



EQUIPPING CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IN AN AGE OF SCIENCE

ST JOHN'S COLLEGE, 3 SOUTH BAILEY, DURHAM DH1 3RJ

SCIENTISTS IN CONGREGATIONS' PROPOSAL GUIDELINES 2026-2027

A new application process

Over the years, Scientists in Congregations awardees have consistently shown creativity, theological insight, and positive community change over time.

2025-26 is the final round of grants. Prospective applicants should send a short letter of intent which will be reviewed by our team. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

This will:

- give applicants clarity and confidence in shaping their projects;
- allow constructive feedback at an early stage of the process;
- encourage a wide range of ideas and approaches.

Application Schedule:

1. Letter of Intent (6 October–21 November 2025)

Submit your initial idea as a letter of intent. If invited to submit a full application, you

will receive constructive feedback on your proposal to help you develop a stronger submission.

2. Formal Application (5 January–6 March 2026)

Shortlisted applications will receive feedback and be invited to submit a full application for consideration by the panel. Applicants will be informed of the panel's decision in early April, and awards will be publicly announced in May 2026.

Stage 1: Letter of Intent

It is designed to be brief and exploratory. It should include:

- Project title
- Project director(s), organisation, and partner(s) (if any). They will include:
 - A Proposed Congregational Leader (Co-Director) with Name, Role, and Contact Details
 - Proposed Scientist (Co-Director) with Name, Role, and Contact Details
 - Note that ECLAS is happy to consider both co-directors' expertise, broadly and creatively. A 'congregational leader' might be a chaplain, a regional Christian educator.... Similarly, a 'scientist' might be a nurse, dietitian, engineer....
- Congregation - what is the specific community of Christians who will engage in the project (e.g., church, chaplaincy, society...)
- A short description of the project (up to 300 words)
- You should then briefly answer a few questions (250-500 words total).
 - What do you want to do?
 - Who is the intended audience?
 - What is the budget?
 - What is the timeline for activities?
- We are open to discussion early in the planning stages. It's okay to ask questions, ask for suggestions, and leave some answers blank - but do acknowledge the gaps. More complete letters will receive favourable review - but so will creative ideas. Remember, this is a way to start a conversation.

Letters should be emailed to Dr Gael Pardoen at sciencein.congregation@durham.ac.uk

Stage 2: Full Proposal

If you are invited to submit a full proposal, it should include:

1. Application Details

- Project title

- Organisation details
- Proposed start and end dates
- Requested funding amount
- Names of congregational and scientific co-directors

2. Description of the Congregation (up to 500 words)

- Demographic details
- Relationship to wider church structures
- Relationship with the local community
- Current engagement with science

(If not a single worshipping congregation, describe the community you represent and its place within the wider church.)

3. Project Description (up to 2,500 words)

Please address the following and organise with clear summary statements and bullet points and follow the word count.

- a. Congregational context
- b. Area(s) of scientific engagement
- c. Plans and budget for events/activities
- d. Strategy for community engagement
- e. Denominational (or equivalent) support

4. Budget Narrative (up to 500 words)

- Explain how the requested funding will be used.

5. Letter of Support (up to 1 page)

- From the most senior denominational or organisational leader to whom you are accountable (e.g. Bishop, Chair of District etc).

Expectations for Successful Projects

Project leads will be asked to:

- Attend two in-person meetings in Durham with other grant recipients, to share learning and reflect on their activities.
- Attend regular online catch-up meetings to update the community on their project and exchange opportunities and challenges.
- Award holders will also be required to submit status reports, including a mid-project report and a final report (up to 1,000 words).

What Makes a Strong Proposal?

Solid proposals will:

- Affirm the work of scientists in their congregational context
- Build on current organisational and personal strengths
- Integrate clear goals and plans for achieving them
- Show awareness of congregational and wider community needs
- Involve senior leadership who are fully informed and actively engaged.

Stronger proposals will also:

- Display a commitment to match funds with local resources
- Have the potential to stimulate further engagement within the congregation
- Have the potential to generate a cascade effect beyond the congregation
- Creatively explore science-engaged theology, addressing issues in fresh and imaginative ways.

We look forward to receiving your letter of intent.

The ECLAS Team.