

National Centre for Research Methods: call for Commissioned Research Projects – phase 2

Guidance for Applicants: updated 22 November 2016

Please note that the restriction of maximum two proposals per research organisation has been lifted (see page 2). Furthermore, additional clarification under the section ‘eligibility for applicants’ (see page 2) has been included.

Introduction

This is a guidance document created to assist applicants to this scheme in the completion of their proposal. It is specific to this scheme and should be used in conjunction with the [ESRC Research Funding Guide](#).

All forms required can be found on the NCRM website [Call for Proposals](#)

Intention to Submit

Applicants must send an Intention to Submit to the NCRM Research Coordinator, Mrs Penny White, by email to p.c.white@southampton.ac.uk by **16:00 on 16 December 2016**.

Full Application

The Application Form should be submitted to NCRM by email to the NCRM Research Coordinator as a single .pdf file. You should also submit a completed Costing Template as an excel file attachment in the same email. The deadline for submitting the Application Form and Costing Template is **16:00 on 28 February 2017**. Applications received after this time will not be considered.

Applications which have not followed the directed procedure or which do not contain all the required information will be rejected.

Eligibility

Eligibility of research organisations

All UK Higher Education Institutions are eligible to receive funds for research, postgraduate training and associated activities. The higher education funding councils for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland determine whether an organisation meets the criteria to be a Higher Education Institution.

Independent research organisations (IROs) approved by ESRC are eligible to apply for ESRC funding. The current list of eligible IROs can be downloaded at www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/; to apply to this scheme IROs must be eligible for responsive mode schemes.

Updated 22 November 2016: Applications are no longer limited to two per eligible research organisation (RO).

Eligibility for applicants

The PI should:

- Meet the ESRC definition of an early career researcher with a maximum of four years' postdoctoral academic research experience. This period is measured between the initial submission date of the PhD thesis and the submission date of this proposal. Career breaks, periods of maternity/paternity and sick leave as well as unemployment will be excluded from the four year period. Periods of part-time academic employment can be calculated on a pro-rata basis;
- not be a current or former Principal Investigator on any other RCUK grant; and
- have the support of an eligible UK research organisation.

Updated 22 November 2016: Applicants who are not established members of a recognised RO must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research. These requirements also apply to individuals named as co-investigators. There is an expectation that the PI's post will be in place for the duration of the project.

Project details

- Enter your organisation and department/unit.
- Enter Primary Topic Area – please include here which of the five topic areas your project relates to, and the predominant topic area if your project spans more than one topic area.
- Enter 'Project Title' (maximum limit of 150 characters).
- Your start date should not be before 1 September 2017. Your grant should be a proposed duration of no more than 18 months.
- Projects must end by 28 February 2019.

Investigators

Enter the name of the principal investigator (PI) and any co-investigators (Co-I) if applicable. Investigators may be from more than one research organisation, but the PI must be from the organisation that will administer the grant. The PI will take intellectual leadership of the project and manage the research; this individual will be the contact person for NCRM correspondence. All named investigators are responsible for ensuring that successful proposals are undertaken and completed in the manner specified.

Mentor

All applicants are required to have a named mentor based at the research organisation where the grant is to be held. The proposed mentor should be of high academic standing and have a strong interest in the applicant's field of research, but should not normally be the applicant's former PhD supervisor. The mentor should also be able to offer the applicant advice and assistance in developing their proposal, building suitable links with leading researchers in their field, as well as with potential beneficiaries and users of the applicant's research.

The role of the mentor is to support the work of the grant holder, both scientific and non-scientific, but the mentor will not be directly involved in running the project. Regular contact must be maintained between the grant holder and mentor through the course of the project, and the mentor will help the grant holder to review progress against agreed milestones, including the implementation of the training and development programme. Costs for mentoring time cannot

be claimed as part of these grants; they must be met as part of the host institution's contribution to the award.

Objectives

List the objectives of your research in order of priority. *(3000 character limit)*

Summary

Provide a plain English summary of the research you propose to carry out in language that could be publicised to a general, non-academic audience. *(3000 character limit)*

Beneficiaries

Please summarise how your proposed research will contribute to knowledge, both within the UK and globally. This should include how the research will benefit other researchers in the field and identify whether there are any academic beneficiaries in other disciplines and, if so, how they will benefit and what will be done to ensure that they benefit.

Please list any academic beneficiaries from the research and give details of how they will benefit and how the results of the proposed research will be disseminated. Also describe the relevance of the research to beneficiaries. *(3000 character limit)*

Please note that this section may be published to demonstrate the impact of Research Council-funded research. Please ensure confidential information is not included in this section.

Impact summary

Please address the following two questions *(2000 character limit)*:

- **Who will benefit from this research?** List any beneficiaries from the research, for example those who are likely to be interested in or to benefit from the proposed research - both directly or indirectly. Beneficiaries must consist of a wider group than that of the investigators' immediate professional circle carrying out similar research.
- **How will they benefit from this research?** Describe the relevance of the research to these beneficiaries, identifying the potential for impacts arising from the proposed work.

Please note that this section may be published to demonstrate the potential impact of Research Council-funded research. Please ensure confidential information is not included in this section.

Staff duties

Summarise the duties of the staff members that will be involved in your project, including the applicants. Ensure that it is clear why it is necessary for this person to perform this role at the resource level you have requested. *(2000 character limit)*

Ethical information

This section must be comprehensively addressed. *(3000 character limit)*

The ESRC's [Framework for Research Ethics](#) contains a full explanation of our approach, with guidance for applicants.

Reviewers (academic and user)

Nominate two academic and two non-academic/user reviewers. These people must not be from the same research organisation as any of the investigators on the project, and should not represent potential conflicts of interest. **Agreement should be sought from nominated**

reviewers before their details are submitted. We may contact one of each ‘type’ of reviewer to assist in the peer review of your proposal.

Proposals will not be disadvantaged by the absence of nominated reviewers.

Resources required for the project

The following guidance applies to the completion of the Costing Template. Your Research Office will be able to assist with this section.

Staff

If your project requires staff other than the team of investigators, their details should be entered here. ‘Directly Allocated staff’ are those who will be working directly on the project, but whose involvement on the grant can only be based on an estimate of the time the work will take (e.g. investigators). ‘Directly Incurred staff’ are those whose time on the project is actual, auditable and verifiable (e.g. researchers and technicians).

T&S - add each item of Travel and Subsistence required for your project. You should indicate the calculations upon which this figure is based in the ‘Destination and Purpose’ box.

Other directly incurred costs - including specified consumables, publication costs, consultancy fees, equipment costing less than £10,000, recruitment and advertising costs.

All project costs relating to UK business or third sector co-investigators must be prefixed as ‘UK Co-I’s business or third sector costs’. The co-investigator salary costs must be entered under ‘Other Directly Incurred Costs’ as should all other claimed staff salaries and related costs associated with the UK co-investigator’s business or third sector body, and should be marked as an ‘Exception’ using the tick box.

All costs associated with international co-investigators, whether salary, fieldwork, equipment or travel and subsistence should be entered as ‘Other Directly Incurred Costs’ and should be marked as an ‘Exception’ using the tick box. All costs should also be prefixed with ‘Overseas.’

All costs relating to UK business and/or third sector co-investigators and/or international co-investigators must be specifically justified, and applicants must explain why such costs are required to achieve the aims of the research project. Applicants must also state clearly in the ‘Justification for Resources’ which costs in the application relate to UK business, third sector or international research organisations. Please note UK business, third sector and international co-investigator salary costs should only be claimed where clear justification is provided as to why this cost cannot be met by the UK business, third sector or international research organisation.

Other directly allocated costs - including support staff salaries, a share of the costs of departmental support staff and the costs of access to major research facilities.

Estates and indirect costs

Estates and indirect costs are specific to each research organisation, and do not require justification in your case for support.

Research organisations that have implemented the TRAC costing methodology and have passed the Quality Assurance process should apply their own estate and indirect costs.

Non-research organisations that are not required to implement TRAC must have a robust costing methodology in place that has been validated in order to apply their own estates and indirect cost rates. The standard default rates should be used where research organisations have not yet developed their own rates.

All resources requested must be fully justified in the 'Justification' section of the application form (see Supporting Sections).

Supporting Sections:

Case for support (*maximum of 4 sides of A4 standard margins, size 12 font*)

This is the body of your research proposal. It must not exceed *4 sides* and must include the following sections:

- The introduction should set the aims and objectives of the study in context. It should briefly sketch the main work on which the research will draw, with references. Any relevant policy or practical background should be included.
- The detailed research questions to be addressed should be clearly stated.
- Give a full and detailed description of the proposed research methods. Particular care should be taken to explain any innovation in the methodology or where you intend to develop new methods.
- Clearly state the framework and methods for analysis, and explain the reasons for their choice.
- Indicate the expected outputs both academic and those orientated to (potential) users (articles, papers, datasets, events, etc.). Where possible, describe the expected impact.
- Please identify whether the research will involve significant collaborative contributions from colleagues outside of the UK.
- The bibliography for references cited in the proposal should be attached under the 'list of publications' document; this should not include publications not cited in the proposal. A list of the most relevant and recent publications should be included in the applicant CVs.

Justification of resources (*maximum of one side of A4*)

A one page A4 statement justifying that the resources requested are appropriate to undertake the research project. The justification of resources should explain why the resources requested are appropriate for the research proposed, taking into account the nature and complexity of the research proposal. It should not be simply a list of the resources required, as this is already given in the form. Where you do not provide explanation for an item that requires justification, it will be cut from any grant made.

Pathways to Impact (*maximum of two sides of A4*)

While the Impact Summary section of the form is for applicants to explain who will benefit from the research and how, the Pathways to Impact attachment should be used to explain what will be undertaken by the applicant to ensure that opportunities for users to benefit from your research, and thus for achieving economic and societal impact, are maximised.

The Pathways to Impact is your opportunity to describe how the potential impacts of your research will be realised. This attachment is specific to users and beneficiaries of the research who are outside of the academic research community including, for instance, the public sector, private sector, third sector or the wider public in general. User communities for ESRC research may include bodies and individuals from industry, charities, universities, local authorities and other public bodies, government departments and independent policy bodies.

Please detail how the proposed research project will be managed to engage users and beneficiaries and increase the likelihood of impacts. ‘Users’ are individuals, groups or organisations who have an interest in or may benefit from the research. Users may be from the public sector, commercial private sector, third sector or the wider public in general. Engaging users in your research from its conception and development through to the dissemination stage is likely to increase the impacts achieved.

Potential academic beneficiaries of your work and pathways towards achieving academic impact should not be detailed in this attachment but in the ‘Beneficiaries’ section of the form and the ‘Case for Support’ as appropriate.

In describing plans to maximise impact, applicants should consider what is achievable and expected for research of this nature. If you do not feel that your research has potential to achieve impact outside of academia, you should use the Pathways to Impact attachment to explain why this is the case. However, it is expected that applicants will have considered impact in its broadest economic and societal terms before coming to this conclusion.

Applicants should note that while we recognise the value of this type of research, reviewers may comment on the applicant’s reasoning during consideration of the proposal.

Impact can take many forms, manifest at different stages in the research process, and be promoted in different ways. It may be helpful to consider impact in respect of the short term (during the currency of the grant), medium term (up to one year afterwards), and the long term.

A statement about the ESRC’s expectations of the research they fund can be found here <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/impact-innovation-and-interdisciplinarity/>.

CV (*maximum of two sides of A4 per applicant*)

A CV for the principal investigator and co-investigators must be included. This should include contact details, qualifications (including class and subject), academic and professional posts held since graduation, details of any career breaks, a list of the most relevant and recent publications, and a record of research funded by the ESRC and other bodies. This should not exceed two A4 sides.

Timetable (*maximum of one side of A4*)

Provide a clear timetable for the project and the intended progress of the research through the different stages. This helps referees to assess the proposed approach and facilitates monitoring.

The timetable should demonstrate that the project has been properly planned and the time needed to complete it, including dissemination activities, has been carefully estimated. Your planned timetable can be expanded upon if necessary within your case for support.

List of publications (if applicable)

The bibliography for references cited in the proposal only should be attached. Please note publications not cited in the proposal should not be added here. A list of the most relevant and recent publications by the applicant should be included in the applicant CV.

NCRM reserves the right to reject proposals which exceed the specified word and character limits.