

Beltane Public Engagement Fellowships Call for Applications

Deadline 9am, Monday 21st October 2013

Interview date: Thursday 7th or Friday 8th November 2013

Background

The Beltane Public Engagement Network (Beltane) is a network for people interested in making academic research accessible to a wide variety of audiences. We are supported by four Edinburgh universities: the University of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh Napier University and Queen Margaret University.

The Beltane follows on from, and builds on, the work of the Edinburgh Beltane Beacon for Public Engagement project. This project was one of six UK Beacons for Public Engagement funded by Research Councils UK, the Funding Councils and the Wellcome Trust. The Beltane Network will continue the original Beltane project's aim of embedding a culture of public engagement in universities.

Fifteen Beltane Public Engagement Fellows and two honorary Beltane Fellows were appointed during the Edinburgh Beltane Beacon for Public Engagement project. A further six Fellows were appointed in 2012/13, including two Parliament Fellowships.

- [Beltane Fellowships undertaken between 2008 and 2013](#)

The Fellowships were integral to the Edinburgh Beltane project from the outset and were its flagship funding scheme. The Fellowship scheme will continue to run in its current form until the end of the 2013/14 academic year.

Purpose, scope and themes

Beltane Fellowships are for academic and research staff at the four Beltane partner institutions (The University of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh Napier University and Queen Margaret University). The Fellowships buy out staff time to allow academics and researchers to participate in the development of public engagement activities and events.

The Fellowship is part-time and equates to one day a week for up to six months, although there is flexibility. During the Fellowship, the Fellow has the status of being seconded to Beltane and is required to spend a combined total of more than 50% of their time working out of Beltane's office and/or with non-academic organisations involved with the project.

If you work at the **College of Science and Engineering** at the **University of Edinburgh** you are strongly encouraged to submit a proposal which will meet the College's 2013-14 and 2014-15 Public Engagement Strategic Priorities:

- **Energy and sustainability** - Possible features: renewables, CCS, synthetic biology/bioenergy, climate change.
- **Human Health** - Possible features: medical informatics, epigenetics, ageing, drug design, synthetic biology, biomechanics/bioelectronics, nanotechnology & health

For other applicants it is not essential, but it is desirable that you are able to show that your engagement activity is relevant to one of the six European Commission's Horizon 2020 (<http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/>) themes in a Scottish context. The themes are:

- **Health, demographic change and wellbeing**
- **Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research, and the bio-economy**
- **Secure, clean and efficient energy**
- **Smart, green and integrated transport**
- **Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials**
- **Inclusive, innovative and secure societies**

In addition the Beltane has a close partnership with Scotland's Futures Forum (<http://www.scotlandfutureforum.org/>) based at the Scottish Parliament and there is an opportunity for the Fellowship to be hosted by SFF if the topic chosen is relevant to Scottish Parliament future business.

Other timely themes include:

- **XX Commonwealth Games, Glasgow 2014; Homecoming Scotland 2014 and Scotland's Referendum**

All Fellowship applications must show how the proposed work is relevant in the Scottish context.

Eligibility and funding

To be eligible for a Beltane Fellowship, you must be a member of academic or research staff at one of the four universities which currently support Beltane (University of Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh Napier University and Queen Margaret University); support staff are not eligible to apply. You must be employed at grade 6 level or above. If you are employed on a fixed-term contract, your termination date must be beyond December 2014 and the secondment must not conflict with the terms of your contract.

Funding is capped at £8,000 per Fellowship and will fund either buy-out or the cost of replacement teaching. For staff employed on higher salaries (e.g. professors), it is likely that only replacement costs can be covered. Beltane funding can only be used to cover salaries and “on-costs” (e.g. National Insurance); we do not fund estates or indirect costs.

Applicants must provide written support from their supervisor, line manager, Head of School or other equivalent as part of their initial application.

Applicants **must** be provisionally available to attend for interview on both of the dates specified in this document – your interview will be on one of these two dates. The interview time and date will be confirmed in the week beginning 21st October 2013.

Application process

The application process consists of a short form and an interview. Key dates are:

- **Deadline for form submission:** 9am, Monday 21st October 2013
- **Interview for shortlisted candidates:** Thursday 7th or Friday 8th November 2013
- **Deadline for notification of interview outcomes:** Early December 2013
- **Fellowship start date:** 1st January 2014
- **Latest date for Fellowship completion:** 30th June 2014

Expected outcomes

Examples of suitable activities for consideration would include but are not limited to:

- Developing and managing a cross-discipline or cross-institution public event in an area relevant to public policy.
- Working closely with government, charitable or public-interest agencies to foster links between academia, policy makers and the public.
- Developing training programmes for staff development in the skills required for good public engagement. This could include transferring existing models of best practice in training to or from the Fellow's own institution.
- Working with media partners to develop materials (print, film or podcast) for a media campaign about research in an area relevant to public policy.
- Investigating the use of novel media (such as virtual worlds) for public engagement activities.

We hope to see qualitative evaluation by the Fellow of their experience and activities. We also hope that Fellows will share their learning with the members of the Beltane and beyond; this could be achieved through the maintenance of a reflective blog, or by publishing a detailed case study.

On completion of the Fellowship, the Fellow is expected to act as a key contact and ambassador for public engagement within their institution. The Fellow is also required to disseminate the outcomes of the Fellowship to colleagues at their employing institution.

Appointment criteria

Factors which will be taken into account when choosing candidates for appointment are:

- Timeliness.
- How relevant the applicant's research is to the call theme (where applicable).
- Whether the Fellowship will include cross-disciplinary or cross-institution activities.
- Whether the Fellowship will be supported by contributions in-kind, such as hosting at a non-academic organisation.
- Whether the Fellowship has the support and involvement of non-academic partners.
- Whether there are plans for evaluation and dissemination strategies.
- Whether the proposed work has the potential to leverage further funding.
- Whether the proposed work has potential to feed into public policymaking process.
- Whether the applicant has plans for post-Fellowship propagation of engagement activities in their home institution.

Previous experience in public engagement activities will not necessarily be an advantage and we would encourage staff new to this area to apply.

Questions and advice

We encourage anyone considering an application for a Beltane Fellowship to contact us before submitting their form. Beltane staff will be able to offer informal advice and answer any specific questions you may have.

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