

GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING FOR SYNTAX FUNDING

OBJECTIVES

Aim

The Research Councils' (BBSRC/NERC) Systematics and Taxonomy Research Scheme is designed to provide short-term funding for research in systematics and taxonomy. The initiative is intended to support preliminary research that will form the basis of novel responsive mode proposals with a substantial systematics/taxonomy component.

Long-Term Objectives

- To stimulate the submission of high quality taxonomy and systematics-related research proposals to the UK's Research Councils.
- To improve representation of systematics and taxonomy in the UK Research Council's portfolio.

Short-Term Objectives

- At least 50% of SynTax projects will lead to a full responsive mode application to either BBSRC or NERC within 30 months of project start.
- Follow on full responsive mode applications will achieve no less than the average Research Council success rate.

ELIGIBILITY

- The Administrative Lead for each proposal must be in full-time academic employment within the UK and be eligible to hold a Research Council grant.
- Applications with a taxonomy component are our primary target.
- Collaborative applications are encouraged, where appropriate.
- Resubmissions of unsuccessful CoSyst applications, modified where appropriate, are allowed.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- The proposal must be excellent science and offer a high probability of the applicant submitting a responsive mode proposal to a UK Research Council within 30 months of project start and of a publication or other appropriate output arising from the research.
- The proposed research must be within the remit of BBSRC or NERC.
- Applications need not be hypothesis-driven but must demonstrate excellent science pertaining to systematics/taxonomy.
- The proposal must justify why the research project requires pump-priming funds.
- Eligible costs include directly incurred costs associated with acquisition of preliminary data. These may include consumables, travel and subsistence associated with fieldwork including vehicle hire, travel and subsistence associated with visits to collaborators essential to the project, contribution to equipment charges, purchase of small items of equipment and provision of computing facilities and/or licences. Other eligible costs include short-term employment of research staff, and temporary field or laboratory assistance, but do not include PI/coPI salary. Resources may also be sought to support existing junior Post-Doctoral Research Assistants, technical and support staff or Post-Graduate Students during laboratory exchanges, sample acquisition and the generation of preliminary data. Please note that this scheme does not support

requests for funds to attend conferences and workshops. Overheads cannot be included in project budgets.

- Grants will be in the range of £5-30k, with an indicative range of £10–20k. The sum requested should be for the amounts required to perform the project and all requests should be fully justified on the proforma.
- Project duration will be up to 24 months.

THE APPLICATION FORM

- Only electronic applications are accepted. Electronic application forms are available at the awards pages of the Systematics Association <http://www.systass.org/> or Linnean Society <http://www.linnean.org/>.
- Applicants clicking on a field in the online form will see a text box with further guidance of the form's requirements.
- In the *Details of proposed project* field, applicants should upload a single document of no more than THREE A4 pages in length. The document can be in Word or pdf format.
- All application pages should include a header with the name of the applicant and the title of the project.
- The document should include no more than two full pages of text (margins not less than 2.5cm, minimum font size 11pt Times New Roman or Arial). A third page can be used to include figures and/or tables, but not substantial additional text. The project description must be structured using the following headings:
 - Project title
 - Principle investigator (and co-investigators as appropriate)
 - Background
 - Objectives
 - Methodology
 - Outcomes and Future Plans
 - Relevance to systematics and taxonomy (justification for the importance of the work)
 - Budget (to include justification of costs)
- Any application which does not conform to the formatting guidelines will not be evaluated.

FAQs

Can I apply more than once?

There is no limit on the number of applications that may be submitted.

How important is the intention of the applicants to submit a full responsive mode grant to BBSRC and/or NERC?

This is extremely important and the primary metric on which the success of the grant scheme will be judged. Any application that does not clearly outline applications planned as an outcome of the research project will be at a disadvantage.

How important is inclusion of taxonomic research in a SynTax project?

This is extremely important. Any application that does not clearly outline how taxonomic research is integrated in the project and future grant applications will be down-graded.

Can I use a SynTax grant to buy equipment?

SynTax grants are not intended to be equipment-only grants. They must represent a full research project that will advance or integrate taxonomic research and lead to a

responsive mode grant application with BBSRC and/or NERC. All equipment purchases will need full justification: why is the equipment purchase necessary and why is SynTax the appropriate source of funding for this equipment?

Do SynTax grants cover full economic costs (FEC)?

No, SynTax grants do not cover full economic costs. You may not include overheads, nor may you budget for PI/CoPI time.

Do SynTax grants cover PI and/or Co-PI salary contributions?

No, SynTax grants do not include any contribution to PI and/or Co-PI salary.

How do I apply for the SynTax Grant?

Online application forms are available on the Systematics Association and Linnean Society websites.

What is the best way to prepare my application?

Please prepare all sections of your submission in a word processing package before copying and pasting into the online application form. Note that the application form cannot be saved and edited later before submission and if you navigate away from the form, your input will be lost.

How should the application be formatted?

Minimum font size 11 throughout, with 2.5cm page margins. Times New Roman or Arial font. All grants should be headed with Title and Applicants name. Please note that the main contents of the grant application should only cover two pages and formatted as described in the guidelines.

I am having trouble submitting using Internet Explorer!

The application forms do not function well via Internet Explorer – please use an alternative browser, such as Firefox, Chrome or Safari.