

Outreach Seed Fund for Recruiting Black Students

2025/26 Guidance Notes

Imperial College London's Outreach Seed Fund for Recruiting Black Students* will support students at the university to develop and deliver Outreach initiatives targeted at engaging Black UK school students with our research and education to inspire the next generation of Black UK school students to consider following a STEM Pathway through Higher Education.

Guidance information on the scheme can be found below.

*This includes Black or Black British-African, Black or Black British-Caribbean, Other Black Background, Mixed-Black African and White, Mixed Black Caribbean and White, or Other Mixed background (including Black African, Black Caribbean or Other Black background).

Imperial's objectives for the Outreach Seed Fund for Recruiting Black Students

The Outreach Seed Fund for Recruiting Black Students has been introduced to:

1. Provide the opportunity for more Imperial role models to engage with pre-university Black African and Black Caribbean heritage school students in order to support students from this demographic, who are underrepresented at the university, to be better informed about STEM opportunities and pathways.
2. Encourage and enable a wider range, and greater number of, Imperial students to develop and deliver new outreach initiatives.
3. Enhance the diversity of student-led outreach initiatives across Imperial and increase the number of Imperial student-led approaches to Outreach.
4. Engage current Black heritage university students and encourage them to create and execute meaningful initiatives to help increase their sense of belonging at the university.

Desired seed fund proposal outcomes

Seed fund proposals could include a discrete project or a pilot activity to be further developed, and ideally will include one or more of the three 'pillars' of messaging that Outreach is working to include in all of its engagement with prospective students:

1. **Demystify:** messaging that helps to demystify the process of applying to university
2. **Support:** messaging that showcases the support and care students receive to develop the skills needed to apply to Imperial
3. **Picture themselves:** messaging that helps students picture themselves studying at the university. We use this to focus on aspects of belonging, ensuring that everyone can see themselves reflected in the students we profile and the passions/interests of our students, for example, through student societies, volunteering etc.
4. **Academic attainment:** offering STEM-specific subject support

Funding and eligibility

A total of £5,000 is available this year from the Outreach Access budget. This will support projects that show innovative and creative approaches to engaging Black students with Imperial's research, demystifying STEM pathways and career opportunities, and helping students picture themselves studying at the university. The application form, guidance, desired outcomes, and eligibility criteria outlined in the rest of the document apply to these projects. Up to £5,000 will be awarded in 2025/2026. Proposals can request funding in the range of £100 - £1000.

Eligibility

1. The Principal Applicant must be a current Imperial student (UG or PG). Proposals can involve a team made up of students, Imperial academics, staff or alumni and/or external partners, alongside the Principal Applicant.
2. Proposals need to be aimed at Black heritage school students based in the UK; this is not limited to secondary school students. Teachers, parents, Local Authorities and Charities can be involved, providing the proposal makes it clear which role these have as influencers of the young person.
3. Existing outreach activities may be eligible for funding, as long as the proposal demonstrates that the intervention has proved effective and it fits with the objectives above.
4. Exhibiting at the Great Exhibition Festival (GEF) / Imperial Lates or other public events should not be the sole objective of the proposal, although proposals can incorporate the GEF or other events as one output among others.
5. Projects need to engage one or more of the following audiences: schools, local community groups, social media networks, or conferences.
6. Projects can involve the engagement of other stakeholders, such as from industry, government or the media. However, projects that only engage these stakeholders and not the audiences listed in Eligibility Point 5 would not be suitable.

Eligible costs	Internal
Staffing costs Please note: each person receiving payment for planning/ delivery time for the project must have the Right to Work in the UK.	Eligible 1) Delivery: this is set at the same hourly rate as 'Recruitment and Outreach Student Ambassadors' (£15.18 basic rate/£17.01 per-hour including holiday pay for delivery of sessions). If tutoring is taking place, this is set at the same hourly rate as 'Outreach Tutors' (£17.31 basic rate/ £19.40 per-hour including holiday pay for delivery of sessions) 2) Planning/ developing content: this is set at half the number of hours of the workshop/ session you are delivering. e.g. if you are developing content for a 2-hour session/ workshop, you can account for 1 hour's pay for prep.
Travel	Eligible
Subsistence	Eligible
Consumables/equipment	Eligible
Training costs	Eligible
Indirect and estate costs	Not eligible

How to apply

Please complete the application form on the webpage.

One supporting document is allowed per application (no more than one page in length) that either provides images or diagrams, or provides details of a previous similar project, to help illustrate your proposal.

For any questions, please contact h.jama@imperial.ac.uk.

Deadlines

Closing date for applications	7 January 2026
Outcome delivered	w/c 2 February 2026
Project delivery phase	February – 31 July 2026
Project completion and final reports due	31 July 2026

Review of applications

Applications will be reviewed by the Outreach team alongside the Outreach Black Students Advisory Board.

Applications will be judged against the following six criteria:

Targeted	Targeting of specific audiences with a clear rationale for why those participants, collaborators, and/or partners have been targeted, and evidence that there is sufficient means to reach those audiences. <i>Detailed descriptions are encouraged rather than broad terms such as ‘the general public’ e.g. specific ethnic minorities, socioeconomic groups, school key stages, geographically isolated communities.</i>
Experience and knowledge of working with the target audience	What relevant or previous experience do the applicants have of engaging with this demographic of students and can this be evidenced? What research/ insights/ understanding do the applicants have of the needs of the students they plan to work with and the barriers they face, which means they are the best placed to deliver this activity? How do applicants plan to identify their audience(s) needs? What assumptions have been made and how do applicants plan to adapt their approach if needed?

Impact	<p>What benefits will the project bring to all those participating in the project, for example, the audiences, staff, students, collaborators, and the wider university? Please include if (and how) the project will influence potential applicants' view of the university or impact their aspirations or ability to apply to Imperial in any way.</p> <p><i>Relevance of the project to the target audience(s). Timeliness – Why is this needed now? E.g. linking to external events or agendas e.g. National Science Week, local festivals, or anniversaries of key people/events.</i></p>
Evaluation	<p>Evidence of a realistic and appropriate evaluation strategy, which outlines how you intend to track the success of your activity against your planned impact. This should include a description of the evidence that you will use to demonstrate impact and how you plan to collect this evidence, for example through surveys, structured activities/ observations, or reflections from teachers.</p>
Achievability	<p>Clear and realistic objectives and timelines with a clear plan for delivery of the project and the right expertise involved to make the project a success.</p>
Legacy	<p>The extent to which the project leaves a legacy beyond the life of the project. Applications which engage students over multiple sessions (mid/ long-term engagement) will be prioritised to ensure maximum impact. Applicants will also have to detail how they plan to keep students engaged with the university community after the event/s. e.g. promote Outreach social media accounts, Outreach newsletter, publicise Outreach programmes, etc.</p> <p><i>This could be skills developed (internally and/or externally), relationships/collaborations developed and/or maintained, new avenues for funding being sought or lessons learnt to inform future engagement projects.</i></p>

Accessing funds and reporting

- A brief final report will be required to summarise achievements and findings from your evaluation. Final reports should be sent to h.jama@imperial.ac.uk on or before 31 July 2026. All funds must be spent by 31 July 2026 and will be released to applicants through the Student Union.
- Project activities will need to be documented in some way e.g. by photography or AV, to capture the process and the outcome, which may be shared with the wider university community through the Outreach webpages and/or internal news stories or social media.