

DICE Network+ Access Fund

Update 23/02/26 v2

Supporting Early Career Researchers (ECRs) to accelerate the UK's transition to a circular economy through digital innovation. To apply, please complete the [application form](#).

1) Overview

The **DICE Network+ Access Fund** provides small, fast-turnaround awards to help members of the **DICE ECR Community** participate in and / or organise activities that directly support the [DICE Network+ objectives](#). The fund is designed to remove barriers to engagement, build capacity, and enhance visibility of ECR-led work across the wider community.

- **Maximum award:** up to **£200** (with larger amounts considered for non-travel related activities)
- **Outputs:** To contribute to the wider DICE N+ outreach and support communications, we request a short **article or blog post** and **photos** within 3 days of the event.

2) Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be an **Early Career Researcher (ECR)** (e.g., PhD researcher or within ~8 years of PhD/equivalent professional experience).
- Be an **active member of the DICE ECR Community** (or join at the point of application).
- Propose an activity that is **directly related to digital innovation and the circular economy**.
- Have a contract of employment with a **UK host institution** (university or research organisation).

Applications from under-represented groups and across institutions and regions are warmly encouraged. If you have any requirements or adjustments to enable you to participate in this Access Fund, please contact us (DICE-Network@exeter.ac.uk).

To ensure we can support as many members of our community as possible, this fund is unlikely to be awarded to the same individual more than once.

3) What We Fund

Activities must have a **clear link to digital innovation** (e.g., data, platforms, AI, digital twins, IoT, analytics, software, digital infrastructure) **and circular economy outcomes** (e.g., reduction of waste, reuse/repair/remanufacture, resource efficiency, product life extension, circular business models, policy and governance for circularity).

Eligible examples (non-exhaustive):

- Travel/subsistence to attend a UK workshop, site visit, or lab day with **direct circular-digital** relevance.
- Costs to **host a small reading group, hack session, or methods clinic** for DICE ECRs.
- **Materials or room hire** to run an ECR-led mini-workshop, co-design session, or stakeholder roundtable.
- **Software licenses** or short training **course fees** that enable a circular-digital method demonstrator (where no other funding is available).
- **Accessibility support** for participation (e.g., captioning, childcare, reasonable adjustments).

Please note, in exceptional cases a larger sum may be awarded for non-travel related activities as detailed above. The DICE Network+ would also consider larger awards where a group of ECRs are applying together to enable an activity linked to wider engagement and impact.

We do not fund:

- General conference attendance without clear alignment.
- Equipment purchases over incidental/consumables scale.
- Salaries, stipends, or large capital items.
- Activities already fully funded elsewhere.

4) Funding Available & Costs

- **Up to £200 per application for travel and accommodation.** Larger sums may be awarded for other activities.

- **Value for money** and **justification** are essential.
- All costs must be **eligible, necessary, and reasonable** (HMRC-compliant where relevant).

5) Expected Outputs (Communications)

To help showcase ECR activity, we ask for:

- A **short article or blog post (300–600 words)** within **3 days** of the activity (what you did, key insights, value to DICE, next steps).
- **2–4 photos** with captions and permissions for DICE communications (or screenshots if online).
- **Acknowledgement:** Please acknowledge **DICE Network+** funding and use the DICE logo where appropriate (we will supply assets).

6) How to Apply

Please submit a brief [application](#) including:

1. **Your details** (name, institution, role, contact).
2. **Activity title, date(s), and description** (what, where, who, why).
3. **Direct link to digital innovation and the circular economy** (2–4 sentences).
4. **Requested amount** (up to £200) and **itemised budget**.
5. **Expected outcomes** (skills, connections, outputs).
6. **EDI and accessibility** (any considerations and arrangements).
7. **Consent** to provide a blog and photos for DICE communications.

We aim for a **light-touch, quick decision** process.

7) Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against:

- **Relevance:** Clear and direct link to **digital innovation** and the **circular economy**.
- **Benefit:** Value to the applicant's development and the **DICE ECR community**.
- **Feasibility & timing:** Activity is realistic and deliverable.
- **Value for money:** Appropriate use of a small award; leveraging co-funding where possible.

- **Reach & inclusion:** Consideration of accessibility and/or broader ECR benefit.

8) Award, Payment & Reporting

- **Decision timeline:** Typically within **10 working days** of submission (faster where possible).
- **Payment route:** Normally **expenses reimbursement** on submission of receipts or small purchase by DICE team where feasible.
- **Evidence required:** Receipts (itemised), proof of attendance/delivery, and the **article/blog + photos**.
- **Changes:** Please email at dice-network@exeter.ac.uk if dates or plans change; pre-approval may be required.

9) Timelines

- **Applications:** Accepted on a rolling basis while funds last.
- **Spend deadline:** Activities should normally be completed within **8 weeks** of award.
- **Outputs:** Blog + photos due within **3 days** after the activity.

10) Good Practice & Examples

- Organise a **methods huddle** on digital twins for remanufacturing.
- Attend a **circular data sharing** lab visit with industry and write a field note.
- Run an **ECR roundtable** on AI for repairability and eco-design policy.
- Take a **short course** in lifecycle data analytics and share a practical guide with peers.
- Facilitate a **community site visit** to a reuse hub with a digital tracking pilot.

11) Terms & Conditions (Summary)

- Funding is **subject to availability** and DICE Network+ priorities.
- All activities must **comply with institutional policies** (ethics, safeguarding, H&S).
- Any **IP, data, or permissions** must be handled appropriately by the applicant.

- DICE reserves the right to **quote, edit for clarity**, and publish submitted blogs/photos with attribution.
- **Acknowledgement and logos** must be used where relevant.
- DICE may request a short **impact update** up to 12 months post-activity.

12) Contact

Questions or ready to apply?

 [**dice-network@exeter.ac.uk**](mailto:dice-network@exeter.ac.uk)

We can provide: logo pack and blog template.