

John Rylands Research Institute and Library Scientific and Digital Project Grants

Application deadline: 5pm, Monday 15 April 2024

Applications should be e-mailed to: research.jrril@manchester.ac.uk

Overview

The John Rylands Research Institute and Library is home not only to world-leading collections, but also to a critical mass of curators, conservators and imaging staff with the expertise and equipment needed to support a range of new scientific, computational, and digital approaches to research into archival materials and printed books. It is at the forefront of developing new approaches to collections-based research, with particular strengths in multi-spectral imaging, spectroscopy and microscopy. Growing interdisciplinary scientific research on cultural heritage collections is a strategic priority for us, and we are keen to engage with colleagues across the Humanities and Science Faculties to collaborate on new and innovative forms of investigation such as proteomics.

The JRRIL's Scientific and Digital Grants are open to all academic staff at The University of Manchester wishing to engage in research into the Special Collections of The University of Manchester Library (which includes the collections of the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah RACE (Race Archives and Community Engagement) Centre) using innovative scientific, computational and digital methods. We welcome applications from both those with extensive experience and those new to the field. These projects must be conducted in preparation for a larger, externally funded grant bid to be held at The University of Manchester. Grants of up to £5,000 are available to cover activities directly linked to the type of research and grant preparation described above, including teaching buyout, the costs of hiring research assistants and technical assistance and support. Please note: **Applicants must discuss their application with their line manager and requests for teaching buyout must be agreed with the respective Head of Department in advance of making an application.** Please liaise with your local school research office to calculate costings related to buyout and research assistance.

Guidance on the eligibility of expenses and research assistance costs is available from the Institute office: research.jrril@manchester.ac.uk.

Possible activities might include (but are not limited to):

- Network or other data visualisations
- Digital microscopy
- Text and data mining
- GIS and mapping

- Literary and linguistic analysis
- Materials analysis using advanced imaging techniques such as multispectral imaging and spectroscopy
- Bespoke applications related to an individual's or group's research project

The grant will not cover:

- Attendance at external training events and conferences, except when this is the most cost-effective way to learn new skills and techniques which are central to the success or the project
- Projects whose primary focus is teaching and learning
- Projects whose primary focus is digitisation, though some limited digitisation may take place as part of the project
- Projects that do not use the Special Collections of The University of Manchester.

Eligibility:

- Academic researchers at The University of Manchester
- Team applications are possible, if all applicants meet the eligibility criteria

Guidance on the eligibility of expenses, and calculating costs for teaching buyout and research assistance is available from the Institute office: research.jrril@manchester.ac.uk.

Assessment criteria:

Applications will be ranked on merit against criteria based on the extent to which they:

- Demonstrate the potential for innovative and emerging methods to make a meaningful contribution to research using the UML Special Collections
- Improve the chances of securing external funding
- Increase the academic and/or non-academic impact of the individual / team's research
- Build new collaborations with or within The University of Manchester

Prior technical knowledge and expertise do not form part of the assessment criteria.

Application process

The completed application form should include:

- The names and affiliation of the application team with contact details for the lead applicant (who will serve as the grant holder, if successful).
- A short summary of the relevant experience of each person involved (approx. 500 words total).
- Details of the intended project to include: title, start and end dates, objectives, methodology, outputs.

- An outline of the sources from the UML Special Collections to be consulted/utilised.
- Future plans for the research project which must include grant capture.
- Brief up-to-date curriculum vitae and list of relevant publications for each applicant (max. 2 pages each).
- The technical requirements of the proposed project, in as much detail as possible (Note: Full technical specifications are not needed at this stage).
- Financial estimates of costs should be included, but will be subject to review and modification by the assessment panel.

Successful applicants will receive:

- A maximum of £5,000 will be awarded per application.
- Support from expert curators, conservators and imaging specialists.
- Support from the Institute grant writer.

What will the Institute expect from the applicant?

- A short blog post at the end of the project
- Contribution to a work in progress seminar series (dates tbc)
- All awarded funding must be spent before **31 July 2025** and claim forms must also be submitted to research.jrril@manchester.ac.uk by this date.
- All grant holders must submit an application for follow-on funding based on the research supported by the Scientific and Digital Grant to an external grant awarding body by an agreed date.

Pre-application advice is available from:

- JRRIL Scientific and Digital Lead, Stefan Hanß: stefan.hanss@manchester.ac.uk
- The Director of the JRRIL, Guyda Armstrong: guyda.armstrong@manchester.ac.uk

The significance and scope of The University of Manchester Special Collections is extensive. We advise applicants to consult the [Guide to Special Collections](#) and the searchable [A-Z](#) on the University of Manchester Library website for more information on our holdings.

Applicants are also encouraged to contact the relevant curators in advance of submission to discuss their research plans. A full list of Special Collections staff and their curatorial responsibilities can be found on the JRRIL website (<https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/rylands/about/our-people/library-staff/>).

Institute staff are also happy to be approached for advice (by contacting research.jrril@manchester.ac.uk).