



## Open Call Research Grants 2026-27

### Guidance for Applicants

**Please read this guidance in full before writing an application and make sure your proposal fits our eligibility criteria. If your application does not match our criteria, it will be rejected straight away.**

The Froebel Trust provides funding for research and practice development as well as specialist training, and information and support for continuing professional learning. By funding research, we aim to advance knowledge and understanding of Froebelian education and learning across diverse contemporary contexts.

#### The Froebel Trust Open Call Research Grants scheme

This scheme provides funding of **up to £50,000** for individual researchers or collaborative research partnerships to develop new knowledge and insights about Froebelian education that will support the development of practice and/or inform policymaking.

#### Our focus for 2026-7

The focus for applications this year (2026-7) is the principle '***relationships matter***' although applicants will be expected to demonstrate a broader understanding of a Froebelian approach and to make links with the other [Froebelian Principles](#)

#### Eligibility – who can apply

1. Researchers can work in any discipline, organisation or country, but applications must show how the proposed research will promote and advance Froebelian education and learning related to children from birth to eight years.
2. It is not necessary for applicants to have a master's or doctoral level qualification, but understanding of research, experience of project management, and the strength of the project design will be considered when applications are reviewed.
3. Although applicants do not need to be based in the UK, applications must be written in English and budgets must be presented in GBP.
4. Partnership projects are welcome. In such cases, a lead organisation must be identified for contractual reasons. We can only pay grants to organisations, not to individuals.
5. Applications must be for original research projects. The Open Call Research Grants Scheme does not fund building, resourcing or development projects or research that is unconnected to Early Years education or early learning.

## Budgets – how our funds can be used

1. Our Open Call Research Grants **can** cover:
  - Directly incurred personnel costs that are related exclusively to the project.
  - Up to 20% of the budget may be allocated for direct activity and production costs, such as venue hire, equipment and materials or project travel costs<sup>1</sup>
  - Project administration where this is not already covered by other funding
  - Publicity costs where these are necessary for the project's success
  - Disclosure and Barring Service checks - for applications in the UK and NI
  - VAT on fees where VAT cannot be reclaimed
2. Our Open Call Research Grants **cannot** cover:
  - Work that is not part of a research project (see eligibility above)
  - Full economic costs
  - More than 20% of the budget used for direct activity and production costs
  - Salary costs of staff who are not related to the project
  - Costs and fees associated with a qualification such as an MA, PhD, etc.
  - Building costs such as heating, rent, etc.
  - Expenses incurred in submitting an application
  - Costs arising prior to the start date of the project
  - Sick pay, maternity pay, or pay associated with other absences of project staff.  
Please see our guidance for grant holders page for further information.

## Key Dates

Applications portal opens	9am (UK time) Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Deadline for applications	4pm (UK time) Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2026
Applicants notified if shortlisted	By 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2026
Applicants notified of the outcome	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2026
Projects must begin	Between 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2026-31 <sup>st</sup> March 2027

## How to apply

Our online application portal opens on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026 at 9am (UK time). You must complete all sections of the application form. You can save your progress in the form and go back to it later. You will need to create a password to do this. Please make sure you remember your password. Your application must be counter signed by someone who is authorised to do so on behalf of your organisation.

We can only accept applications, which are made via this portal before the deadline of 4pm (UK time) on 22 May 2026. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

<sup>1</sup> In deciding whether to support fieldwork and travel within projects, the Trust will give serious consideration to the benefits to the project versus the environmental impact

## How applications are assessed

### 1. Eligibility check

We carry out an eligibility check and applications that fail to meet the following criteria will be rejected:

- a. All sections of the application form must have been completed and submitted via our online portal before the deadline.
- b. The lead applicant must work for the organisation that has counter-signed the application.
- c. The application must be written in English.
- d. The proposal must support The Froebel Trust's charitable objects.
- e. The application must propose original research.
- f. The application must adhere to the Trust's guidance on budgets.
- g. If the applicant / co-applicant is already in receipt of a Froebel Trust grant (from a previous year), there must be an assurance that the final report and financial statement for that project (from a previous year) will be submitted to the Trust prior to the date on which the new project would start.

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

### 2. Evaluation of applications

Applications that pass the eligibility check will be notified if their application has been sent to the Scrutiny Group, along with an invitation link to complete the Froebel Trust's Equalities Monitoring Survey, which is anonymous, voluntary and separate from the grant application.

Eligible applications will be evaluated by at least 2 members of the Trust's Scrutiny Group. They will evaluate:

- a. The originality and significance of the proposed research
- b. The potential for the project to support the Trust's charitable objectives
- c. The intended outcomes and impact, and who will/could benefit
- d. The strengths of the project design and dissemination plan
- e. Ethical considerations, risk management and project management. You can read our statement on '[Expectations of ethical practice in research](#)' on our [website](#). Please view

our short video '[Good practice in ethics and research](#)' which gives further information and guidance on ensuring ethical integrity in your research.

- f. The alignment of budgeted costs to project activities, and value for money
- g. The researcher's or team's capability to carry out the project successfully
- h. Equality, inclusion and diversity matters – of the design and the team
- i. Sustainability matters considered in the project. The Froebel Trust is committed to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an international commitment to end poverty and hunger and stop climate change. When preparing your project plan and budget, please consider the environmental impact. You can find out more about the SDGs on the UN website <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> Applicants should also consult their own organisation's policies in this respect.

### **3. Grants panel**

The scrutiny process leads to a shortlist of applications. The shortlist is derived from a combination of evaluative comments and scores for each application from the Scrutiny Group and will be reviewed by the Grants Panel.

Some applicants may be asked to provide further information to clarify aspects of their application; some may be invited to a short Zoom discussion for this purpose.

### **4. Outcome**

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the selection process by email on **10<sup>th</sup> July 2026**. Please bear this date in mind when adding email addresses to the application form.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

- We want to support projects that aim to benefit young children, directly or indirectly. We want learning from projects to benefit those involved and be shared with the wider community of early childhood education and care.
- The Trust's aim is to ensure that the funding and grants are distributed fairly. Both Trustees and the Froebel Trust team are committed to increasing the inclusiveness of our grant-making processes, with the aim of achieving greater diversity in our applicants (including the schools, Early Years settings and universities, which receive our funding). All applicants that meet our funding criteria will be sent a link to our **Equality Monitoring Survey**, which helps us to understand how well we are reaching different groups of people. Answers are anonymous, and participation is voluntary. You can read our statement on Equality, equity, diversity and inclusion on [our website](#).
- Successful applicants will be required to sign our Grant Offer, which includes specific Terms and Conditions of awards, **which are not negotiable**. A sample copy can be viewed on [our website](#).

- Charities are required to carry out due diligence checks on grant beneficiaries. We ask all our grant holders to supply a range of evidence to confirm your identity and details about your organisation to check your eligibility for funding. All information you share with us will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared. Until these careful checks have been completed successfully, we are unable to release any grant payments to you. You can find out more about this required process from the [Charity Commission](#).
- Anyone who receives an Open Call grant will be expected to provide regular progress reports and to meet online with the Director of Insights & Impact who will act as a critical friend. Projects longer than 18 months will also be asked to provide a written progress report in the middle of the project.
- A final report must be submitted by all Open Call grant holders within three months of the project's completion. We will provide guidance about preparing the final report, which will be peer reviewed before it is published on our website.
- Reports that contain images are often more attractive to readers. We can only publish images if appropriate consent has been collected from people whose images are shown (or their parents or carers if they are children).
- At the end of a project, a statement of expenditure will also be required. This must explain in detail how the grant was spent. We will supply a template to fill in.
- We often ask our grant recipients to get involved in our seminars, webinars and conferences. This is a way to share knowledge and understanding with others, especially key messages and learning from a project.
- The Froebel Trust must be acknowledged on any material or publicity that is produced for external presentation or publication in association with / resulting from an Open Call Research Grant. Please refer to our Photography and Film Images policy and Social Media and Communications policy (copies available on request).
- If you receive a grant from us, you might be invited to complete a questionnaire or take part in an interview as part of our self-evaluation activities. Participation is entirely voluntary.
- The decision of the Froebel Trust Council will be final. Every effort has been made to develop a thorough, fair and informed assessment process. The Trust reserves the right not to enter into any correspondence about the assessment process and/or any subsequent monitoring procedures.
- We are here to help. If you experience any problems with the online application portal or have any questions about eligibility please email us and we will respond as fast as we can.

Please write to [office@froebeltrust.org.uk](mailto:office@froebeltrust.org.uk) for the attention of **Mariana Macías Márquez**