

**REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION  
Research Network Grant Scheme (RN)  
2024**

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## I. Introduction

Founded in 1965, the Regional Studies Association (RSA) is a leading global learned society in the field of regional studies and regional science. Through our international membership, we provide an authoritative voice, leadership and network for academics, students, practitioners and policy makers in the field. Our main activities are the publication of our journals *Regional Studies*; *Spatial Economic Analysis*; *Territory, Politics, Governance*; *Regional Studies*, *Regional Science*; *Area Development and Policy*; and *Finance & Space*, our e-Zine *Regions*; our international conference and meeting programme, our Grant Schemes (Early Career Grants, Membership Research Grants, Fellowship Research Grants, Travel Grants and Policy Expo) and our Research Network Scheme.

In 1985, the RSA Board agreed to introduce Research Networks (formerly referred to as Working Groups) to the Association's activity portfolio. A list of current and previous Research Networks is available at <https://www.regionalstudies.org/funding/research-network-grant-scheme/>. In 2015, the Association introduced an increased Research Network funding scheme up to £10,000 which was part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of the Association.

This handbook brings together the various policies, procedures and documents of the Regional Studies Association relating to RSA Research Networks awarded in and after 2015. The full Terms and Conditions governing the grant will be provided to successful applicants as part of the formal grant offer and will be based on the general terms and conditions set out below.

The allocation of monies in each round will be determined by the quality of applications. There will normally be up to three grants available in each round. The Association may choose to release further funds in any round.

## II. Creating a Research Network

RSA Research Networks are formed by RSA members interested in meeting to examine an issue that responds to the aims and goals of the Association and of interest and concern to members of the Association as well as non-members. The issue needs not necessarily to have a direct policy-focus, but the examination would normally lead to policy related conclusions.

In considering whether to apply for a new Research Network, it is necessary first to review the areas already covered by current RSA Research Networks. If there is no existing or closely related Research Network then you will need to complete the application form available at <https://www.regionalstudies.org/funding/research-network-grant-scheme/> and send it to the RSA office via email [researchnetwork@regionalstudies.org](mailto:researchnetwork@regionalstudies.org).

Proposals will be selected using the following criteria:

- Topic of interest to the RSA and its members;
- Commitment to maximise participation;
- Commitment to promote the RSA through dissemination, reporting of findings and recruiting new members;
- Financial viability.

The Research Network should last for the maximum duration of three years.

## III. Research themes

Research Networks need to respond to the aim and goals of the Association. The Regional Studies Association's Development Plan highlights the Association's objectives which are:

1. To promote education in the field of regional studies by the exchange of ideas and information;
2. To stimulate and aid studies and research into regional planning, development and policy and to disseminate the results of such research.

The Association's aims are to:

- Lead the regional research, policy and practice communities
- Develop our members and support our community
- Deliver high quality regional research
- Influence policy debate and practice

- Innovate in publishing
- Acknowledge excellence in our field

#### **IV. The RSA's expectations from Research Networks' 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;
- The Research Network should last for the maximum duration of three years;
- To inform the RSA office about any changes, updates in organisation of events, program or budget immediately;
- To acknowledge the financial support of the RSA in any promotion and 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 websites to the Association's relevant web pages;
- To publicly 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 during each event, preferably via the Power Point presentation and display materials provided by the Office;
- To promote the events organised to RSA members and non-members 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 additional networks);
- 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 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 detailed participants' names and contact information (postal and emails) in English to the RSA office provided that this does not contravene local data protection regulations following each event;
- To provide the full programme of each event including the list of papers presented;
- To provide detailed accounts, receipts and invoices for the Association's office for the reimbursement of funds via the claim form;
- To ensure that the Research Network operates within the overall policy and legal framework set by the RSA Board, including good financial management;
- To inform all delegates of the rules of claims and reimbursement prior to the event taking place;
- To encourage presentations from early career and student members of the Association;
- 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 a third party (for example on a letter to venues regarding room hire), whether in hard copy or electronic form. If you omit this information, you are breaching legislation and may be liable for the legal consequences. A legal disclaimer needs to cover any web-based communications (for example if you have your own website).

#### **V. Management and membership of Research Networks**

This award is open to RSA members in any membership band - A, B, C or D at the time of application. Each organiser listed in the application must be a current member of the RSA at the time of the application and throughout the duration of the Research Network. If an organiser's membership lapses during the Research Network, claims will not be reimbursed.

The Research Network must be organised and managed by RSA members. All organisers must be and remain members of the Association throughout the entire duration of the Research Network. They should come from

different countries and can be from any membership category. The Association will consider Research Networks proposed by students and early career researchers as well as those in the other categories of membership.

RSA Members should note that they are not permitted to hold more than one consecutive RSA research award at a time. For clarity, members holding a Research Network Grant, Policy Expo or Travel grant may not apply for the MeRSA, FeRSA or Early Career grant until their existing award has expired and all reporting requirements have been satisfactorily delivered and accepted by the Association. Members are only permitted to have only one of the RSA Individual Research Grants (Early Career, MeRSA, FeRSA). For example, if you have held an Early Career grant you are ineligible for the MeRSA and FeRSA grants. For clarity, after successful submission of all deliveries for the Early Career, MeRSA or FeRSA award, a member may apply for the Policy Expo, Research Network, Travel Grant or Conference Bursaries. This is in the interest of enabling access to the Association's limited resources to as many members as possible and thus to support a multiplicity of scholars and their different approaches and topics of interest and is consistent with the Association's pluralist approach to regional studies.

## VI. Financial guidelines

### Grant awarded

**The maximum funding for Research Network is:**

- **£10,000 for newly established networks;**
- **£7,500 for renewing networks.**

If the costs of events exceed the awarded 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 RSA Research Network grant 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 RSA members are not charged or if this is unavoidable are charged at a lower rate than non-RSA members.

The RSA will not reimburse invoices that exceed the sum of £10,000 as 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 guidelines listed below. Any unused monies from the sum awarded will be kept by the RSA. When budgeting, please think of all possible expenditures.

### Eligible costs

***The Research Network organisers may not claim their travel and accommodation expenses as this is not in the spirit of the scheme.*** Funds may be spent to cover the direct expenses incurred in organising events. Monies awarded under the Research Network scheme can be spend only in the following ways:

#### 1. Meeting costs

- Grant can be used to cover the costs of meetings' 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 free of charge by universities.
- 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 and the purchase of badges.

## 2. Plenary speakers

From within the Research Network funding a maximum of £4,000 may be used for travel and accommodation expenses of plenary speakers. **Only those who are individual members of the RSA at the time of the event can be reimbursed.**

## 3. Provision of travel and accommodation bursaries to the following categories of RSA members who attend the meeting as delegates

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

Only RSA members can be reimbursed. For the purposes of clarity, only student and early career members based in a Band A country 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 travel and accommodation bursary claims would not exceed £400.00. The RSA will only reimburse economy class transport (train, plane, bus, underground and ferry), petrol costs met, 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 only to participants who are RSA members at the time of the event. *Please note that claimants' membership status will be checked prior to reimbursement.*

As part of this grant, Special Sessions at RSA conferences can be funded with up to £1,000 for travel and accommodation bursaries only.

## 4. Administrative support

The Research Network grant allows organisers some administrative support (maximum of £1,500) but does not allow the employment of staff.

### Payment schedule and 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. The organisers are expected to send the names of all participants awarded a travel and accommodation bursary to the RSA office. Participants who have been agreed by the organisers to receive a bursary will need to forward their signed claim forms and their original receipts to the 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.

The organisers of the funded events are directly responsible for the claims and for any delay in the reimbursement of expenses due to mismanagement of claims. The Association is only able to provide reimbursement once the claim forms (with attached original receipts) have been signed by and sent to the office for processing by the organisers.

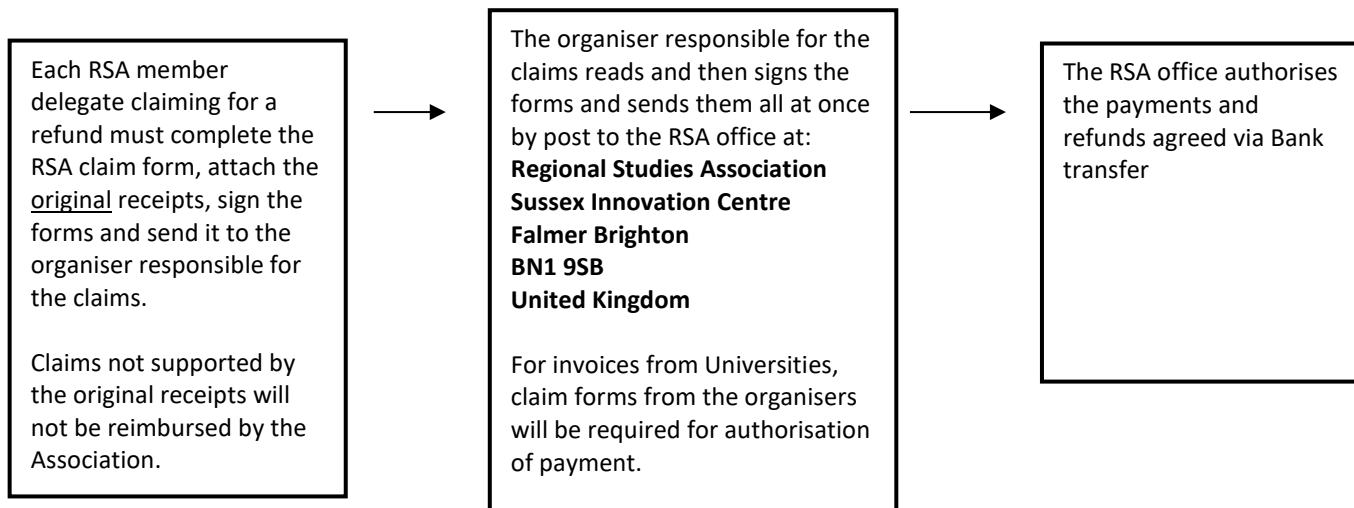
The RSA will reimburse the Research Network on production by the Research Network of evidence that all conditions of the grant have been fulfilled. This may include (but is not limited to) the production of event report

forms, photographs and delegates lists of events, evidence of dissemination of RSA marketing materials and presentations during the event. Please consult the guidelines for more information.

The last £2,000 of the Research Network grant will be retained until receipt and acceptance of the final report.

At the end of the Research Network, all unspent monies revert back to the Regional Studies Association.

### Research Network claims procedure



***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 materials.***

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, outputs and dissemination of findings

Research Networks are expected to last for three years but longer lasting applications will be considered on merit. Grant holders may reapply for further funding – as the renewed network. Continuation applications should demonstrate progression of the themes for discussion and a wider trawl for participants. Research 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.

Research Networks are expected to start their work in a timely way following the award and failure to do so may result in the closing of the award. Furthermore, if the Research Network does not provide its final report, the final payment 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.

#### Outputs and dissemination of findings:

- One introductory report for *Regions* on the new Research Network submitted to the e-Zine *Regions* (more details here: <https://regions.regionalstudies.org/>) after the Award letter has been sent; other trade journals and magazines on the Association and other websites and via appropriate emailing distribution lists;
- To organise at least four Research Network (online or in-person) events; Please note that the RSA office can provide support for online events including IT support, a webpage, registration page, international marketing support and a Zoom license. Please contact Suede Stanton-Drudy ([suede@regionalstudies.org](mailto:suede@regionalstudies.org)) to discuss if this is of interest;

- To organise at least two Special Sessions held at one or two RSA conference(s). Please check the RSA website <https://www.regionalstudies.org/conferences-events/> for the call for special sessions;
- Event reports (including good quality photos) for each Research Network event need to be submitted to the RSA within 3 months after each event. A template for such reports is available at <https://www.regionalstudies.org/funding/research-network-grant-scheme/>. These reports will be published on the RSA website and in the e-Zine *Regions*;
- To submit a paper to *Regional Studies*, *Regional Science (RSRS)*. The Article Processing Charge (APC) for a paper in RSRS will be covered by the RSA on top of the grant. For more details on RSRS go to <http://rsa.tandfonline.com>;
- Additional plans e.g. for a journal special issue or edited book are strongly encouraged, even if aspirational and should be clearly explained;
- Additional relevant updates, in forms of brief reports, news items, pictures, pieces for the RSA website, RSA Blog, LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter are strongly encouraged.
- To provide a final report at the end of the Research Network (within 6 months after the final event) of up to 750 words that summarises the Research Network and its activities;
- Any publications that flow from the research of the Research Network should acknowledge the financial support of the Regional Studies Association.

The RSA office team will support Research Network organisers 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).

#### VIII. Application procedure and renewal process

The application form is available at <https://www.regionalstudies.org/funding/research-network-grant-scheme/http://www.regionalstudies.org/research> and requires the following types of information:

- Title of proposed new Research Network
- 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 prioritized research themes which are outlined in section III.
- Dissemination Plans
- Proposed plan of events and activities with dates and location and their anticipated outcomes
- Detailed budget

#### Timing for applications

All completed applications are considered first by the Research Committee who may take references on the proposals and who will make a recommendation on funding to the Board of Trustees. The Board may delegate to the Research Committee or to one or more Trustees plus the Chief Executive any more detailed negotiations and final decision if it deems appropriate.

For renewals, 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. Proposals are considered by the Association’s Board which meets at regular intervals during the year. Renewal applications must be received in line with the application deadlines stated on the RSA website at [www.regionalstudies.org/funding/research-network-grant-scheme](https://www.regionalstudies.org/funding/research-network-grant-scheme) [www.regionalstudies.org/research](http://www.regionalstudies.org/research)

The estimated timings for the 2024 round are as follows:

Application closing date	Applicants normally informed about the outcome
24 <sup>th</sup> October 2024, 23:59 BST	March 2025



## **IX. Recognition / Intellectual property / Knowledge transfer**

The support of the Regional Studies Association should be acknowledged when the research results are presented. Copies of any publications should be given to the Association. The receipt of the grant should be acknowledged in all publications. Where possible and appropriate the Association expects, that datasets arising from the research will be deposited in a public repository and that the whereabouts of the dataset will be made known.

The Association wishes to have the opportunity to support all its researchers and therefore if any events or promotions are to be organised as a part of the research, the RSA should be alerted so that they may assist with marketing.

The RSA requires the right to access all unpublished papers, records, data or collections resulting from the work carried out under an RSA Early Career Grant scheme, some of which may be required for Annual Reports and Board Meetings. The RSA may, at any time, require detailed information on the results of work funded through the scheme for use in reports and financial audits.

### **Knowledge Transfer**

The RSA recognises and encourages knowledge transfer and actively supports partnership and other schemes that enable this. Recipients of the EC Grant Scheme are encouraged to ensure that the outcomes of this research investment are used to the benefit of the regional studies and/or regional science community and should inform the Association where research materials are deposited.

### **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)**

It is the HEI's responsibility to ensure that the research complies with all correct GDPR, the Data Protection Act and PECR (Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations).

## **X. Ethics, misconduct and liabilities**

Research Network organisers should ensure with their institution that the appropriate insurances are in place.

It is the responsibility of the HEI to ensure that the research is organised and undertaken within a framework of best practice that recognises the various factors, including rigour, respect and responsibility, that may influence or impact on a research project. Grant holders will be required to comply with their HEI's ethics code and this will be referenced in the document signed off by the HEI.

It is the responsibility of the HEI to ensure that all necessary permissions are obtained before the application is sent to the Association and that the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the research are clear.

The grant holder and the HEI are responsible for any matters arising out of the process of a grant holder's research, the institution holding the grant or from the results of the research.

The grant holder and the HEI are responsible for any human resources related, health and safety issue (the HEI health and safety regulations will apply). The Regional Studies Association accepts no responsibility for issues directly or indirectly resulting from the funded research, the grant holder or other organisations and individuals involved.

## **XI. FAQ**

### **1. Can members hold more than one RSA grant/award at a time?**

No. Members should note that they are not permitted to hold more than one consecutive RSA research award at a time. For clarity, members holding a Research Network Grant, Policy Expo or an RSA Individual Research Grant (Early Career, FeRSA or Travel grant) may not apply for the MeRSA until their existing award has expired and all reporting requirements have been satisfactorily delivered and accepted by the Association.

Members are only permitted to have one individual grant. For example, if you have held an Early Career grant you are ineligible for the MeRSA and FeRSA grants.



For clarity, after successful submission of all deliveries for the Early Career, MeRSA or FeRSA award, a member may apply for the Policy Expo, Research Network, Travel Grant or Conference Bursaries.

**2. Can the researcher take a period of time out of work during the grant period?**

This is at the discretion of the Chair of the RSA Research Committee and RSA Chief Executive and would not normally exceed six months but may in exceptional circumstances extend to one year.

**3. What is the latest that a grant holder can delay the start of their project?**

Six months maximum – not negotiable. After this period the money is reclaimed by the Association.

**4. Can part-time researchers apply for the Research Network Grant?**

Part time researchers can apply but the research project must still be completed within 3 years.

**5. Can researchers apply for funding for a project which has already started?**

No, retrospective funding is not allowed.

**6. What about insurance, health and safety, and liabilities while the researcher is working?**

Please consult the section on ethics, misconduct and liabilities.

**7. Is the Research Network Grant portable?**

Yes, provided there is a common agreement between the grant holder, the original and the new host institution, and only with advance written permission from the Association.

**8. Is a change of scientific theme, methodology, scientific strategy and/or objectives allowed during the grant?**

Any significant changes in the direction of the project will require written permission from the Association.

**XII. Application Queries**

Any queries should be addressed to [researchnetwork@regionalstudies.org](mailto:researchnetwork@regionalstudies.org) or by telephoning +44 (0)1273 698 017.

Regional Studies Association,  
Sussex Innovation Centre | Falmer Brighton BN1 9SB | United Kingdom  
Tel: +44 (0)1273 698 017  
Email: [office@regionalstudies.org](mailto:office@regionalstudies.org) – [www.regionalstudies.org](http://www.regionalstudies.org)

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