

## ELIGIBILITY FOR RESEARCH COUNCIL FUNDING

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The Research Councils promote and support research, postgraduate training and associated activities in UK research organisations. These may be supported in any field or discipline at the instigation of the Investigator (Responsive Mode) or at the instigation of the Research Council (Calls for Proposals or Managed Mode).

All UK Higher Education Institutions that receive grant funding from one of the UK higher education funding bodies<sup>1</sup> are eligible to receive funds for research, postgraduate training and associated activities.

The Higher Education Funding Councils determine whether an organisation meets the criteria as an HEI. Research Institutes (RIs), for which Research Councils have established a long term involvement as major funder as part of the national research base are also eligible to receive research funding, from any Council.

Other Independent Research Organisations (IROs) may also be eligible for UKRI Research Council funding (resource and capital) if they possess an existing in-house capacity to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the UK research base and are able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research programmes.

The organisations must also satisfy all the following conditions:

1) Organisations must be:

- a. A charity registered with the Charities Commission, or

The organisation must be a legal entity which is not:

- a. Owned  
b. Established  
c. Primarily (i.e. 50% or more) funded for research purposes by any single part (or related parts) of the public sector (other than by a Research Council, HEI, NHS Trust, National museum/gallery/library/archive/botanical garden/observatory) or by a business.

2) The organisation must possess an existing in-house capacity to carry out research, in the field or discipline in which it wishes to be funded, that materially extends and enhances the UK research base; and be able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research programmes, as demonstrated by:

- a. Sufficient high-quality current research capacity. This requires:  
i. a minimum of ten researchers with a significant number of publications in top quality journals and/or monographs with key academic

<sup>1</sup>These bodies consist of Research England (RE), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Scottish Funding Council (SFC) and Department for the Economy (DfE, Northern Ireland).

- publishers, and/or other outputs that have been subject to the highest standards of peer review. Journal quality should take account of benchmark measures appropriate to the discipline.
- ii. a track record of staff, while employed at the organisation, leading or co-leading innovative research projects in the previous five years, including directing other postdoctoral researchers and/or research students. This should include evidence of the size and complexity of the projects and details of how they were managed and coordinated.
- b. Sufficient financial support for research at the organisational level to ensure the availability of essential infrastructure and the long-term sustainability of research activity, as evidenced by research income from independent sources averaging at least £0.5M pa over the previous three years.
  - c. Importance and relevance of the research capability, as indicated in 1-2 above, to the Council(s) to which eligibility is sought.
  - d. Evidence of the organisation having a strong track record of maximising the wider impact and value of its research to the benefit of the UK economy and society.

IROs are eligible to receive funding from a Research Council in both managed and responsive modes unless specifically stated otherwise in the call guidance.

Organisations currently recognised as IROs are listed on the UKRI website at [Eligible independent research organisations – UKRI](#).

Organisations that are eligible to apply for Research Council funding may work in partnership or collaboration with any other organisation, irrespective of its eligibility status, subject to the conditions of any grant awarded.

In exceptional circumstances Research Councils may have requirements for the development of equipment, facilities or capability, to pursue their research priorities, for which there is no capability in HEIs, RIs or IROs. Only in these specific circumstances Research Councils may fund organisations which do not otherwise satisfy the conditions for eligibility. Research Councils will not provide funding to an organisation to deliver a capability which is already funded by that organisation in support of its own strategic priorities.

The Research Councils will jointly consider eligibility of IROs for research funding and eligibility. Once eligibility has been approved, the IRO will become eligible for all Research Councils. This review will also need to determine that the IRO is able to meet the accountability and audit requirements. An IRO seeking eligibility for funding from any Council should contact the Je-S helpdesk which manages the application process. UKRI with the assistance of the cross council Operations Group ensure consistency of approach between Councils. The list of eligible organisations will be published on the UKRI website. A change in the status of an IRO would require re-consideration of an IRO's eligibility. Otherwise, once eligibility has been granted, it will last for a minimum period of 5 years; and then continue unless a point is reached where the IRO has received no funding during the previous five years.