



Nottingham Trent
University

NTU P-ACE



NTU P-ACE Flexible Fund: Guidance for applicants

Submission deadline: **Monday 11 January 2027**

The NTU Policing Academic Centre of Excellence (NTU P-ACE) brings researchers and policing together to address evidence needs and help research inform practice.

Through its Flexible Fund, NTU P-ACE supports NTU staff to develop research with policing partners and share knowledge that can benefit policing and communities. We invite applications for co-produced research projects.

An online briefing seminar will be held in November 2026 and recorded; we will publish the date shortly.

For more information about the P-ACEs see our [website](#).

For questions about the Flexible Fund, email PACE@ntu.ac.uk.

Indicative Timeline:

- 19 October 2026: Call opens.
- 11 January 2027: Deadline for applications, including the budget table and partner expression-of-interest email.
- On or around 1 February 2027: Preferred projects notified; pre-award preparations begin.
- By 21st Feb 2027: Preferred applicants submit required ethics application.
- By 31 March 2027: Finalise the agreed budget and project plan, and progress partner letters, contracts and staffing arrangements.
- From 1 April 2027: Project start date.
- 31 March 2028: Latest project end date.
- July to September 2028: Presentation at final NTU P-ACE project event

What we are looking for:

The NTU P-ACE is one of only [nine funded P-ACEs](#) launched by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) in partnership with UK Research & Innovation (UKRI). NTU P-ACE aims to strengthen connections between academic researchers and policing.

We welcome applications from colleagues across all NTU Schools and disciplines, including those who have not worked with policing before. **If you have a project idea but do not yet have a policing contact, please get in touch with the relevant theme lead listed below as early as possible. NTU P-ACE can help you connect with police forces and develop the idea with them.** We have several existing partners who have signed a letter of support for NTU P-ACE and may be interested in partnering you. A full list is available on the NTU- PACE [summary slides](#). Note you are not restricted to working with these organisations, but our pre-existing relationships may be helpful.

The Flexible Fund supports NTU-led work that responds to a clear policing need and involves an external non-academic partner connected to that need. Partners should help shape the work and have a meaningful role in delivering it or using its outputs.

We welcome both co-produced research that addresses questions raised by policing and activities that help policing and communities use existing research. Projects should make their findings and outputs accessible and useful, for example through events, guidance, tools or other resources suited to their intended users.

Project Alignment

Projects must demonstrate a clear fit with at least one of the following NTU P-ACE themes. Applicants can bring expertise from any NTU School or discipline.

NTU P-ACE Themes

- Crime prevention: Professor Andy Newton, andy.newton@ntu.ac.uk
- Public trust and transparency: Professor Loretta Trickett, loretta.trickett@ntu.ac.uk
- Future climate and sustainability: Professor Rowena Hill, rowena.hill@ntu.ac.uk
- Identification and tracing: Dr Rachel Bolton-King, rachel.bolton-king@ntu.ac.uk
- Surveillance and sensing: Dr Rachel Bolton-King, rachel.bolton-king@ntu.ac.uk

Further information about the themes is available on the [NTU P-ACE website](#)

National policing research needs

Projects should also explain their relevance to Policing's Areas of Research Interest, which set out research challenges identified with policing. [The NPCC Policing Problem Book](#) provides further context on challenges facing policing.

Applicants can briefly explain the policing need and its fit with the NTU P-ACE theme and national research interests in the application forms 100-word alignment response.

Who can apply

Applications may be led by a colleague from any NTU School who has a current contract of employment covering the proposed project period. Each application must name an NTU project lead and be **a member of the NTU P-ACE network**. Apply at PACE@ntu.ac.uk

The project lead must obtain approval from their Line Manager before applying, confirming that the proposed commitment is compatible with their existing workload. Each proposal must name at least one external non-academic partner with a clear connection to the policing need being addressed. You may also include academics from other Universities.

Attach an email from a named partner confirming their interest in participating. A formal letter of support is not required at application stage; preferred projects will be asked to obtain one before the award is finalised.

Eligible costs:

Applicants may request support under one or more of the categories below, according to their project's needs.

You are not expected to request funding under every heading.

All requests should be proportionate to the proposed work and explained in the resource justification section of the application.

Grade G Research Fellow support.

Applicants may normally request 0.2–0.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) Research Fellow (**Grade G**) support for up to 12 months, approximately **one to two days** per week.

This will be allocated from two existing P-ACE research fellows who will be employed full time from 1st April 2027 to 31st March 2028.

Please request the level of input your project needs and indicate the main skills required. We are recruiting two fellows, one to support social sciences and social policy related research, and one to support science and technology. We will seek mixed methods skills, but it is likely one will be stronger in qualitative research/people/partnerships; and the second in quantitative analysis and data science.

Uni-Temps Research Assistant support.

Applicants may normally request 100–250 hours of Research Assistant support (**Grade G**). Requests of up to 300 hours may be considered exceptionally where clearly justified. Please describe the work the assistant would undertake and the skills required. This is intended to support specialist skills that the P-ACE Research Fellow cannot provide.

External partner input.

Applicants may normally request £2,500–£7,500 for identifiable external partner staff time or other input directly attributable to the project. Requests of up to £10,000 may be considered exceptionally where clearly justified. Explain the partner's contribution and how the amount requested has been calculated.

We will consider external costs for academics where strong justification is provided but generally, we would expect these to be in kind.

Equipment.

Applicants may normally request £5,000–£7,500 for equipment needed to deliver the project. Requests of up to £10,000 may be considered exceptionally where the equipment is essential and the cost is clearly justified.

Community participation support.

Applicants may normally request £1,000–£4,000 to enable meaningful community participation in the project. Requests of up to £5,000 may be considered exceptionally where clearly justified. Any use of vouchers (e.g. Love2Shop) or childcare vouchers must comply with NTU policy.

Travel and subsistence.

Applicants may normally request £500–£1,000 where travel or subsistence is necessary for project delivery. Requests of up to £1,500 may be considered exceptionally where clearly justified.

Events and engagement.

Applicants may normally request £500–£1,000 for workshops, stakeholder engagement or other project-related events. Requests of up to £1,500 may be considered exceptionally where clearly justified.

Marketing and dissemination.

Applicants may normally request £500–£1,000 to help project outputs reach their intended users, including accessible materials and other knowledge sharing activities. Requests of up to £1,500 may be considered exceptionally where clearly justified.

Other

If you need a direct project cost that does not fit these categories, enter it under Other in the budget table and explain it in the resource justification. Such requests will be considered individually.

Final Budget Allocation

Final allocations may be adjusted across the successful projects following the in-principal funding decisions. Any proposed adjustment will be discussed with the applicant to ensure the project remains deliverable.

Ineligible Costs

Funding is not available to replace the time of existing NTU staff; contributions from project leads and co-leads will be treated as in-kind support from your existing non-teaching workload model.

Application Process and Timelines:

The call opens on **19 October 2026**.

Completed applications must be emailed to PACE@ntu.ac.uk by **Monday 11 January 2027**.

Please submit the application form, including its budget table, and an email from at least one named external partner expressing interest in participating. A formal letter of support is not required at this stage. Before submitting, applicants should consult their school research support team to check the proposal and its costs. Staff should also obtain line manager approval, as set out under eligibility. We expect to identify preferred projects on or around **1 February 2027**.

Preferred applicants will then work **with NTU P-ACE and relevant support teams to complete any required ethics, data management and partner arrangements** before the activities that depend on them begin.

Projects may start from **1 April 2027**, must finish by 31 March 2028, and may run for up to 12 months. For questions about the call or help developing a connection with a policing partner, contact PACE@ntu.ac.uk as early as possible.

How proposals will be assessed and decisions made

Applications will first be checked against the call requirements. Proposals must address a clear policing need, align with at least one NTU P-ACE area of focus, and involve an external non-academic partner with a meaningful connection to the policing challenge. Applicants should also explain how their project relates to Policing's Areas of Research Interest.

Applications meeting these requirements will be assessed against four criteria:

- **Quality and rigour:** The academic basis and credibility of the proposed research proposal.
- **Feasibility:** The delivery plan, relevant skills of the team, partner involvement and management of key risks.
- **Outputs and benefits:** Whether the proposed outputs will reach users beyond academic audiences and what benefits could realistically follow for policing and communities.
- **Value for money:** Whether the resources requested are proportionate to the proposed work and clearly justified.

Applications will receive individual reviews before a panel meets to discuss the assessments and make funding recommendations.

The panel will include members of the NTU P-ACE Management and Directors Team, experienced academic staff at NTU, and representatives from policing and community organisations. It will consider the assessment scores, available resources and the balance of projects across the NTU P-ACE areas of focus.

NTU P-ACE may decide not to fund a proposal where significant ethical or responsible research concerns cannot be adequately addressed.

We expect to notify applicants of the preferred projects on or around 1 February 2027. These are in-principal decisions: final awards may involve agreed changes to activities or resources and will be conditional on acceptance of the award terms and conditions and completion of the relevant pre-award requirements.

Important Information: The Pre Award Period (1st Feb 2027 to 31st March 2027)

We expect to notify applicants of the P-ACE preferred projects on or around 1 February 2027.

During this period, and before projects can start, **applicants will work with NTU P-ACE, their School and the relevant University teams to complete the following steps:**

1. Prepare for ethics review. Confirm the appropriate ethical review route and **submit any required application to the relevant panel by 21st Feb 2027** at the latest.

This should include data arrangements. Prepare a data management plan covering access, secure storage, handling, retention and appropriate sharing of project data. Put any necessary data access or sharing agreements in place before receiving or using partner data.

Address responsible research, inclusion and IP. Review the ethical, social and practical risks identified in the application, including potential harms and how participants and communities will be included. Agree any arrangements needed for existing or anticipated intellectual property before the relevant work begins.

2. Confirm partner commitments. Obtain formal letters of support setting out each partner's role and their financial or in-kind contribution. Letters must state the amount of any match funding explicitly. Agree any contracts or collaboration arrangements needed for the work.
3. Confirm the project and resources. Agree any adjustments to the proposed activities, timetable, staffing or budget following the funding decision. The agreed resources must remain sufficient to deliver the project.
4. Arrange staffing, payments and purchases. Work with the relevant NTU teams on Research Fellow recruitment or UniTemps support, where awarded. Set up any external partner who will receive payment on NTU's finance system and plan any equipment purchases in line with University processes.
5. Confirm readiness to start. Finalise the project timetable, including milestones and dependencies, and accept the award terms and conditions. Projects may start from 1 April 2027 with activities for which the necessary arrangements are in place. Activities requiring ethical approval, data access or a signed agreement must wait until the relevant requirement has been completed.

Terms and conditions of funding:

By accepting an award, the project lead (Principal Investigator) agrees to the following conditions. The award letter will confirm the approved activities, budget, project period and any project-specific conditions.

- **Project information and publicity.** NTU P-ACE may publish a non-confidential summary of the project on its website and, where appropriate, submit details to the College of Policing research projects map. Non-confidential summaries may also be shared with other award holders. Any sensitive information will be discussed with the project lead before publication. Full applications will not be shared with other award holders without the applicant's agreement.
- **Monitoring and reporting.** The project lead will work with NTU P-ACE to monitor progress, report on expenditure, record outputs and outcomes, and identify emerging benefits or lessons. The reporting requirements are set out in the section below. NTU P-ACE may request reasonable additional information where needed to monitor the award.
- **Acknowledgement and sharing outputs.** Publications, materials and other outputs arising from the project must acknowledge NTU P-ACE support. Findings and outputs should be made accessible to their intended users and, where appropriate, openly available in line with NTU policies. Sharing must also respect confidentiality, data protection, intellectual property and any agreed partner restrictions.
- **Responsible delivery.** The project must follow applicable NTU requirements for ethics, research integrity and data management. Activities requiring ethical approval, access to data or a signed agreement must not begin until the relevant requirement is in place. The project lead is responsible for keeping these arrangements under review as the work develops.
- **Partner agreements and intellectual property.** The project lead will work with NTU and the partners to put any necessary agreements in place before the activities or payments that depend on them. Existing and new intellectual property will be managed in accordance with NTU policies and any agreements made with partners.

- **Events and wider learning.** Award holders are expected to take part in relevant NTU P-ACE activities to share their work and learning, including the final project event planned for July to September 2028.
- **Changes to the project.** Material changes to the agreed activities, timetable, partners or budget must be discussed with NTU P-ACE and approved before they are made. Requests should be sent to PACE@ntu.ac.uk as early as possible.
- **Financial management.** Expenditure must be for the approved project, within the agreed budget and project period, and in accordance with NTU financial regulations and the conditions of the award. The project lead is responsible for monitoring expenditure and working with NTU P-ACE to resolve any ineligible charges. Unspent allocations may be reallocated.
- **Continuation of the award.** NTU P-ACE may suspend or withdraw funding if the conditions of the award are not met or the project can no longer be delivered as agreed. Where practicable, concerns and possible remedies will be discussed with the project lead first.
- **Changes to the project lead.** The award cannot be transferred to another institution or used for a different project. If the project lead leaves NTU or can no longer lead the work, the project may continue only if NTU P-ACE approves a replacement NTU project lead and any necessary changes to the delivery plan.

Reporting Requirements:

Award holders must provide brief quarterly progress updates throughout the project. These should summarise activities and milestones completed, partner involvement, outputs produced, expenditure against the agreed budget, any changes or risks, and any support needed from NTU P-ACE.

An end-of-project report is due upon completion of the project. It should summarise what was delivered, the findings and outputs, benefits achieved or likely to follow, and lessons learned. It must also include a full expenditure report. The end-of-project report will serve as the final quarterly update; a separate update for that period will not be required.

An accessible summary of the project and its findings or activities is due within two months of completion. It should be suitable for sharing with policing partners, communities and other non-academic audiences, subject to any confidentiality or partner agreements.

NTU P-ACE will provide templates for the quarterly updates, end-of-project report and accessible summary, and will confirm reporting dates when the award begins. Award holders are also expected to present their work at the final NTU P-ACE project event planned for July to September 2028.