

**2026 WUN Research Development Fund Letter of Intent (LOI) Submission Form****Introduction**

UTS has opened a call for Letters of Intent (LOI) for the 2026 WUN Research Development Fund. This LOI is only for prospective applications where UTS will be the lead institution.

**Research Development Fund**

The WUN Research Development Fund (RDF) is an annual competitive fund aimed at bringing together researchers to undertake innovative, high quality, sustainable research that addresses global challenges. The WUN RDF provides grants of up to £10,000 (approx. A\$18,900) for one year to foster research collaborations among academic staff at WUN member universities.

The 2026 RDF is a transitional funding call aligned with WUN's future strategic direction. As part of this transition, funding will be provided for a smaller number of projects overall (up to 10), with a maximum of one application permitted per lead member university. Member universities may still participate as co investigators on multiple projects.

The project must engage at least three WUN member universities, including UTS, across a minimum of two regions. Non-WUN universities and external partners may also participate, however, projects must maintain an active core of WUN member universities.

Proposals are welcome from researchers at all career stages. Teams that include, or are led by, early career researchers are particularly encouraged to apply. Projects led by an early career researcher as principal investigator may receive additional points during the review process.

**WUN RDF 2026 Focus**

WUN invites proposals that address problems in one or more of the following areas within the context of sustainable development:

1. Social justice and human rights; inequality
2. Sustainable world: cities and urbanization; energy transitions; water, and food security
3. Mental health; child and maternal health; ageing
4. Responsible and ethical applications of Artificial Intelligence

**Application Process**

The Letter of Intent (LOI) submission is part of the initial UTS internal review process undertaken before a formal application is submitted to WUN. The deadline for LOI submissions is **Monday, 31 August 2026, at 11pm AEST**.

The UTS internal review committee will select one LOI to progress to the full proposal. The final application will be submitted online through the WUN online application portal and is due by **11pm AEST on Thursday, 15 October 2026**.

**Privacy notice:** This online application form has been developed by the Global Strategic Partnerships team at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). Information is being collected for the purpose of assessing Letters of Intent for the 2025 WUN RDF. The information collected will be stored on behalf of UTS by Qualtrics and extracted for use by UTS and the collaborator's institution. Any personal information will not otherwise be disclosed unless you have provided express consent or where required or permitted by law. Further information on privacy can also be found in the Qualtrics privacy statement. If you wish to access the information held about you in relation to this application or withdraw the application, please contact the Global Partnerships team.

☐ I have read the Privacy notice and shared this information with my collaborator(s).

### Program guidelines

☐ I have read the [2026 WUN RDF guidelines](#) and shared this information with the collaborator(s).

#### 1. UTS staff details

Title (e.g. Mr, Ms, Dr, Associate Professor, Professor, Distinguished Professor)

Full name (First and Last name)

Gender

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary/other

Position title

UTS Faculty or Institute (e.g. ISF, IPPG)

Work email

Mobile / Work phone

At what stage of your academic career would you classify yourself:

- ☐ Early Career Researcher (WUN definition: a researcher who is in the final year of their PhD degree program or has completed fewer than seven years of their first appointment as a member of faculty/academic staff.)
- ☐ Mid-Career Researcher

☐ Senior Academic

Have you previously participated in the WUN Research Development Fund as a Principal investigator or a Co investigator?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please provide details of any previous involvement with the WUN Research Development Fund, including the year of application, project title, and your role as either Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator.

Research Team

A project must engage at least **three WUN member universities** across at least **two regions** (regions are defined in the 2026 WUN RDF [Guidelines](#)).

**Please select the WUN member universities involved in this project.**

Note: this survey will automatically generate a question block for each university you select.

- ☐ University of Alberta
- ☐ University of Auckland
- ☐ University of Bristol
- ☐ University of Cape Town
- ☐ Chinese University of Hong Kong
- ☐ University of Exeter
- ☐ University of Ghana
- ☐ Griffith University
- ☐ University of Lausanne
- ☐ University of Leeds
- ☐ Maastricht University
- ☐ Mahidol University
- ☐ Makerere University
- ☐ Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais
- ☐ Tecnológico de Monterrey
- ☐ National Cheng Kung University
- ☐ University of Pretoria
- ☐ The University of Queensland

- ☐ Ruhr University Bochum
- ☐ University of Sheffield
- ☐ University of Technology Sydney
- ☐ University of Tsukuba
- ☐ University of York

## 2. WUN COLLABORATOR DETAILS

Title of [WUN] collaborator (e.g Mr, Ms, Dr, Associate Professor, Professor, Distinguished Professor)

Full name of [WUN] collaborator (First and Last name)

Gender of [WUN] collaborator

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary/other

Position title of [WUN] collaborator

Faculty, College or School of [WUN] collaborator

Work email of [WUN] collaborator

Mobile / Work phone of [WUN] collaborator

At what stage of their academic career is the [WUN] collaborator?

- ☐ Early Career Researcher (WUN definition: a researcher who is in the final year of their terminal degree

program (e.g., PhD) or has completed fewer than seven years of their first appointment as a member of faculty/academic staff.)

- ☐ Mid-Career Researcher
- ☐ Senior Academic

Please provide a link to the academic profile of your [WUN] collaborator

Has your [WUN] collaborator previously participated in the WUN Research Development Fund?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Please provide details of any previous involvement your collaborator has had with the WUN Research Development Fund (RDF), including the year of application, project title, and whether their role was as a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator.

### 3. EXTERNAL PARTNER DETAILS

Does your project involve any non-WUN members or external partners?

Note: WUN RDF Projects may include non-WUN universities and external partners, but must have an active core of WUN member universities.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please add non-WUN member's title, full name, position title, organisation, company, peak body or equivalent, email address, mobile/ work phone details and their website link

### 4. Project Details

**Project title** (Character limit 75)

Enter a summary for a non-specialist audience. Outline the project objectives, proposed approach, expected outcomes, and significance, including what is novel and why the project is important to researchers and/or society.

## 5. Evaluation Criteria

### 1. ACADEMIC QUALITY (max 300 words)

Is the project academically rigorous, and does it address a new research problem or take an existing WUN research program in a significantly new direction? Please note that proposed projects must not be extensions of, or minor variations on, previously funded RDF projects

### 2. RELEVANCE TO CALL (max 300 words)

Within the context of sustainable development, does the project address a problem of consequence in one or more of the below focus areas?

1. Social justice and human rights; inequality
2. Sustainable world: cities and urbanization; energy transitions; water, and food security
3. Mental health; child and maternal health; ageing
4. Responsible and ethical applications of Artificial Intelligence

### 3. WUN ADVANTAGE (max 300 words)

#### Definition of WUN advantage:

WUN is likely to have special advantage when the research problem:

- Requires distinctive constellations of talent that are best assembled (or can only be assembled) by drawing on multiple partners.
- Presents opportunities for comparative analysis, stemming from member universities' locations in different geographical and cultural contexts.
- Requires access to unique environments/resources possessed by one or more partners.

Note: applicants should pay special attention to the concept of **WUN advantage**, as it helps distinguish the project and demonstrates how it benefits from the network's geographical diversity and complementary of expertise.

Describe what is distinctive about the individuals, expertise, and/or resources contributed by the participating WUN member universities. Explain the unique strengths they bring to addressing the research problem and how the project leverages the cultural and geographic diversity of the WUN network.

#### 4. RESEARCH TEAM (400 words)

Does the project involve a well-qualified team of researchers drawn from relevant disciplines and regions? Outline how the program team will be led and constituted.

#### 5. OUTCOME AND IMPACT (max 300 words)

- What will the project have achieved by the end of the funding period of one year? (deliverables, outputs, milestones)
- How will this project achieve impact? Impact might be achieved through one or more of the following: authoritative research publication(s) or policy paper(s); the project having laid the groundwork for major research funding.

#### 6. Budget

##### FUNDING

Funding requested

Enter funding amount requested in GBP up to a maximum of £10,000 (A\$18,900.00). Please enter whole numbers without commas.

**Program budget**

Please provide the program budget outlining how your WUN RDF award would be spent.

If your project is successful, will you require additional funding support from UTS of up to A\$5,000)? If yes, please provide a justification for this request.

Note: UTS may provide up to A\$5,000 in additional funding for successful applications, where the need for supplementary support is clearly justified.

**7. Signature****SIGNATURE OF UTS APPLICANT**

I confirm that I have discussed this application with my WUN collaborators. Once submissions have closed, all UTS applications will undergo an internal review process.

The UTS internal review committee will select a maximum of one application to progress to the full application stage. The selected applicant will receive guidance on the next steps, including the preparation and submission of a full application to WUN **by 11:00 pm AEST on Thursday, 15 October 2026.**

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