

Get funding for ideas that address COVID-19

Opportunity status: Open

Funders: UK Research and Innovation, [Arts and Humanities Research Council \(AHRC\)](#), [Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council \(BBSRC\)](#), [Economic and Social Research Council \(ESRC\)](#), [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council \(EPSRC\)](#), [Innovate UK](#), [Medical Research Council \(MRC\)](#), [Natural Environment Research Council \(NERC\)](#), [Science and Technology Facilities Council \(STFC\)](#)

Funding type: Grant

Publication date: 21 September 2020

Opening date: 31 March 2020

Closing date: 9 December 2020 11:00 UK time

Last updated: 19 November 2020

Before applying, you should check the details of projects that are already funded to avoid duplicating existing work.

[See all UKRI-funded COVID-19 projects.](#)

You should also check our priority areas for funding to increase your chances of submitting a successful application.

[See our current priority areas for COVID-19 funding \(PDF, 152KB\).](#)

Areas that are now out of scope include:

- funding to directly mitigate the effects of the pandemic on specific institutions and businesses
- longer term research proposals that address the COVID-19 emergency or future pandemics

We will support excellent proposals up to 18 months duration, in any subject area within UKRI's remit, which meet at least one of the following:

- new research or innovation with a clear impact pathway that has the potential (within the period of the grant) to deliver a significant contribution to the understanding of, and response to, the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts
- supports the manufacture and/or wide scale adoption of an intervention with significant potential
- gathers critical data and resources quickly for future research use.

Projects can be up to 18 months long.

Grants will be awarded at 80% of the full economic cost for research council funding, or in line with Innovate UK's funding rules. For Innovate UK funding, State Aid rules apply.

Read about Innovate UK's funding rules in [Innovate UK's guidance for applicants](#).

We are interested in funding research of any scale that can demonstrate it will deliver impact in the project length.

Researchers holding existing UKRI standard grants should in the first instance consider whether they could repurpose that funding to address the objectives of this call.

[Apply to switch your existing funding](#)

Repurposing your existing grant is the quickest way to start the research.

Companies and organisations being funded by Innovate UK, who wish to re-purpose their grant for COVID-19 purposes, should approach their monitoring officer in the first instance and progress any requests through the project change request (PCR) system.

The closing date is Tuesday 15 December at 16:00 for submission to research councils. Innovate UK **final round** for this competition will close on Wednesday 9 December at 11:00. See 'How to apply' for details.

[Open all](#)

Who can apply

Proposals will be accepted from anyone who is normally eligible to apply for UKRI funding. This includes any company or SME that would normally be eligible for Innovate UK grant support.

[Check your eligibility for funding](#)

Usual research council or Innovate UK funding rules will apply.

Research and technology organisations (RTOs) can lead applications for Innovate UK grants, but they must collaborate with at least two businesses of any size.

Academic institutions cannot lead an application to Innovate UK, but may participate in collaborations.

Exceptionally, proposals will also be accepted from public sector research establishments (PSREs). Providing this opportunity to PSREs addresses the Nurse Review's principle of '[investing in excellence, wherever it is found](#)'.

UKRI have developed this [initial list \(PDF, 65KB\)](#) of PSREs that could be eligible to apply for research council grants (at 80% fEC) through this fund. This list is not exhaustive.

PSREs will need to complete the appropriate eligibility form to evidence they have the capacity and capability required by UKRI. Instructions on how to apply for eligibility and a list of PSREs which are already eligible can be found on the [UKRI eligibility page](#).

Researchers holding existing UKRI standard grants can apply to switch their funding to address the objectives of this call.

[Apply to switch your existing funding](#)

An individual or business can be principal investigator or lead on only one bid at any one time. You may support others as co-investigator, as long as you have the capacity to do so without detriment to the project you lead.

You may be asked to become part of wider consortia or join with already existing efforts.

Please note this call is specifically for proposals that will deliver within 18 months and require a rapid decision due to the nature of the proposed project. Other UKRI schemes are still open to applications for COVID-19 related work that do not require such a rapid response or for longer term projects.

Working with international co-investigators

For more details please see the 'Additional information' section below.

Resubmissions

Applications previously submitted to the DHSC/UKRI initiative's earlier calls cannot be resubmitted to either the DHSC/UKRI rolling call or this UKRI open call.

Applications previously submitted to any other Innovate UK competition cannot be resubmitted to this UKRI open call.

Proposals submitted to this call that are unsuccessful cannot be resubmitted to this call unless invited to do so.

What we're looking for

Since we opened this competition in March 2020, the research and innovation community have responded with some excellent ideas and proposals.

Sadly, COVID-19 is still with us, and robust solutions to many problems are still needed.

That said, there are some areas that are already well funded, and others where few high-quality proposals have been submitted. For this reason, we are now focusing on gaps in the COVID-19 research and innovation landscape.

We have developed a priority list of areas which we are particularly interested in seeing addressed. These will be updated periodically.

See the [priority list of areas \(PDF, 152B\)](#).

It's important that applicants also check what projects are already in progress, using the topic map tool or the spreadsheet of UKRI-funded COVID-19 research.

Proposals should:

- describe the approach you will take and put it in the context of the national response to COVID-19. International collaboration is permitted, so long as the research is of relevance to the UK
- explain the outcomes you will achieve in three, six, 12 and 18 months. Please note that these will be made public if the proposal is selected for funding
- explain the level of urgency, and why the activity is important now
- demonstrate that the proposal has the necessary critical mass to make a difference. Where relevant, demonstrate the strength of links to relevant decision makers
- demonstrate a clear route to impact within the timescale of the project
- confirm whether the research requires any access to the health and care system and if so describe how you will comply with the newly established NIHR single, national process for prioritisation of COVID-19 research studies (see additional information)
- give an estimate of the resources required (within 10%)
- as part of the submission, the proposal may include requests for access to [UKRI experimental, analytical or computational capabilities \(PDF, 167KB\)](#) that are currently operational
- name the team that will run this and demonstrate their ability and capacity to deliver
- UKRI can help provide access to pooled research staff from UK facilities, including research software engineering support and staff data scientists. Indicate on the form if help assembling the team is needed
- provide evidence that the host institution or business supports the proposal and that the research can be carried out under present institutional or business restriction.

We have developed [advice and lessons learnt](#) from the funding opportunity to date, to help you develop a high-quality proposal.

Getting approval from your host institution, company or organisation

You need approval to confirm that the work is achievable under whatever constraints are currently in place in your department, university or company, and that they are content for you to focus on this work under 80% full economic cost funding.

The approval can be from whoever has authority to give such assurance whether that is your department head, university research office or pro-vice-chancellor's office.

Data and software sharing and open access requirements

For more details please see the 'additional information' section below.

Innovate UK funding

Applications to Innovate UK must be led by a business (or a research and technology organisation (RTO) if a limited number of special conditions are met, see guidance for applicants).

They can be single company bids or involve collaboration with business or academic partners.

Innovate UK's assessment of applications will include evaluation of potential routes to market that will enable the proposed solution to achieve the desired impact upon the effects of the pandemic and result in beneficial impact upon the growth of the businesses involved.

In assessing projects' impact, we will take a balanced view between very significant clinical or public health outcomes and market impact.

Applications requesting Innovate UK funding must comply with Innovate UK terms and conditions.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to consider the options available by reading the information on each of the three competition pages before choosing one of the funding streams. Innovate UK is unable to fund applications that do not fully comply with State Aid Law – any projects that are accepted for funding will have to demonstrate that they meet State Aid requirements.

Applications previously submitted to any other Innovate UK competition cannot be resubmitted to this UKRI open call.

Read about Innovate UK's funding rules in [Innovate UK's guidance for applicants](#).

COVID-19 ethics support for researchers and innovators

UKRI remains committed to supporting ethical research and responsible innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Guidance and resources for researchers](#)

Proposals that are out of scope

These include:

- funding to directly mitigate the effects of the pandemic on specific institutions and businesses
- proposals more appropriate to other existing funding calls or other research funders
 - longer term research proposals that address the COVID-19 emergency or future pandemics that don't meet the urgency guidelines should be submitted through normal responsive mode.
 - proposals that duplicate research and innovation activities previously supported.

How to apply

There are two application routes for this call. Project leaders from academic and public sector research organisations should apply to the research councils via the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system. Project leads from businesses need to apply to Innovate UK via one of the three strands on the Innovation Funding Service (IFS).

Applications to the research councils (call closes 16:00 Tuesday 15 December)

- fill in the [application form \(Word, 66KB\)](#)
- attach the form to your application in the [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#).

Full instructions for the Je-S application process are provided in the Additional Information section and [instructions on how to submit an application to this call on the Je-S system \(PDF, 236KB\)](#).

Please note: In order to ensure that all involved, researchers, reviewers and UKRI staff, are able to have a well-deserved break over the festive season, review of proposals will be slower in late December/early January. Proposals received close to the closing deadline are unlikely to be processed until the new year.

All proposals to the research councils must utilise the provided form.

The application form and the following information should be collated into a single PDF:

- the regulatory requirements annex that forms part of the application form
- a CV for the principal investigator and any co-investigators. Each CV to provide relevant key publications, outputs and grants, and other relevant information indicating their suitability to lead or support the research as described in the

application (no more than 1 x A4 page per CV using Arial 11 point. These can be inserted into the form as a PDF)

- an **optional** document of supporting figures, Gantt chart or data tables (no more than one page of A4).

No further attachments should be included.

Please note that although the call for research proposals is being hosted on Je-S by EPSRC, and will show the EPSRC logo in some places, the call remains UKRI wide. Your proposal will still be assessed by the most appropriate council(s).

Applications to Innovate UK

Submit your application using the Innovation Funding Service (IFS).

Two different funding options are available.

These links give more information on those state aid funding options and how to apply:

- [de minimis](#)
- [Article 25](#).

The scope of the competition is the same for each option. Choose the option that suits your project and your business using that information and our [general guidance](#).

You can only submit an application to one of these competitions.

You may only apply once to this UKRI open competition as a whole for any given innovation project. You cannot submit a project application that was previously submitted to this or any other Innovate UK competition.

Innovate UK are accepting and evaluating applications in competitive rounds. Each competition will be open for approximately four weeks.

The **final** round for this competition will close on Wednesday 9 December at 11:00. Unfortunately, Innovate UK cannot extend this deadline and will be unable to process any incomplete applications. Innovate UK will not run any further competitions under this call.

As part of assessing your application, we may share it within UKRI, and with other organisations, under the terms of our [privacy notice and information management policy](#). We may also do this to support the national and international coordination of research to combat COVID-19 or to seek funding contributions from third parties. Innovate UK may share proposals with their Affinity Partners for consideration for support.

Full details on how to apply via these systems is given in the 'additional information' section.

US COVID-19 high performance computing consortium applicants

If an applicant wishes to access high performance computing resources from the US COVID-19 Consortium (as per the additional details section below), they should produce a supplementary document following the [guidance to provide additional information \(Word, 60KB\)](#), and submit it as a separate PDF along with their application as above.

We ask that applicants state that they are applying for time to the consortium in their application email.

How we will assess your application

Innovate UK's assessment of applications will include evaluation of potential routes to market that will enable the proposed solution to achieve the desired impact upon the effects of the pandemic and result in beneficial impact upon the growth of the businesses involved.

In assessing projects' impact, we will take a balanced view between very significant clinical or public health outcomes and market impact.

The proposal will be reviewed by one or more of the UKRI councils. Proposals assessed as within scope of the call and contributing to a gap in the current research and innovation priorities will go through review.

For research councils, this will be by expert reviewers and will be considered by subject-focused panels which will meet every four to six weeks.

Please note: In order to ensure that all involved, researchers, reviewers and UKRI staff, are able to have a well-deserved break over the festive season, review of proposals will be slower in late December/early January. Proposals received close to the closing deadline are unlikely to be processed until the new year.

Decisions will be communicated as soon as possible thereafter.

Where applicants are invited to provide a response to the expert review comments on their proposal this must be submitted within five working days and should follow standard [EPSRC guidelines](#).

Proposals to Innovate UK will be assessed by independent experts. Assessment of applications will include evaluation of potential routes to market that will enable the proposed solution to achieve the desired impact upon the effects of the pandemic and result in beneficial impact upon the growth of the businesses involved.

Contact details

For more information on this open call and how to apply to the research councils, please email CV19researchinnovation@ukri.org

For more information on how to apply to Innovate UK please email support@innovateuk.ukri.org or call 0300 321 4357.

Innovate UK's phone lines are open from 9:00 to 11:30 and 14:00 to 16:00, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Additional info

Change to application process

Applications to this open call must be submitted via online submission systems. For academic-led proposals the updated [application form \(Word, 66KB\)](#) should still be completed and uploaded upon application.

Applications to the research councils

Bids must be led by an eligible research organisation or public sector research establishment (PSRE).

Proposals must be submitted via Je-S using an EPSRC outline proposal form.

All applicants (principal investigators and co-investigators) will need to hold registered level Je-S accounts. If you are not already registered, please ensure that sufficient time is allowed for this process before completing your proposal.

Find out [how to create a registered Je-S account \(PDF, 236KB\)](#)

Users will need to select the account type 'an applicant on a standard or outline proposal'.

This account type will require verification from the nominated organisation.

Users will receive an email from Je-S saying the account is being verified and a further email to confirm if the account has been accepted or declined when your organisation has verified your details.

Please note that the call is being 'hosted' on the Je-S system by EPSRC on behalf of all the research councils (AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC, MRC, NERC, STFC). It may therefore be branded with EPSRC logo in various places. This is unavoidable because of legacy systems.

The call does however remain a cross-UKRI programme and proposals within the remits of any of the research councils can be submitted. Your proposal will continue to be reviewed and assessed by the most relevant council(s).

See the detailed instructions on [how to submit an application to this call on the Je-S system \(PDF, 236KB\)](#).

Applications to Innovate UK

Bids must be business-led or collaborations with a business (or businesses).

Proposals will be submitted via IFS (Innovation Funding Service) following one of the three links relating to one of the three different State Aids regimes available:

- [de minimis](#)
- [EU Temporary Framework](#)
- [Article 25](#).

Applicants should decide under which State Aid route to apply, select the appropriate link and complete their applications in IFS, in line with the guidance.

You can only submit an application to one of these state aid frameworks and may only apply once to this UKRI open competition as a whole for any given innovation project.

Re-submission of projects that were previously submitted to this or any other Innovate UK competition is not permitted.

Applications requesting Innovate UK funding must comply with Innovate UK terms and conditions.

Innovate UK is unable to fund applications that do not fully comply with State Aid Law – any projects that are invited forward for more detailed consideration by Innovate UK will have to provide further information to demonstrate that they meet State Aid requirements.

Applications previously submitted to any other Innovate UK competition cannot be resubmitted to this UKRI open call.

Read about Innovate UK's funding rules in [Innovate UK's guidance for applicants](#).

Innovate UK's assessment of applications will include evaluation of potential routes to market that will enable the proposed solution to achieve the desired impact upon the effects of the pandemic and result in beneficial impact upon the growth of the businesses involved.

Additional information on councils' priorities in this area can be found on their websites.

DHSC prioritisation of COVID-19 research studies

Any research that requires access to the UK health and care system must follow guidance issued by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to get their study nationally supported as high priority COVID-19 Urgent Public Health Research.

See the [NIHR guidance](#).

This will include research that would normally need NHS R&D approval, including where access to patients, data or health and care staff would be required.

Given the urgency of the current situation UKRI are committed to a principle of parallel processing. We encourage requests to UKRI to be submitted in parallel to requests for access to the UK health and care system through the NIHR portal.

However, we are aware that you may need evidence of the approval of funding before the NIHR makes their decision on access. We will therefore endeavour to make decisions as quickly as possible.

If approval is received through NIHR and a study is nationally recognised, evidence of this must be provided to UKRI.

Working with international co-investigators

International co-investigators from any country are eligible to receive funding from grants issued by UKRI councils for this call.

Please note: international co-investigators are not eligible to receive funding from Innovate UK grants in this competition.

Any academic researcher (such as those holding a PhD or equivalent qualification, or higher) from an established international research organisation of comparable standing to a UK research organisation will be eligible to act as a co-investigator.

Proposals should explain the inclusion of international co-investigators, detailing the skills expertise, or access to resources and contexts, that they will contribute to the project.

The grant will cover 100% of the direct costs for international co-investigators. Funding requested for international co-investigators must not exceed 30% of the proposal's full economic cost.

More than one international co-investigator may be included, provided the total funding cap is not exceeded.

Salary costs are not normally eligible costs. Exceptions may be requested and justification should be provided to explain why these costs cannot be covered through other sources.

We recognise that this is a particular issue for international co-investigators from low and middle-income countries (LMICs) and requests for exceptions will be considered in this context.

Overheads (estate or indirect costs) are not eligible costs. However, where research is being undertaken by a co-investigator based in a LMIC, a contribution towards overheads will be considered, where it can be shown that it will assist in developing research capacity (calculated as 20% of the overseas organisations' directly incurred costs).

If working with international co-investigators, it is the responsibility of the UK institution to undertake any due diligence that may be necessary, and to ensure appropriate collaboration agreements are in place as required.

Applicants are requested to provide assurance in the letter of support that the necessary due diligence has or will shortly be undertaken to enable work to start without delay, should funding be approved.

Global Talent Visa and COVID-19 research

International academics and researchers wishing to work on UK-based COVID-19 research projects funded by UKRI or other endorsed funders can apply for a [Global Talent visa](#) under relaxed criteria until 31 January 2021.

Data and software sharing and open access requirements

Data produced as a result of this funding will need to be shared in line with the [joint statement on sharing research data and findings relevant to the novel coronavirus \(nCoV\) outbreak](#), to which UKRI is a signatory.

Software, such as analysis scripts, spreadsheets, or modelling codes, created as part of the work under this funding should be similarly shared.

Examples of suitable data depositories include:

[COVID-19 data portal](#)

The COVID-19 Data Portal was launched in April 2020 to bring together relevant datasets for sharing and analysis in an effort to accelerate coronavirus research.

It enables researchers to upload, access and analyse COVID-19 related reference data and specialist datasets as part of the wider European COVID-19 Data Platform.

[Health data gateway](#)

The Health Data Research Innovation Gateway is a portal to find and request access to UK health datasets controlled by members of the UK Health Data Research Alliance.

Launched in January 2020, the first phase of the Gateway provides detailed descriptions (metadata) of these datasets, which researchers can search, browse and request access to health data.

It does not hold or store any patient or health data. It aims to increase transparency around accessible datasets and processes associated with their access.

[UK Data Service](#)

[OpenAIRE](#)

Software, analysis scripts and modelling codes should be made available through a version control service such as Github or Gitlab.

[US COVID-19 High Performance Computing Consortium](#)

UK researchers can apply for access to the High Performance Computing (HPC) Consortium, including some of the world's leading HPC systems, for computational time to support their research into COVID-19.

Information on the systems available can be found on the [consortium website](#). In particular, applicants to the UKRI COVID-19 call can apply by producing a supplementary document to their UKRI applicant (see the 'how to apply' section above for more details).

UK researchers who are not applying for funding from the COVID-19 call can apply to the consortium directly by [submitting a proposal](#).

Timeline

- 24 September 2020**
New round opens
- 9 December 2020**
Closing date for submissions to Innovate UK final round
- 15 December 2020 16:00**
Closing date for submissions to research councils

Related opportunities

[Apply to switch your existing funding to COVID-19 priority areas](#)

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](#).