual equipment where these charges cannot be avoided.
- The monies may be used to help with field trip costs such as coach hire etc
- The monies may be used to cover modest charges for the copying of meeting materials such as handouts, purchase of badges

Please note that all sums below are in GBP.
No other costs will be covered by the awarded sum.

Reimbursement Procedure

- The Research Networks' organisers will nominate a person when applying for the award, who will be responsible for all the claims throughout the Research Network. All delegates who answer the criteria (please see above) will forward their signed claim forms and their original receipts to that person who will be corresponding with the RSA office for all claims.
- The Regional Studies Association holds the funds and reimbursements are made via the claim form or invoices, both supported by original receipts. It is important that invoices are made out to the Regional Studies Association and that you send the invoice to the RSA office for direct payment.
- The Association undertakes to make prompt reimbursements via a credit card or by cheque but will not usually use bank transfers due to costs involved.
- At the end of the Research Network, all unspent monies revert back to the Regional Studies Association and the final payment may be withheld until the formal final report has been received and accepted by the Board.
- The Association's Public Liability policy covers RSA Research Networks both in and outside the UK. Details of the cover are available. Please note it will only cover conventional meetings/workshops activities. There is no cover for hill walking field trips for example. However, if you think that any of the group's planned activities might fall outside this, please consult the office immediately.

Claims



Please note that delegates are not to claim for refunds directly from the RSA office and each claim must be signed by the organisers of the Research Networks. Refunds will be made only if all the organisers are members of the Association and once the report of the event has been received by the office together with supporting material.

- Please note that if a Research Network does not claim any refund within 6 months of its last event, claims will not be reimbursed by the RSA.

VII. Research Networks' activities

The Association normally expects each Research Network to have three events and additional ones can be arranged during the Association's Annual International Conference but note that the award money cannot be used for claims for these additional events.

All information, alerts, reports, advertising etc about Research Network activities should to be sent to the RSA office so that they can then appear in *Regions* (provided the timing is right – ask the RSA staff about deadlines and publication dates) and be posted on the website.

Most Research Networks are expected to last for a maximum of two years from the date of the first event but longer lasting applications will be considered on merit. Grant holders may reapply for further funding but there should be progression of the themes for discussion and a wider trawl for participants. Networks may only hold one award at a time.

Inactive Research Networks are a waste of both the RSA resources and those of the organisers and a poor reflection on the Association. The Board has therefore decided that, as a matter of policy, any Research Network which does not accept, sign and return the Award Letter within 6 months of its being sent to the organisers will be deemed obsolete. Furthermore, if the Research Network does not provide its final report, the final repayment for monies spent will be retained and steps may be taken to recover other monies expended. Of course, this would be a last resort and the Association hopes that it will not face such difficulties.

References to the Research Networks on the RSA website will be removed from the active list of Networks approximately 6 months after the last Research Network planned activity and will be put on the inactive page in the same area of the site.

VIII. Dissemination of findings

The following are the minimum expected:

- Press release the establishment of the Network in *Regions* (the Association's membership magazine); other trade journals and magazines on the Association and other websites and via appropriate emailing distribution lists
- Invite all Association members to participate in the Network (although not necessarily offering to pay for them) through issuing an open call for attendance (the office staff team will assist with this). It is understood that there will be meeting size restrictions and attendees may need to be selected. An appropriate balance between Regional Studies Association members and others is expected.
- Acknowledgement of the financial support of the Regional Studies Association in any publicity material for events.
- Provide a written report of each activity in a form to be specified by the editor at the time of *Regions*. The Association's Board will require a financial report and may require other details in addition to the narrative report. In addition to each event's report, organisers are requested to submit the event's programme including the titles of papers presented and the list of all delegates in English with postal and email address.
- Provide a final report at the end of the Research Network of up to 500 words that is summarising the research Network and its activities. This report will be added to the RSA website.
- Press release the main findings of the Research Network (as above).
- Additional plans e.g. for a journal special issue or edited book are strongly encouraged, even if aspirational and should be clearly explained.
- Any publications that flow from the research of the Research Network should acknowledge the financial support of the Regional Studies Association

In general, the RSA office team will support award holders in respect of advertising their events and activities to the wider membership and disseminating information following meetings. Award holders may always seek advice from the Office but have no direct call on the time of the staff

team beyond this (i.e. the office staff will not be able to book rooms, arrange catering, book flights, staff the registration desk or otherwise support the activities of Research Networks).

IX. Applications: new and renewal proposals

The Research Networks funds are renewable. This means that anyone is able to apply for further funding for a Research Network when it comes to an end. An application form will need to be filled in and details of how the renewal proposal aims to develop the findings of the original or previous Research Network will be sought by the Research Committee and the Board. Organisers wishing to renew an existing Research Network will be expected to apply for additional funding from other sources in order to maximise the impact and reach of the renewed Research Network. They will also be encouraged to work with research leaders on themes identified by the Association as prioritized themes within regional studies and identified gaps within the field.

Applications are accepted throughout the year for new and renewal proposals. Proposals are considered by the Association's Board which meets at regular intervals during the year. Applications must be received no later than 3 weeks prior to a Board meeting in order to be considered.

If you require any further clarification, advice about setting up a Research Network or you wish to send an application form, please contact via email: office@regionalstudies.org or by phone on +44 (0)1323 899698.