



28 Bedford Square
London WC1B 3JS
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7631 0566
Fax: +44 (0)20 7323 4877
www.nuffieldfoundation.org
Registered Charity 206601

1st April 2010

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re-launch of Nuffield Foundation Social Science Small Grants Scheme

I am writing to let you know that the Foundation's Scheme of Small Grants in the Social Sciences has now been re-launched. Application materials and guidance forms are now available on our website, www.nuffieldfoundation.org

You may remember that I wrote last June telling you that the previous scheme would be closing. At that time we hoped to open the new scheme before the end of 2009, but we received so many applications in the last days of the scheme that our budget was overspent, so we had to delay opening the new scheme. I do apologise, as we try to give as much accurate advance notice as possible, but in the end we thought this was the fairest way to proceed.

I should also say something about why we have made the changes that we have to the Social Science Small Grants scheme. The Foundation's work in social science research capacity-building will be reviewed over the next 9 months. Trustees have decided to continue to run the Small Grants Scheme while it is being reviewed, but to make some changes to its scope during the wider review. They decided that this is preferable to closing the scheme altogether during the review.

The previous Small Grants Scheme had been running for over thirty years; for the past 12 it has been largely unchanged. Given our other programmes of work and our particular interests in certain subjects and in certain types of capacity, Trustees feel that it is no longer appropriate for the Foundation to run a scheme spanning such a wide range of social science research, from the edges of the humanities to the edges of the natural sciences and covering every conceivable topic. This is particularly the case given that other larger funders run similar schemes and that, with increasing numbers of applications to the Scheme, we are spending rather more resources than is proportionate in administering the scheme.

Instead, the Foundation will now concentrate its funds on work that falls more generally within its own broad areas of interest. The new Guidelines for the Social Science Grants Scheme explains clearly what we do and do not cover. We will treat substantive areas inclusively, and are not being rigidly prescriptive. We welcome applications within all of these themes but where we deem an application falls outside our substantive interests, we will respond as quickly as we can to let applicants know that their application is ineligible. The maximum grant we can make under the new scheme is £15,000.

Finally, a word about the longer term. The Foundation is likely to take a different and more strategic approach to fostering social science research capacity from 2011, to provide



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funding that will increase quantitative research skills and other research skills in other areas of long-term interest to the Foundation through some sort of centres competition. We expect to have reached a final decision and make a public announcement in the autumn of 2010. This means that we will keep the new Scheme of Small Grants in the Social Sciences open only until December 31, 2010 or until the budget allocated for this work runs out, whichever is first. We expect there will be sufficient money to fund work through the rest of this year, but do want to be clear that is unlikely that the scheme will continue beyond 2010.

In the meantime, the new forms are now available and we look forward to receiving strong applications.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Witherspoon".

Sharon Witherspoon MBE
Deputy Director