



YMP Seed Funding, Spring 2026 Call Guidance Notes

The York-Maastricht Partnership is delighted to launch our third Seed Funding call to support collaborative research at York and Maastricht.

Overview

The YMP Seed Funding call builds on our existing partnership to offer researchers at York and Maastricht University the opportunity to kickstart new innovative and collaborative research projects. This funding is designed to prepare you for external funding applications by providing the 'pump priming' necessary to conduct pilot studies, gather preliminary data, or develop proof-of-concept work.

The funding is designed to help you:

- Launch new collaborative research projects
- Generate preliminary data required for large-scale external grant applications
- Foster interdisciplinary approaches across the two institutions
- Access specialised facilities or purchase essential small-scale consumables

The key themes included in this call are:

- Culture and Heritage
- Imaging and Health
- Robotics and AI
- Sustainable Planet (*agritech, biodiversity, future farming, plant science, food systems, green chemistry*)

Eligibility

All applications must be jointly submitted by at least one lead applicant from the University of York and one from Maastricht University. Any member of research staff at the University of York or Maastricht University is eligible, provided that they hold a PhD at the time of application, and that their employment contract extends beyond 31 July 2027. The project budget will be split between both universities (see FAQ below) and funding at each institution will be managed by UM and York research offices according to the regulations of each university.

Priority will be given to new collaborations. You must not have received significant joint external funding for the specific project topic proposed in this application. If you would like help finding a partner at the partner university, please contact ymp@york.ac.uk for assistance.

YMP Seed Funding

The total funding available for this call across both universities is €200,000, and we anticipate funding c. 4-8 projects through this call. Applicants may apply for any amount up to the total, but the anticipated number of grants should be taken as a guide to likely award size. You will also need to obtain the support of your head of department for the application.

Eligible costs include

- Small-scale research consumables and materials.
- Small equipment or the use of research facilities (excluding purchase of standard personal computers, laptops, or standard software);
- Access fees for specialized facilities or equipment (e.g., lab time, imaging suites).
- Casual research assistance or technician time.
- Travel and meeting costs specifically required for project coordination.

Ineligible costs

- Teaching buy-out or permanent staff salaries.
- Standard office equipment (laptops, etc.).
- Capital equipment.

All allocated funding must be spent and project activities completed by 31 July 2027.

Expected Activity and Outputs

The primary goal of this seed funding is to establish strong new collaborations between York and Maastricht, and to provide a bridge to external funding applications. Eligible outputs include:

- Preparation and submission of a joint grant proposal for major external research funding, prepared with partner university colleagues and submitted within 9 months of the award.
- Submission of a peer-reviewed publication, co-authored by the applicants, on one of YMP's key themes (see above for list of themes). The paper submission should be made within 3 months of the end of the funding.
- Preparation of a substantial new research project including the York and Maastricht applicants AND an industry partner.
- Project showcase: One of the above and a joint seminar or workshop to present preliminary findings to York and Maastricht colleagues.

Awardees are expected to include an acknowledgement of their YMP funding in the submission of any publications following on from their project.

Application process

Applications must be submitted on the application form below and sent by email as Word or PDF documents to ymp@york.ac.uk by midnight (GMT) on 30 June 2026.

If you have any queries around eligibility or budget preparation, please contact katherine.benson@maastrichtuniversity.co.uk.

Key Criteria for assessment

Applications will be assessed by York and Maastricht on the following criteria:

- Thematic alignment: Does the project clearly address one of the four YMP themes?
- Quality: Is the research question original and the methodology robust?
- Feasibility: Can the pilot work be realistically completed within the timeframe and budget?

- Sustainability: Does the project have a clear next step for the collaboration and for a substantial external grant application?

We will also consider applications from researchers who would also like to explore industry or policy engagement in the UK or in Brussels as part of their project. If this is of interest, please contact Katherine Benson to discuss before making your application.

Timelines and how to apply

Monday 30 March 2026 – call opens

30 June 2026 - midnight GMT– application deadline

w/c 20 July 2026 – selection panel meets

Late July 2026 - applicants will be notified of the outcome of their applications in late July, with projects beginning in August 2026.

We look forward to receiving your application. If you have any questions, please contact ymp@york.ac.uk.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the funding have to be split 50/50 between York and Maastricht?

No. While the project must be a joint effort, the budget should reflect where the costs will occur. For example, if a specific lab analysis is happening at Maastricht, more funds may be allocated there. However, the application must demonstrate mutual benefit to both institutions.

Can we use the funding to pay for staff time?

YMP seed funding is intended for direct project costs. This includes travel, consumables, and facility access. It cannot be used for 'buy out' or salary contributions for the lead applicants. It can be used to hire casual research assistants or student help for specific tasks.

What is the definition of a 'new collaboration'?

We prioritise pairs who have not previously held a large joint research grant. If you have co-authored a paper but never had funding to run a project together, you are eligible. If you have an existing €500k grant together, you would be considered a low priority for this call.

Can we use the funds to host a workshop?

Yes, if the workshop is a direct step toward gathering data or refining a methodology for a larger grant application. Networking-only events are better suited for the YMP Workshop Funding. Seed funding bids should have a clear research objective.

What happens if we don't win the external grant we apply for later?

Seed funding is inherently a risk investment. While we expect a high-quality submission to an external funder, the YMP Board understands that grant success is never guaranteed. We measure success by the submission of a high quality joint proposal.

Can we apply for both the Visiting Fellowship and the Seed Funding?

No. The seed funding is designed to support collaboration between York and Maastricht so we would

expect you to include travel and accommodation costs at the partner university as part of your project budget.

What happens after the Seed Funding ends?

The YMP views seed funding as a stepping stone to longer-term collaboration. We expect successful projects to lead to at least one tangible outcome, such as a joint peer-reviewed publication, a bid for external funding (e.g., Horizon Europe, NWO or UKRI), or confirmed plans for a collaborative York-Maastricht project with an industry partner. We can also provide support at both universities for policy engagement in the UK and in Brussels via The York Policy Engine and Maastricht's Brussels Hub.