

Matariki Engagement Grant (MEG) Application Guidance – 2026

Following on from the success of the Matariki Leadership programme, running since 2021, [The Matariki Network of Universities \(MNU\)](#) is launching a new call for the *Matariki Network Engagement Grant*, to support grants of up to **£5,000** for the collaboration and engagement of Professional Services Staff within the Matariki Network.

Applications will open on March 2nd and close on May 22nd at 23:59 BST.

If you would like assistance in identifying potential project partners, please either speak to your institution's [local Matariki Coordinator](#), or complete the following form (by no later than 23rd March): [Matariki Engagement Grant - Partner request form – Fill in form](#)

An online information session will be held on the 3rd March (6pm UK time) – pre-register for your place [here](#).

Timeline of the Call

Call opens: 2nd March 2026

Application deadline: 22nd May 2026 (23.59 BST)

Internal selection panels: Early June 2026

Matariki Network Judging Panel of finalists: Mid-June 2026

Communication of results: End of June 2026

Earliest start date of projects: August 2026

Objectives

- **The Matariki Network Engagement Grant** will be made available for *Professional Service staff belonging to the MNU Network* at Matariki Network Institutions.

- The Matariki Engagement Grant is intended for a *minimum of two MNU partner* institutions per project to develop a collaborative initiative or event with a focus on further development, promotion, and embodiment of the Matariki [five guiding principles and values](#). Applications with focus on the Matariki guiding principles as well as around the following priority areas are strongly encouraged, though other themes will also be considered: **Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion, Alumni Engagement, Student Experience, University Global Strategy, Health & Wellbeing, and Health & Safety.**
- A centrally held fund will be dedicated to grants to support **Professional Services collaborations and engagement** between two or more Network members. Applications are open for **grants of up to £5,000**, which must be spent within **a 12-month period** from approval of the grant. The number of grants awarded will be limited, with the expectation that approximately four awards will be granted across the entire Matariki Network.
- Projects must provide benefit to both/all institutions directly involved, as well as provide learning/recommendations for the wider Matariki Network.
- Applications will be judged initially through an internal selection process by the applicant's own institution. The shortlisted applications from each Matariki partner will then be judged by a central Matariki Network selection committee.

Priority Areas

Projects must demonstrate alignment to [MNU's five Guiding Principles and values](#).

The five Matariki Guiding Principles (updated 2022) include:

1. Commitment to Transnational Dialogue
2. Academic Freedom and Autonomy, Freedom of Expression
3. Respect for Diversity
4. Critical Friendship
5. Purposeful Collaboration for Improving Lives

Proposals are additionally encouraged which include the MNU guiding principals alongside areas related to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Examples of additional themes which will be given priority include: Sustainability, Diversity and Inclusion, Alumni Engagement, Student Experience, University Global Strategy, Health & Wellbeing, and Health & Safety.

Criteria

- Applicants must be a Professional Service staff member; located at a Matariki Network Institution.
- Applications must include a collaborative project between *two or more Matariki* members that will benefit the participating institutions (and potential wider application for other Network partners). Potential examples include job shadowing/swaps, creation of shared resources, (online) workshops/events, study tours, etc.
- Applicants must establish their own collaborator(s) in the partner institution(s) and agree on the project outline prior to application. If applicants are struggling to find a collaborator in their field from a partner institution, they can complete the [Partner Request Form](#) by no later than **23rd March**.
- No activity will be funded where the activity constitutes the usual activities of the department/office/College, nor will an activity be funded if it needs recurring funding.
- Duality of funding for the same initiative will not be considered, specifically if alternative funding has been granted elsewhere.
- Please note: We will require the applicant's manager to back the application through a letter of support to ensure that the proposal can be accommodated within their divisional workload requirements, complies with the applicant's institutional employment terms and conditions, institutional policies and procedures for engaging with cross-institution working and data protection regulations.

Applications

- Submitted applications will be sent to an internal selection panel at the applicant's home institution to be shortlisted, before being sent to a Matariki Network central Judging Panel for consideration. This panel will consist of individuals from each of the Matariki Network partners.
- If an application is unsuccessful, applicants may re-apply to the fund in the next allocation period.

Outcomes

All shortlisted applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by the end of June 2026.

A record of the outcome of each application will be maintained by the Matariki Network Secretariat.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Matariki Network is committed to encouraging applications from all currently underrepresented groups. Furthermore, MNU expects that equality, diversity and inclusion be embedded at all levels, and in all aspects of research practice throughout the project.

Selection Criteria

Applications will be judged to the following criteria:

- An understanding of the context, challenges, and developments of the project focus area in Higher Education sector from at least two Matariki Partners' contexts.
- Appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed outputs for the individual, the collaboration partner institutions, and the wider Matariki Network community.
- Feasibility of completing the proposed activity to a high standard within a specific timeframe.
- Understanding of the [Matariki Guiding Principles](#) and evidencing those throughout the project.
- The project's risk mitigation.
- The project's value for money.
- The potential for the outputs to enhance practice for Matariki Network partners.

Shortlisted applicants will be jointly evaluated by a panel of senior professionals from each MNU university. Where possible, the Judging Panel will award an equal number of awards involving each of the MNU partner institutions.

Costs

The funding provided is intended to support expenses and costs associated with workshops, meetings and project-related costs to encourage engagement across the Matariki Network. Details of eligible and ineligible costs are listed below.

Eligible costs:

- Project costs including consumables such as marketing and promotional materials, event programmes, (up to a maximum of 1/3 of total grant amount).
- Facilitation of a workshop/event with partners, with the aim of refining the content and objectives of an engagement proposal, or developing strategies for a Network-wide impact.
- Catering and room hire.
- Travel, accommodation and subsistence for project partners.

Ineligible costs:

- Salary support for the applicant(s).
- Business start-up costs.
- Travel or accommodation for non-MNU project partners.

Governance

- The monies will be transferred to the award holder (in GBP), who will be required to administer the spend in line with the individual project plan, e.g. book travel, make all arrangements associated with the award.
- The award holder must provide a full record of spending against the grant awarded and will be required to return any underspend to the fund at the end of the grant period.

How to Apply

Deadline for submissions of the application is 22nd May at 23:59 BST.

- Applications are to be prepared and submitted by the Lead Applicant.

- Note that you need approval from the relevant Manager and other relevant stakeholders and you need to follow all internal guidelines at participating Institutions before submitting.
- Applications must be submitted through the [online application](#). (Please note that the form will only go live on the 2nd March)

Supporting documents required: After you have submitted your application, please print the signature page and have you, your collaborative partner, and your immediate Manager sign it manually or electronically.

*Please send the **signature page** together with your and your collaborative partner'(s)' **CVs**, along with a **letter of support from your immediate Line Manager** to: matarikinetwork@durham.ac.uk.*

The application questions can be viewed in advance [via this link](#).

Monitoring and Reporting

Projects must start by the end of 2026 and must end **12** months following their start date. All project expenditure and a final report and evaluation of the impact of the activity or initiative undertaken must be submitted no later than 2 months following their completion.

This evaluation will be:

- Shared with the Matariki awarding panel to ensure effective use of the funding;
- Used as a case study to inform the annual Matariki report;
- Used to publicise the opportunity with other colleagues in future campaigns.

Contact Us

For institution specific queries:

- Please contact your [local Matariki Coordinator](#) in the first instance.

For any additional queries, please contact:

Matariki Secretariat

matarikinetwork@durham.ac.uk