UK Research and Innovation

Manufacturing the future

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
Funding type:	Grant
Maximum award:	£2,000,000
Publication date:	20 September 2020
Opening date:	N/A
Closing date:	Open - no closing date

Last updated: 10 November 2020

Start application

Manufacturing the future investigator-led research grants are for researchers at UK higher education institutions, research council institutes, UKRI-approved independent research organisations and NHS bodies.

We encourage collaboration with other researchers, industry, the public sector and other relevant partners.

We are looking for researchers in engineering, physical sciences, information and communications technologies, and mathematical sciences who want to apply their expertise to manufacturing challenges.

We have up to £3 million available for projects each quarter, dependent on demand and the quality of the proposals. There are no deadlines.

We will award 80% of the full economic costs of the project, and your organisation must agree to find the balance.

Open all

Who can apply

Research grants are open to UK higher education institutions, research council institutes, UKRI-approved independent research organisations and NHS bodies with research capacity.

Find out more about institutional eligibility.

You can apply if you are resident in the UK and meet at least one of these criteria:

- are employed at the submitting research organisation at lecturer level or equivalent
- hold a fixed-term contract that extends beyond the duration of the proposed research project, and the host research organisation is prepared to give you all the support normal for a permanent employee
- hold an EPSRC, Royal Society or Royal Academy of Engineering fellowship aimed at later career stages
- hold fellowships under other schemes (please contact EPSRC to check eligibility, which is considered on a case-by-case basis).

Holders of postdoctoral level fellowships are not eligible to apply for an EPSRC grant.

Clinical applicants must be employed or be on a fixed-term contract longer than the proposed project at an NHS trust, hospital, board, primary care trust or general practice.

You can apply for this grant if you are a new investigator.

Find out more about **individual eligibility**.

We will not accept uninvited resubmissions of projects that have been submitted to UKRI or any other funder.

What we're looking for

We are seeking a range of investigator-led proposals from researchers working in the engineering and physical sciences who want to apply their expertise to challenges faced by UK manufacturing.

We define manufacturing research as the development of new and existing manufacturing processes, systems and networks.

We aim to help solve some of the most serious challenges facing the UK, both today and in the future. Manufacturing makes a major contribution to the UK economy but further investment is required, particularly in research into high-value and specialist manufacturing.

We particularly want to support work that turns science and engineering research into products and processes that can be used at scale in manufacturing.

Our manufacturing the future theme highlights a number of key areas for research:

- 21st century-defining products enabled by new technologies and advanced materials
- digital manufacturing
- sustainable manufacturing
- new industrial systems, including alternative machine tools, cellular manufacturing, self-healing tools, systems that self-build, and alternative supply chains and business models.

Find out more about our **manufacturing the future theme**.

We fund a wide range of projects ranging from small, short-term grants to multi-million-pound research projects, including:

- high-risk/high-return research embracing new concepts or techniques
- feasibility studies
- instrument development
- project-specific **equipment**
- collaborative projects that cross different disciplines.

You can use this funding opportunity to apply for standard grants, new investigator awards, networks or workshops.

Find out more about **new investigator awards**.

We will fund 80% of the full economic costs of your project. You may request funding for staff costs, equipment and other items required to carry out the project, costs related to impact, and travel and subsistence.

We have up to £3 million to invest in manufacturing the future projects each quarter. We can accept applications for up to £2 million. If you are considering a larger proposal, please contact a member of EPSRC's manufacturing the future team to discuss this.

How to apply

You must apply using the **Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S)**.

We are always open for applications for investigator-led research projects in manufacturing the future. We strongly recommend you submit your proposals as soon as you are ready to do so.

When adding a new proposal you should select:

- council: EPSRC
- document type: standard proposal
- scheme: standard, new investigator, or network

- call/type/mode: ‘none’ for a standard proposal, or ‘new investigator award’ or ‘network’ if relevant.

Your application should include the following attachments:

- case for support: eight pages, with two on your track record and six on the scientific case
- workplan: one page
- justification of resources: two pages
- CVs: up to two A4 sides each only for named postdoctoral staff, researcher co-investigators (research assistants who have made a substantial contribution to the proposal and will be employed on the project for a significant amount of time), and visiting researchers
- letters of support from all project partners included in the Je-S form: no page limit
- quotes for equipment above £25,000: no page limit
- equipment business case for any items of equipment or combined assets with a value above £138,000: up to two pages
- technical assessments for facilities listed as requiring one in the Je-S guidance: no page limit
- cover letter: optional attachment, no page limit, not seen by peer review.

You should attach your documents as PDFs to avoid errors. They should be completed in single-spaced 11 font Arial or similar sans serif typeface.

We recommend you start your application in good time. You can save completed details in Je-S at any time and return to continue your application later.

When you submit the application, it will first go to your host organisation for review. Please allow enough time for this to meet the batching dates stated in our guidance. You should hear the result of your application within 26 weeks of submission by your host organisation.

See the **Je-S handbook** for full advice on completing applications.

Find out more about **completing your application**.

How we will assess your application

Your application is assessed by peer review. It will be sent electronically to at least three reviewers, including at least one nominated by you. You will have the opportunity to respond to reviewer comments if your application gains enough support.

The proposal, reviewers’ comments and your response will then go to a manufacturing-focused panel that will score it against our assessment criteria and rank it with other proposals. Your proposal may be assessed by one of our relevant theme panels if you do not meet the batching date or there is insufficient demand.

Your application is assessed first and foremost on quality (primary), followed by national importance (secondary major). It is also assessed on applicant and

partnerships (secondary) and resources and management (secondary).

Find out more about **the assessment process**.

Contact details

manufacturingpeerreview@epsrc.ukri.org

Additional info

Find out more about:

- **resubmissions**
- **equipment**
- **use of animals (PDF, 34KB)**
- **responsible research and innovation**
- **ethical considerations**
- **equality, diversity and inclusion**
- **other EPSRC funding options**
- **equality impact assessment (PDF, 172KB)**.

NOTE This is the first phase of our new website – let us know if you have **feedback** or would like to **help us test new developments**.