

ISCF future flight research director 2021

Opportunity status: Upcoming

Funders: [Economic and Social Research Council \(ESRC\)](#)

Funding type: Grant

Total fund: £190,000

Publication date: 8 March 2021

Opening date: 29 March 2021

Closing date: 22 April 2021 16:00 UK time

Last updated: 18 March 2021

Apply to become an Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) research director for the future flight challenge.

You must:

- be based at an eligible UK research organisation
- understand the benefits of applying economic and social research to the UK aviation sector
- have led research and impact in the economic and social sciences
- have a record of building effective relationships between academics and businesses
- have networks in aviation.

You will support the future flight challenge to:

- identify where economic and social research can make a significant contribution to future flight
- link stakeholders, researchers and businesses to tackle challenges around future flight
- champion economic and social research to the challenge and the aviation sector.

The role lasts 12 months.

The full economic cost of the project can be up to £190,000. ESRC will contribute 80% for most costs.

Who can apply

The research director will start July 2021.

Joint applications (including job shares) for co-research directors are welcome where a clear split of responsibility is given. If submitting a joint application, the Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S) application form will require that one of the co-research directors will be listed as principal investigator, the other will need to be listed as co-investigator.

All proposals to this opportunity must be from a researcher based at an eligible UK research organisation; see the UKRI website for a [list of eligible organisations](#).

What we're looking for

The research director will act as an integral part of the ISCF future flight challenge and we expect the successful research director to play a strategic role in bringing together relevant participants that cross disciplinary boundaries and stakeholder groups, including those from business and industry.

A key priority for the research director will be to help the challenge identify the areas where economic and social sciences can make a significant contribution to the creation of safe systems for new classes of air vehicles with novel technologies, and development of the wider aviation system.

Priority areas may include, but are not limited to:

- understanding the impacts on different communities and how future flight initiatives might mitigate or increase social inequalities
- understanding areas of risk (for example in terms of public perception and ground risk) and their mitigation
- understanding how far these new technologies are compatible with existing policy agendas
- how to support UK businesses (for example, what skills are needed to develop and adopt these technologies effectively?)
- understanding the public perceptions of future flight initiatives and their potential for social or environmental good. For example, what are the levers for influencing public perceptions? Or what are the impacts of aviation noise on public acceptance?
- business model innovation (for example, how can firms develop their business models around the opportunities afforded by new technologies?).

The role

The research director will:

- identify areas where economic and social research can make a significant contribution to the future flight challenge and wider aviation sector to inform the direction of future flight research
- be visible and a champion for economic and social research in the future flight challenge, to both internal and external audiences. This may include providing guidance to the challenge to ensure economic and social research is integrated into future flight
- support the future flight challenge team to address both immediate and arising economic and social challenges associated with the challenge, including those posed by society, and identify mechanisms to address these challenges
- add value to funded activities under the future flight challenge, for example by identifying opportunities for shared learning across projects. Also, to engage with all funded activities to understand their challenges and to identify new research opportunities and identify collaborations
- work with the future flight challenge director, challenge team, and ESRC to play a strategic role in identifying and bringing together relevant participants that cross disciplinary boundaries and stakeholder groups, including those from business, academia and industry.

Please note, these aspects of the role are not exhaustive and applicants to the future flight research director opportunity are expected to present their vision of how they think they can add value within the future flight challenge.

Person specification

The successful applicant must demonstrate:

- an outstanding track record of world-leading research and impact within areas relevant to future flight
- the ability to provide intellectual research and impact leadership
- a strong commitment to interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral approaches to research, with evidence of having previously drawn together a broad range of perspectives and approaches from across the economic and social sciences, engineering, digital technology and beyond
- track record of building effective inclusive relationships between academics and businesses
- an understanding of the needs and demands of the aviation sector in the UK. They will have a proven track record of engaging collaboratively with industry and academic partners and have strong networks in the aviation space
- outstanding communication skills, suitable for engagement with a range of different audiences – specialist and non-specialist – within the academic community, business community, user community and beyond
- experience of collaborative research and proven ability to engage and develop partnerships with people and organisations beyond the academic community, in particular with stakeholders at a senior level in government, industry and the private sector, particularly in a UK context
- familiarity with UKRI's mission, and with the broader funding and policy landscape in the UK
- familiarity with the UK government's industrial strategy, and an understanding of how research will contribute to fulfilling ambitions

- a clear vision for how they will utilise their role as research director to help to deliver the future flight challenge.

Funding

ESRC will be investing up to £190,000 at 100% full economic cost (fEC) for the future flight research director opportunity. ESRC's contribution for UK applicants for most costs headings is 80% of fEC.

Funding is available across 12 months for the research director role and is expected to cover the following costs:

- research director at ~0.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) plus associated estates and indirect costs
- support staff up to a total of ~1.0 FTE across posts plus estates and indirects
- directly incurred costs for example, leadership activities, travel and subsistence, arranging workshops and meetings
- a flexible fund is available to administer to research award holders to support them to meet the needs of investments in the wider challenge portfolio and provide a mechanism for facilitating and utilising opportunities (funded at 100% fEC).

Further information is available in the full specification (see additional information).

How to apply

You must apply using the [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#).

When applying select:

- council: ESRC
- document type: standard proposal
- scheme: research grant
- call: ISCF Future Flight Research Director 2021.

Further guidance is available in the Je-S guidance document (see additional information).

This opportunity will open on 8 March 2021 and all associated documentation will be visible. However, applicants will be only be able to access the opportunity form on Je-S from 29 March 2021. Applicants are welcome to start preparing applications prior to this date.

How we will assess your application

Applications for the future flight research director role will be assessed and shortlisted by an independent panel comprising of academics, business

representatives and other stakeholders in May 2021.

Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to a final interview panel in June 2021. Further information on the format of the interview will be provided to shortlisted candidates.

The successful applicant will be expected to start in July 2021.

Contact details

Sammy Field at iscf@esrc.ac.uk

For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

Any queries regarding the submission of proposals through Je-S should be directed to:

Je-S helpdesk (jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org – 01793 444164)

Additional info

Supporting documents

[Specification \(PDF, 262KB\)](#)

[Je-S guidance \(PDF, 343KB\)](#)

The challenge has a number of specific objectives to which the future flight research director will be expected to contribute to directly:

- create and demonstrate the aviation system of the future that will enable the integration and safe operation of new classes of air vehicles with novel technologies
- increase mobility, improve connectivity in remote and rural environments and reduce congestion in urban areas for people across the UK
- accelerate the application and integration of hydrogen, advance electric and autonomous flight technologies to support the UK in reaching its net zero target
- drive technology investment to the UK by increasing UK manufacturing and service opportunities.

The research director will act as an integral part of the future flight challenge and we expect the successful research director to play a strategic role in bringing together relevant participants that cross disciplinary boundaries and stakeholder groups, including those from business and industry.

The research director will work with the future flight challenge director and team to identify how the economic and social science communities can most effectively support the future flight challenge and the aviation sector to speed up the creation of safe systems for new classes of air vehicles.

ESRC, with the support of the Innovation Caucus, hosted an online town hall event for potential applicants on 17 March 2021. [Watch a recording of the event \(Innovation Caucus website\)](#).

Timeline

- 29 March 2021**
Opening date
- 17 March 2021 11:30 to 13:00**
Town hall event
- 22 April 2021 16:00**
Closing date
- May 2021**
Shortlisting panel
- June 2021**
Interview panel
- 1 July 2022**
Project start

Related content

[Future flight challenge](#)

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**.

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