SMaRteN funding call: answering students’ Key Questions

# Funding call details

SMaRteN are pleased to invite proposals for research projects to address students’ key questions about their mental health. Funding is available as part of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) ‘plus’ funding scheme for Mental Health Networks. Projects should focus on one or more of the following themes:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Theme |
| 1 | How should support services be designed and delivered within universities? |
| 2 | Mental Health Literacy across the institution |
| 3 | What are the causes of mental health problems for students? |
| 4 | How does academic culture, structure and assessment impact on student mental health? |
| 5 | Sense of belonging |
| 6 | Work and study life balance |

This funding should be used to complete pilot or preliminary work that will support larger, subsequent grant applications. We are looking for ambitious but realistic projects that can be completed within the time frame and budget. We will prioritise projects that foster an interdisciplinary collaboration. We particularly invite applications from researchers and organisations working in disciplines **outside** of psychology and psychiatry. We are prioritising research with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups and encourage researchers within these communities to apply for funding. Applications from Early Career Researchers are also welcome.

The total funding made available through this call is £135,000. As per UKRI guidelines, funding will cover up to 80% of Full Economic Cost (FEC). We expect to award funding for a combination of small projects (up to £8,000 at 80% FEC) and medium-sized projects (up to £25,000 at 80% FEC). Funding will be available for up to 12 months duration.

**Applicants should submit proposals by 17:00 on 14th April 2021.**

Projects must be completed by August 2022.

Successful applicants will be expected to present a summary of their findings and learning from the project at a SMaRteN workshop to be organised for the Autumn of 2022.

# Topic areas

During the 2019–20 academic year, SMaRteN ran a Priority Setting Exercise with students. Students were invited to submit key questions for future research into student mental health. These questions were reviewed by students and grouped into themes. This funding call invites researchers to initiate new research to address these questions. The details below set out further background to the topic areas raised by students. This exercise was carried out before the COVID-19 pandemic.

## How should support services be designed and delivered within universities?

Students want to know what the university’s responsibility should be for providing mental health support. Students are interested in how these services should be structured and how effective university support services are. Students are concerned about the availability and accessibility of services and interested in understanding the steps that can be taken to improve accessibility. Equally, they were interested in understanding their peers’ awareness of support and confidence in seeking help.

Psychologists have highlighted gaps in our understanding of the efficacy of university mental health services ([Barkham et al., 2019](#_ENREF_4)). Greater consistency and data harmonization are required to better evaluate the support services provided for students. However, Crook recently argued that concerns about student mental health are nothing new but extend back into the 1940s (Crook, 2020). Consideration of how services should be structured, requires insight from history, philosophy and sociology. For instance, we might ask what we can learn from the history of service provision for student mental health?

The Whole-University Approach, advocated by Universities UK and Student Minds, seeks to address any mismatch between supply and demand of services by reducing demand for services through implementation of a university-wide preventative approach ([G. Hughes & Spanner, 2019](#_ENREF_15)). While such an approach has been widely advocated, evaluation has been limited (Fernandez et al., 2016; Worsley et al., 2020). In-depth, qualitative research, including ethnographic fieldwork, can help identify the cultural and structural barriers to implementing policy and the potential risks for unintended consequences ([Dooris, Powell, & Farrier, 2019](#_ENREF_9)).

Consideration of the university’s responsibility for providing mental health support touches on the intersection between university and NHS services. This is an area of concern to those working in and accessing student mental health services. Perspectives from ethics and public policy may have real value in supporting progress here.

Students tended to ask about how institutional design influenced availability and accessibility, rather than whether personal factors might influence whether an individual seeks help. Are existing services accessible to all students? Do students perceive these services to be accessible?

## Mental Health Literacy across the institution

Mental health literacy is a complex concept and one that is challenging to measure ([Jorm, Korten, & Jacomb, 1997](#_ENREF_19)). Mental Health literacy can be defined simply as knowledge and beliefs about mental disorders and which aid their recognition, management or prevention. Student questions around this subject demonstrate a broad conceptualisation of the concept. Students highlight the importance of an academic faculty’s mental health literacy and want to understand how mental health literacy could be improved. They also believe that it is important for research to identify how they could look after their own mental health and that of their peers.

Do notions of mental health literacy successfully capture experiences of distress and treating distress, or do they enshrine epistemic injustice into university bureaucracy (Fricker, 2007)? The degree of acceptance, negotiation and ironic detachment towards literacy is unexplored.

Academics are under increasing pressure to support student mental health, and many find it challenging to do so ([G. Hughes, Panjwani, Tulcida, & Byrom, 2018](#_ENREF_14); [G. Hughes & Byrom, 2019](#_ENREF_16)).

There is evidence that students are likely to turn to friends for support ([Brill, 2015](#_ENREF_6); [Reavley, McCann, & Jorm, 2012](#_ENREF_24)). While first aid skills are a central part of mental health literacy, students often feel their responsibility extends beyond this ([Byrom, 2017](#_ENREF_7)). Addressing this, formal and structured peer-support programmes are growing in popularity within universities, for which there is some preliminary indication of acceptability. There is currently an evidence gap in this area, with little research evaluating or comparing different approaches to peer support ([John, Page, Martin, & Whittaker, 2018](#_ENREF_18)).

## What are the causes of mental health problems for students?

While many students asked general questions about the causes of mental health problems among their peers, there was particular interest in the role of:

Student finances: There is strong evidence of a relationship between financial stress and poor mental health among university students ([Andrews & Wilding, 2004](#_ENREF_2); [Cooke, Barkham, Audin, Bradley, & Davy, 2004](#_ENREF_8); [Richardson, Elliott, Roberts, & Jansen, 2017](#_ENREF_26); [Roberts, Golding, Towell, & Weinreb, 1999](#_ENREF_27)). However, we do not know what the relationship is between national policy changes around student financing and student mental health. Secondary data analysis of large national data sets may help inform our understanding. SMaRteN has developed guidance to support researchers to use national data sets for research into student mental health - <https://www.smarten.org.uk/review-of-national-surveys.html>

Living arrangements, including dual residency: housing quality is positively associated with psychological wellbeing ([Evans, Wells, & Moch, 2003](#_ENREF_10)), with individuals living in poor housing conditions more likely to experience mental health problems ([Pevalin, Taylor, & Todd, 2008](#_ENREF_23)). How do housing conditions relate to student mental health? How has this changed over the years? Has investment in student accommodation had a positive impact on student mental health? Has the deterioration or deregulation of the private rented sector had an impact? A sense of ‘home’ is a key factor in wellbeing, identity and sense of belonging for students ([Holton, 2017](#_ENREF_13)). How does dual residency impact students’ ability to cultivate this sense of ‘home’?

Social, cultural and institutional factors: There is a suggestion that the neoliberal university, by its very nature, is an unhealthy place to be. Characterised by individualism, competition and mistrust, universities promote values that are obstacles to maturation and the building of personal and collective resilience (Furedi, 2004). This is exacerbated by student mental health support services which encourage students to address cultural or structural problems by internalising techniques of the self that further fragment the student society and thus feed into the problems they purport to address (Cederstrom and Spicer, 2014). How do these factors play out in contemporary student life?

## How does academic culture, structure and assessment impact student mental health?

Students asked the following questions:

1. Can a method of academic assessment impact mental health? Can changes to assessment design can reduce negative impacts?
2. To what extent do challenging content and high workloads contribute to mental distress among students? What steps can be taken to help students manage this pressure?
3. Do university ‘extenuating circumstances processes’ (sometimes called mitigating circumstances processes) work effectively for students with mental health problems?

Students also asked more general questions about the structure of teaching, considering, for instance, how the change in teaching styles from secondary school to university might negatively impact mental health, what the relationship is between contact hours and student mental health and whether differences are observed in the impact of online vs. in-person teaching on student mental health.

There is some suggestion that practice assessment can reduce test anxiety in subsequent graded assessment ([Molin, Cabus, Haelermans, & Groot, 2019](#_ENREF_21)). Student workload is a major factor contributing to stress and can result in prolonged study times or drop-out ([Bowyer, 2012](#_ENREF_5); [Griffiths et al., 2015](#_ENREF_12)). Despite theoretical models existing for understanding workload in occupational settings and how it relates to stress, most notably the effort-reward imbalance model ([Van Vegchel, De Jonge, Bosma, & Schaufeli, 2005](#_ENREF_28)) and the job demands-resources model ([Bakker & Demerouti, 2007](#_ENREF_3)), theoretical models are only just starting to be applied to student workload (e.g., ([Williams, Dziurawiec, & Heritage, 2018](#_ENREF_30)) and are yet to be considered in parallel with the workload-planning models used by educators.

## Sense of belonging

Students identify sense of belonging as a potentially important factor contributing to their mental health. Students want to know:

1. Do all students feel a valued part of their community? Does the university culture engender a sense of belonging? How can this be improved?
2. How lonely are students in comparison to peers not in education? Why do students feel lonely? What can be done to reduce loneliness among students?
3. How do experiences of exclusion and discrimination impact student mental health? What steps can institutions take to increase inclusivity?

While there is a developing body of research focusing on loneliness in relation to student mental health ([Janta, Lugosi, & Brown, 2014](#_ENREF_17); [McIntyre, Worsley, Corcoran, Harrison Woods, & Bentall, 2018](#_ENREF_20); [Richardson, Elliott, & Roberts, 2017](#_ENREF_25); [Vasileiou et al., 2019](#_ENREF_29)), fundamental questions about the meaning and conceptualisation of belonging, loneliness and sociality remain (Bound Alberti 2019; McLennan and Ulijiaszek 2018; Eccles and Qualter 2020). There is an opportunity for conceptual work on the notion of belonging as well as historical, ethnographic or other empirical approaches investigating the lived experience of belonging.

Research on the experience of racial and ethnic minorities in higher education in the UK has concentrated on the attainment gap ([Mountford-Zimdars, Sanders, Jones, Sabri, & Moore, 2015](#_ENREF_22)). Further work is urgently needed to understand sense of belonging and loneliness among minority groups in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

International students may face specific additional challenges. However, a recent review of research considering the mental wellbeing of international students identified only two UK-based studies, both with small sample sizes ([Alharbi & Smith, 2018](#_ENREF_1)).

## Work – Life Balance

Students asked questions about the challenge of maintaining a work-life balance, questioned whether this contributes to poor mental health and asked what steps could help students achieve better balance. Student challenges with balance are likely to vary; for instance, caring responsibilities are a common feature of mature student life and such responsibility can act as a barrier to study completion (Forgotten Learners: Building a system that works for mature students (["Forgotten Learners: building a system that works for mature students," 2018](#_ENREF_11)). The challenge of finding balance between work and social life at university has not yet been the focus of research into student mental health.

# Funding priorities

## Pilot and preliminary work

We are seeking to support early work that will lead to *subsequent* robust research projects that can attract further funding. In your application you should make clear why the proposed work is needed now and how you might build on this work beyond the lifespan of the funding. We are interested in hearing about your planned next steps and the support you may benefit from to realise these.

## Understanding the experience of minority groups

Throughout the key questions project, questions about the experience of minority groups arose. The student population is diverse, and research understanding student mental health needs to capture that diversity. In particular, there are substantive research gaps around the mental health experiences of BAME groups. We seek to encourage applications that focus on understanding the mental health of students from minority groups. Where research takes a universal perspective on student mental health, you should explain how you will ensure that the full diversity of student experience is represented in your study. Where projects focus on engaging students from minority groups, consideration must be given to the recruitment challenges.

## Understanding the longer-term impact of COVID

It is now clear that COVID-19 will have a far-reaching impact on our lives and is likely to change the Higher Education landscape for many years to come. For instance, following an emergency shift to online learning, many universities may consider a more blended approach to education in the future. Working online has created a need for interventions to help students feel engaged with the university, to make friends and to socialise. There may be opportunities to understand and improve institutional approaches to fostering a sense of belonging for students. This funding call should NOT be used to understand the immediate impacts of COVID 19. However, we encourage applications that consider the longer-term impacts of COVID 19 and how we might support student mental health as part of a ‘new normal’.

## Student co-created research

Research that is co-created with students is likely to have more relevance to students, to better capture their perspectives and speak to their concerns. Co-creation, done properly, can be challenging and time consuming. It is important for such work to identify the areas of expertise of all participants in the team and to recognise where these participants add value to the project. Co-created projects should engage students from the outset and ensure they are involved throughout. Students may require specific training to contribute meaningfully and to feel they can add value to the project. Your proposal should explain how students are involved throughout the project and how you will support that involvement.

## Applications led by researchers from minority groups

We are keen to support applications led by researchers from minority groups. This is a priority, in parallel to understanding the experience of students from minority groups. We recognise that lived experience and cultural knowledge are assets for developing powerful research.

## Applications led by early-career researchers

Across all of SMaRteN’s activities we are keen to support and encourage Early-Career Researchers (ECRs). As an ECR, you may access further support in developing your proposal through SMaRteN’s ECR group. This is a group that meets weekly to discuss research related to student mental health. Please see [www.smarten.org.uk/lab-group](http://www.smarten.org.uk/lab-group). If you consider yourself to be an ECR, your application should explain how and why you define yourself as such. We encourage ECRs to involve more senior or experienced researchers as part of their team and to consider how these individuals may provide mentoring and support throughout the project. If your team includes, but is not led by, an ECR, your application should explain how the ECR will be involved in the project and supported to develop their own skills and expertise.

Please note, funding cannot be used to pay for PhD student projects. PhD students may be involved as part of the team (and paid for their time) if this does not exceed two hours a week.

## Applications led by researchers working beyond psychology, psychiatry and Neuroscience

Each of the six research themes raises complex questions that require an interdisciplinary approach. While individuals working in psychology, psychiatry and related subject areas may submit applications, we will be prioritising applications led by and involving researchers bringing expertise from beyond these disciplines. We encourage applications that consider social and cultural context, including how cultural and social context may impact on research methodologies and clinical interventions. The research themes are unlikely to satisfactorily addressed by a single research methodology. If your team is interdisciplinary, please outline in your application how you will work together and integrate expertise from different disciplines.

# Eligibility and costs

Applications must be from individuals working within a UK Higher Education Institution (HEI). Other organisations can be included as co-applicants or collaborators within an HEI-led application.

Awards will not be made retrospectively; this means that the work for which support is requested must not have commenced before the award is announced.

## What costs will grants cover?

Funding will be allocated in line with UKRI guidance. Proposals need to show 100% of the Full Economic Cost (FEC) of the proposed research. In line with UKRI funding policies, funding will be provided to meet 80% of the FEC on successful proposals.

**Small projects**

Projects may cost up to £10,000 FEC. We will contribute up to £8,000, meeting 80% of the FEC.

**Medium sized project.**

Projects may cost up to £31,250 at FEC. We will contribute up to £25,000, meeting 80% of the FEC.

For full details on eligible costs, please see ESRC guidance: <https://esrc.ukri.org/files/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/>

Funding may be sought to cover the direct expenses incurred in planning, conducting and developing the research, including:

* Project planning and development costs.
* Research expenses, including participant reimbursement, transcription.
* Consumables, including the purchase of datasets, photocopies, microfilms and any other minor items that will be used up during the course of the project.
* Short-term consultancy or salary costs for expert staff, or short periods of research assistance.
* Travel and subsistence.
* Investigators’ time: the costs of principal investigator (PI) and co-investigators (Co-Is) working directly on the project. Investigator time, not cost, must be justified in the application.
* Administrative costs (including estates and indirect costs) may be included in the application.
* Estates
  + This may include building and premises costs, basic services and utilities and any clerical staff and equipment maintenance or operational costs that have not been included under other cost headings. They will be calculated by the Research Organisation (RO), and a single figure will be required at the time of application.
* Indirect costs
  + Indirect costs will be calculated by the RO according to the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) and should be declared as a single figure on the proposal form, with no need for information about, or justification of, its derivation.

The following items are not currently eligible for funding:

* Computer hardware including laptops, electronic notebooks, digital cameras, etc;
* Books and other permanent resources;
* Publication costs – UKRI provides the following guidance: article processing charges (APCs) and other publication charges relating to peer-reviewed research articles and conference proceedings cannot be included in research grant proposals. The payment of APCs and other publication charges related to UKRI-funded research are supported through UKRI open access block grants which are provided to eligible research organisations. For further information see the open access information: https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/open-access/open-access-policy/
* Conference costs.

In previous funding rounds we have seen some universities contribute to the project costs, for instance covering some of the PI’s time on the project or the overhead costs. If your university is contributing to the costs of the project, beyond making up the difference between FEC and the contribution we provide (80% of FEC), please explain this in your application. Your application should further include a letter of support from your institution, confirming their financial contribution to the project.

# How to apply

Your application must be completed online via our Qualtrics form. This can be accessed here:

<https://kcliop.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ebruucWYE0UqLY1>

It is not easy to save your form while in progress. We thus recommend that you complete your form in word before copying and pasting your answers into the online form. We appreciate that this makes it a little more complicated to complete your application. We are using the online form because it makes collation of details about applications and management of the review process much simpler.

Please download a word version of the application form from the SMaRteN [website](https://www.smarten.org.uk/funding.html).

Please note that, once you have submitted your application form, you must also send an institutional letter of support to our network coordinator at [smarten@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:smarten@kcl.ac.uk)

# Assessment

Proposals submitted to this call will be initially assessed for eligibility. Proposals will then be reviewed by a panel made up of members of the SMaRteN leadership team and student team, in the final weeks of April. Following a panel meeting, funding decisions will be communicated to applicants in May.

## Assessment criteria

The shortlisting panel members will assess proposals against the following criteria:

### Does the proposed project address one of our Key Questions?

Your application should specify a Key Question that you will be addressing through your project. Please explain clearly in your proposal how your project will address the Key Question. We will be considering proposed projects from the perspective of student priorities for future research. Please explain how your proposal aligns with the student priorities outlined in section 1.1 of this application pack.

### Research excellence: Are the research question(s) important, novel and likely to lead to significant new understanding?

You should address what is novel about your project. Your application should outline the new understanding that the project will facilitate and the process by which this will be realised.

### Transparency and reproducibility

Have you considered how to maximise transparency and reproducibility for your project? This may include, where relevant, publishing your data or research materials to be openly accessible, i.e., via FigShare. Guidance on transparency and reproducibility is available from the [UK Reproducibility network](https://www.ukrn.org/).

### Ambitious and realistic

Is your project ambitious? Is the project realistic? You should explain why funding is needed now to help you take your proposed plans forward. Your application should make clear how you will complete the proposed work within the project time frame. Please consider carefully whether you have adequate staff capacity and time to complete the project. Your application should explain clearly how you have arrived at the conclusion that the proposed work is feasible, given the time and funding constraints.

### Conscious of COVID

Your application must clearly state the impact that a continuation of the pandemic may have on the proposed work and how this would be mitigated. For instance, if you propose to interview students, please consider whether this can be conducted online rather than face to face and the implications for the project of working online. You should explain how you will work with collaborators. Equally, the findings of your project should be relevant to a post-COVID, less socially distanced, context.

### Future potential

Will your proposed work lead to further research in this area and to a subsequent grant application? Please explain clearly what you envisage as the next steps for this line of research. You should outline clearly why funding is needed now and how our funding will help you to secure a subsequent larger grant to further grow and develop research in your chose area of interest. We will consider whether your plan for further developing the research programme is clear and viable.

Within your application, you should outline key milestones that will demonstrate that you are on track, working forwards securing future funding. You should outline where you will secure this support and detail any support you believe you require to secure future funding . For all projects we fund, SMaRteN is keen to explore how we can support you to develop your work beyond our financial contribution.

### The right researcher for this project

Do you and, if relevant, your fellow applicants, have the expertise, skills and experience to complete this project successfully? Please explain this carefully within the grant application. Will the funding make a tangible difference to your research trajectory? Within your proposal, you should outline how this project fits with and builds upon your current research. How will this funding support your career development?

Please consider whether you have the support and collaborations in place to help you complete your project. Please consider including Co-Is who can provide skills support or mentoring to help you complete the project. Your application should explain the support and collaborations you have in place, why these are needed to support the project and how these relationships will work through the project.

### Institutional support

Is there adequate institutional support for this project? Your application should consider the institutional support available. Your application should be accompanied by a letter of support from your institution (usually a head of department) confirming that they support your proposal

### Understanding the experience of minority groups.

Please take care to explain how your proposed work will enhance our understanding of the experience of minority groups. If your project takes a universal perspective, you should explain the steps that you are taking to ensure that the full diversity of student experience is represented in your study.

### Understanding the longer-term impact of COVID-19

We will consider whether your proposed project will help us to understand the longer-term impacts of COVID-19 and how student mental health might be supported as part of a ‘new normal’.

### Student involvement.

Your application should explain how students have been involved in the development of the research proposal. You should explain how students will be involved in the delivery of the project. This usually takes considerable care and attention. Please consider what expertise students will bring to your project and how you will make maximal use of their expertise through the project. You should consider whether you need to provide training for students and if so, how this will be delivered. In what ways will students benefit from their involvement with your project?

For further guidance on student co-production, please see: <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/co-productionguide.html>

### Led by or involving researchers from minority groups, early-career researchers and researchers working beyond psychology and psychiatry.

If researchers meeting these criteria are involved as part of the team, rather than leading the proposal, please ensure you clearly explain the expertise they bring to the team and how they will be involved in the project. These researchers should have a meaningful contribution to the project development.

### Success criteria

Your application needs to clearly explain what success will look like. We want to see clear criteria for assessing the success of the project. These should be clearly articulated. How will you know whether the project has been successful?

Has your application clearly explained how your success criteria will be achieved?

Please consider how your project will add value to the student mental health research field? Will your project bring about developments in student mental health outside of the research space?

### Project beneficiaries

Who will benefit from this project? Please outline project beneficiaries and consider how benefits will be realised. How will you communicate your research findings? Will your research have implications for policy and/or practice across universities? If so, please consider how this might be realised and outline any support you would need to achieve this.

### Value for money

Your application must justify the funding requested. This should be done carefully and precisely, considering why funding is necessary. For instance, if funding is sought for 20% of the PI’s time, your application should explain why this is necessary and sufficient to complete the project.

We will consider whether the funds requested are essential for the work and justified by the importance and potential of the research. Does the proposal demonstrate value for money in terms of the resources requested?

### Ethical considerations

Please identify ethical and/or research governance issues that you think the project may need to navigate. You should outline your plans to address these issues. Where you are collecting personal data, please outline your plans for storing, and, if appropriate, sharing data in accordance with GDPR? We will consider whether there are ethical and/or research governance issues.

# **Award conditions**

Successful applicants will be expected to:

* Attend various meetings planned by SMaRteN through the duration of the award.
* Work with SMaRteN to communicate their research plans, process and findings to students.
* Present a summary of their findings at a network workshop in Autumn 2022.
* Liaise with UKRI and the SMaRteN Network Coordinator as appropriate.

# Support for application development

We are organising the following options to help you to develop a strong proposal:

## Pre-recorded webinar to provide an overview to the call and answer any questions.

Download from [www.smarten.org.uk/funding](http://www.smarten.org.uk/funding)

## Early feedback on a preliminary application

You may wish to submit a preliminary application to seek early feedback on your planned proposal. You can complete this online: <https://kcliop.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cNHmvyUq67e8YEl>

These will be reviewed regularly, and we aim to provide feedback within two weeks of your outline being submitted.

The latest date to submit a preliminary application is 26th February 2021.

## Virtual sandpit sessions

We will be coordinating virtual sandpit sessions. These sessions will provide an opportunity for researchers to come together to discuss their research plans and to connect with potential collaborators. To attend a virtual sandpit session, you MUST have submitted a preliminary application. At the sandpit session, you will be asked to share a summary of your proposed project.

**How should support services be designed and delivered within universities? [10 – 11:15, 1st February]**

### Mental Health literacy across the institution [11:00 – 12:15, 2nd February]

### What are the causes of mental health problems for students? [9:30 – 10:45, 4th February]

### How does academic culture, structure and assessment impact on student mental health? [11:00 – 12:15, 4th February]

### Sense of belonging [9:30 – 10:45, 5th February]

### Balance [11:00 – 12:15, 5th February]

## Other questions

We will include all queries and answers within a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. This will be updated every few days and added to the SMaRteN website for applicants to view. Queries will be added to the document anonymously, however please do keep in mind that you might be identifiable if your query is specific to your individual research. Please check the FAQ document prior to submitting a query – queries already addressed in the FAQ will not be answered.

Please see our [FAQ page](https://www.smarten.org.uk/funding-faqs.html).

## Further support for Early-Career Researchers

If you are an ECR, you may wish to join our weekly lab group. We meet online at 11am on a Wednesday to talk about research related to student mental health. We hope this group provides an opportunity to connect you with like-minded researchers and build your knowledge and understanding. For more information please see [here](https://www.smarten.org.uk/groups.html)

## Key Questions Conference

On 16th and 17th December, we will hold an online conference featuring panel discussions relating to many of the Key Questions themes. Attending the conference is not a pre-requisite to being eligible for funding. However, applicants may find the discussions informative. Book your place  [here](https://www.smarten.org.uk/events.html)

# Timetable

* Last date to submit preliminary application (optional) – 26th February 2021
* Call closes – 14th April 2021
* Panel shortlisting meeting – June 2021
* Applicant outcomes communicated – July 2021
* Projects must start by – August 2021
* Projects must be completed by August 2022
* Presentation of findings and learning from project – Autumn 2022

# Contacts

If you have any queries regarding this call, please email [Laura.Beswick@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:Laura.Beswick@kcl.ac.uk).

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