



# Provide an electron paramagnetic resonance national research facility

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Open
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Total fund:</b>	£5,400,000
<b>Publication date:</b>	7 April 2021
<b>Opening date:</b>	7 April 2021 09:00 UK time
<b>Closing date:</b>	3 June 2021 16:00 UK time

*Last updated: 7 April 2021*

Apply for support to provide an electron paramagnetic resonance (EPR) spectroscopy national research facility (NRF) in the UK.

You must be a researcher from one of these:

- UK higher education institution
- research council institute
- UKRI-approved independent research organisation
- public sector research establishment
- NHS body with research capacity.

The facility will be available to international researchers from many disciplines. It will give them access to:

- a range of cutting edge instruments
- expertise in EPR spectroscopy.

Your application must include a realistic approach to cost recovery. You must identify non-UKRI sources of funding in case you do not meet the cost-recovery targets.

Depending on your cost-recovery plan, we expect the project's full economic cost to be more than £6.75 million, taking inflation over the lifetime of the project into account. We will fund up to £5.4 million.

We expect to fund one project for five years.

---

## Who can apply

Applicants should aim to begin the project in April 2022.

Please ensure sufficient time to create Je-S accounts for Investigators who do not currently have one.

Standard EPSRC eligibility rules apply. Research grants are open to:

- UK higher education institutions
- research council institutes
- UKRI-approved independent research organisations
- public sector research establishments (PSREs)
- NHS bodies with research capacity.

This call will not count towards the EPSRC Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants Policy.

For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, read the [EPSRC funding guide](#).

Read the guidance on [institutional eligibility](#).

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

- are employed at the submitting research organisation at a level equivalent to lecturer or above
- hold a fixed-term contract that extends beyond the duration of the proposed 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.

In line with the UKRI diversity principles, equality and diversity must be embedded at all levels and in all aspects of research practice. We are committed to supporting the research community in the diverse ways a research career can be built with our investments. This includes:

- career breaks
- support for people with caring responsibilities
- flexible working
- alternative working patterns.

With this in mind, we welcome applications from academics who:

- job share
- have a part-time contract
- need flexible working arrangements
- are currently committed to other longer, large existing grants.

Please see our equality and diversity webpages for further information.

---

## What we're looking for

Following a successful Statement of Community Need bid, EPSRC wishes to support a call for an Electron Paramagnetic Resonance National Research Facility.

EPSRC will support the facility with a five-year grant which will undergo a mid-term review at the two and a half to three-year stage.

The EPSRC convened a specification panel at which the Statement of Community Need was used to develop these detailed facility requirements, which applicants are expected to meet.

### 1. Key requirements for the proposed facility

This NRF must be a user-focused facility that delivers on the needs of the wider academic and industrial user base in the UK by providing access to cutting edge EPR expertise and equipment. It should recognise and promote the application of EPR spectroscopy across the physical and life sciences, and provide national leadership to develop a community vision for the future of EPR.

This EPR NRF must also:

- have capacity to accommodate the current UK EPR facility user base, to grow it, and to fulfil their research and training requirements
- facilitate access to in-house instrumentation at other sites in the UK and worldwide that have unique and complementary EPR capabilities.

The EPR NRF should enable world leading research that achieves ground-breaking impact with wider societal benefits, as well as having the potential for commercial exploitation that benefits the UK economy.

The facility will provide researchers with access to Electron Paramagnetic Resonance Spectroscopy instrumentation and associated expertise to support novel and exciting research in the physical, biological and engineering sciences.

### Essential requirements

The facility must have cutting-edge, in-house pulsed, and continuous-wave (CW) EPR platforms (X and Q band) with specifications corresponding to the latest commercially available capability, including:

- advanced cavities (allowing optical excitation and hyperfine spectroscopy)
- high-power microwave and rf amplifiers
- arbitrary waveform generators (AWGs)
- cryogenic and elevated temperature probe technology and closed-loop cryostats.

The facility must be able to either provide in-house access to other EPR capabilities, such as:

- lower and higher-frequency EPR spectrometers
- rapid scan and electrochemistry
- be able to arrange access to such capability at other EPR research centres in the UK and worldwide.

The facility should either provide in-house access, or arrange access to open-access computational modelling software, such as:

- DEERAnalysis
- Easyspin
- ORCA
- SPINACH.

## **Key equipment**

Key equipment should be in air-conditioned laboratories that are not subject to significant radio frequency (RF) interference.

Laboratories should be:

- equipped with, or have easy access to fridges and cryogenic storage facilities for samples
- contain basic sample preparation facilities.

Where cooling is required, this should be via a self-contained chiller system.

Appropriate storage and handling procedures for hazardous substances are required, as are policies and procedures for secure and safe access for users who visit to carry out experiments.

For on-site users, it is expected that they should be able to access and analyse their data in real time in a relatively quiet environment (for example, without cryopumps running).

## **Electron paramagnetic resonance experience**

The facility should encourage and accommodate users with no or limited prior EPR experience as well as providing access for experts to advanced EPR facilities.

Applications for this call should give details of user training provision (considering previous user experience), including the expertise and experience of those involved in the training.

## Expert advice

It is expected that all users would have access to expert advice (both remote and face-to-face, as appropriate) including but not limited to:

- experiment design and feasibility
- sample preparation and storage
- data interpretation and advice regarding results, including how to obtain remote access to recorded data and run remote instrument control (where appropriate).
- for on-site visitors, site safety training at levels relevant to the users aided by suitable risk assessment documents
- a process for users to make a request or complaint about any aspect of the facility, and a procedure for resolution.

## Process for different users

The application should describe the process (for example, by means of a flowchart) for different types of user (novice, experienced, expert) including any triaging of the request and any specific training process.

This should include detail on the roles of different staff members to support this, on how the users' expectations of the facility will be managed at all stages of the process, and on how the facility will be acknowledged.

## Facility staff

Facility staff should have expertise across a broad range of EPR application areas with evidence of mitigation against staff single-point failures.

## User groups

The facility should consider the needs of different user groups. For example:

- students
- academic researchers
- private sector customers
- researchers in or outside the host organisation
- new and experienced users.

The facility should include plans for engaging with future generations of researchers, including [Centres for Doctoral Training \(EPSRC\)](#).

## Agreements with external users

The application should state how the facility would set up agreements with external users to allow them to work safely and securely at the facility.

## Website

EPSRC expects the facility to have an appropriate website fitting of an NRF and that meets accessibility requirements.

The website should promote the facility and demonstrate the capability it provides as well as the world leading outputs, including specific case studies.

The website should inform users (both current and potential) about mechanisms of how to gain access to the facility, and support and expert advice that the facility provides to users before and after recording of data, including how to gain remote access to recorded data.

## **2. Operational requirements**

### **Utilising equipment**

The facility must aim to utilise the equipment to the maximum extent, including out-of-hours operation.

### **Application document**

The application document must detail and justify the following, referencing the planned cost sharing strategy (section four) as appropriate:

- expected proportion of facility use by user type:
  - novice, experienced, expert
  - from or outside host organisation(s)
  - industrial
  - application areas, for example EPSRC or other UKRI council remit.
- range of time durations for experiments on specific instruments, including a target for percentage utilisation (in working hours and 24/7 use, as appropriate) specifying time required for instrument maintenance and calibration
- a target for time from request for access to carrying out an experiment
- the application must be clear about the expected balance between non-expert users who send in samples and expect full interpretation service and EPR-experts who wish to visit to make use of state-of-the-art infrastructure not in their host institution.

### **Diversify the user base**

The facility is expected to grow and diversify the user base (new universities, new research organisations, different research communities and new industrial users) over the lifetime of the grant. The application should provide details on:

- how the facility would assess the current and future size of the user base
- their communication and engagement strategy to reach new user communities
- what growth they expect to achieve in the user base.

### **Capability**

The application document must include details on how the capability of the facility and the related storage, preparatory, and ancillary equipment would be maintained. This should include:

- details of agreements with appropriate equipment vendors for upgrading and developing the equipment and facility
- a consideration of how this will be optimised where possible over the duration of the grant
- basic details for routine service (daily, weekly, and monthly) and preventative maintenance (quarterly, annually)
- details of the local technical expertise.

The application is expected to provide a timeline for capital investments over the duration of the grant to keep the facility at the cutting edge.

## **Application process**

The application document should outline the application process, with a clear distinction between:

- non-expert users who send in samples and expect full interpretation service
- experts who wish to visit and make use of state-of-the-art infrastructure
- mechanisms should be described for prioritisation of applications and increasing the user base, the criteria should be stated

Having a time allocation panel drawn from the UK and international EPR community is recommended. Facility personnel should be on this panel but should not be a majority.

The chair should be external. Time allocation panel membership should be published on the NRF website.

## **National and international EPR landscape**

The application document should give details about how the facility will be positioned on the national and international EPR landscape, and how it would engage with the rest of the research community.

By a specified time point during the grant, the NRF should coordinate the writing of a national roadmap for EPR.

The facility should organise regular user surveys, including inputs on future facility developments and capabilities.

## **Usage statistics**

The facility is expected to collect usage statistics in line with relevant GDPR regulations and grant conditions, at the individual user and instrument level.

The facility is encouraged to publish the statistics on its website. Statistics and user feedback should inform decision-making regarding capability developments and changes to the modus operandi.

## **Contribution**

The applicants should consider how the contribution of the facility (immediate and long term impacts) is measured and used to demonstrate the added value of the

facility.

Demonstrate at least yearly that they have met the community need and communicated with the diverse needs of the user base. This could be via case studies published on the facility website.

### **Data management policy**

The application must include a data management policy that is compliant with UKRI open data policy and extends beyond the duration of the grant.

The facility must have appropriate and robust systems and procedures to ensure data protection during collection, storage, processing, remote access and secure downloads of research data, including:

- IP sensitive results
- confidential access to data
- secure downloads.

### **Risk assessment and management**

The application must include a risk assessment and a risk management strategy focused on achieving the highest productivity of the facility.

## **3. People and management arrangements**

The facility must meet the following requirements:

### **Excellent team**

The facility must be led by an excellent team which are capable of:

- community building
- assessing community scientific needs
- managing the operational aspects of a facility to meet user and staff requirements
- have the confidence of the community as experts in EPR spectroscopy or in their respective operational roles.

The team will need to work constructively with multiple stakeholders and funders. For grant purposes the application will have a named eligible principal investigator (PI) with other team members listed as co-investigators. Requested PI time should be fully justified with respect to duties to be performed.

### **Technical or operational director**

There must be a nominated technical or operational director who will manage and lead the delivery of the facility. This may or may not be the same person as the nominated director. The application must:

- clearly identify who will take these posts
- provide CVs
- provide evidence of their ability to accomplish their roles.



## **Governance structure**

The governance structure should include:

- a management board (MB), including:
  - the facility director
  - the technical or operational director
  - others as appropriate
- an independent steering committee (SC) that reflects the user community.

The independent steering committee should include external advisors, international representation, and industry representation. The process for identifying and approving SC membership should be defined. A member of EPSRC is also on the SC.

The panel will discuss any specific governance requirements for this facility that should be included in the call and monitored for the subsequent grant. An organogram of the proposed structure should be included. The remit of each such body and their membership (and duration of office) are to be published on the facility webpage. The proposed membership at the start of the grant should be stated in the application.

## **Support and development of professionals**

The facility is expected to provide ongoing support and development for research technical professionals (RTPs) involved in the running of the facility which UKRI recognise as being core to the successful running of the facility.

## **Leadership**

EPSRC expects the facility to take a leadership role in the physical sciences, life sciences and engineering communities. Leadership in this context might involve:

- uniqueness of the facility (no equivalent elsewhere internationally)
- outreach
- demonstrating value of service to community (need and usage)
- owned by the users.

## **Future roadmaps**

Take a leadership role in the community supporting the development of future roadmaps or strategy and working with other bodies in the community to facilitate this as a key contributor. Retain knowledge of the international landscape and where they sit within it and how this feeds into facility strategy.

## **Key performance indicators (KPIs) and service level agreements (SLAs)**

The expectation of EPSRC is that as a result of this call any grant awarded will include KPIs and SLAs that the facility will aspire to meet. These may include but are not limited to those given as standard. The following KPIs and SLAs could be considered:

- number of users: expert and non-expert, return or new
- department and university profile of users and number of industry users
- number of samples: with broad indication of time
- % usage of different instruments: in working hours and 24/7, as appropriate
- user satisfaction average scores
- number of complaints
- list of papers and highlights
- grant applications and success rate
- cost recovery via grants.

## Feedback and complaints

EPSRC expects that a proposed facility will have a process in place for complaints and monitoring of user satisfaction.

The applicants should give an explanation and provide details of the proposed feedback processes and how feedback will be used to implement improvements

The facility should also describe the escalation procedure for user complaints, indicating who to contact in specific cases, with this clearly set out on the facility webpage.

## 4. Cost sharing

EPSRC is committed to providing cost effective services. The application must include a realistic approach to cost recovery. EPSRC expects applicants to identify non-UKRI sources of funding to underwrite the cost-recovery plan in the event of targets not being met which should be documented in letters of support.

The proposal should include details of the charging model, and how it would operate for different types of user and different access routes. A per hour or per day or per sample rate should be specified as appropriate, indicating what is included in the rate, for example, running costs and staff costs. Specifically, it should include:

- the definition of the different charging-categories in the charging model
- consideration of how charged usage will dovetail with free-at-the point of access facility usage
- how this may affect prioritisation of experiments.

Applicants should describe how different access routes will be managed to protect the proposed balance of different users as detailed in operational requirements.

If, following peer review, EPSRC considers that insufficient effort has been made to detail a cost-effective facility it may, in discussion with the PI, alter the profile of a successful grant to return maximum value to UK research users.

The facility should aim for a target by year five that EPSRC's direct support of the NRF is 50% of the total contribution. In line with other NRFs EPSRC will not fund the entirety of the facility and requires a proportion (%) of the recurrent (resource) costs for the facility operation to be recovered each year through charged usage.

For the avoidance of doubt, in this context, recurrent costs mean operational expenditure that is not equipment spend. This target must not preclude proof-of-principle and first-time usage.

EPSRC considers the suggested targets below to be reasonable minimum cost recovery targets for an EPR NRF over a five-year funding period.

Applicants may wish to propose alternative targets and are welcome to describe how further savings might be made and used to fund enhanced facility activities and capabilities. These should be reflected in the proposed grant payment profile that will need to be provided as part of the grant application.

<b>Year</b>	<b>EPSRC contribution to recurrent cost</b>	<b>Cost recovery</b>
1	80%	20%
2	80%	20%
3	70%	30%
4	60%	40%
5	50%	50%

Progress towards increased sustainability will form a key KPI of the successful grant and will be reviewed by the independent steering committee and at the mid-term review.

## **5. Host organisation support**

The facility should be run for the benefit of the national research community. EPSRC is therefore paying the majority of costs at 100% full economic cost (FEC). However, it is important that the host organisation(s) also commit to fully supporting the bid, as detailed in the host organisation letter(s). As a minimum they must commit to:

- relinquishing rights to university owned equipment for external users at the levels detailed in the application
- underwriting the meeting of the cost-recovery targets, in order to provide staff and other resource costs if targets are not met
- providing appropriate support and development opportunities for all staff, including instrument scientists and research technical professionals (RTPs) associated with the operation of the facility
- long term (beyond the length of the grant) data storage and retrieval facilities in line with UKRI data policies
- supporting the facility to develop and implement policies that provide safe, secure and legal access for external users to the facility
- supporting the facility in the creation and administration of the web site.

## Funding available

The EPSRC is awarding up to £5.4 million (at 80% FEC) for one NRF to be funded.

We will apply indexation to a grant before an offer letter is produced, therefore the total EPSRC contribution requested (including any justified exceptions costs paid at 100%) must not exceed £5.27 million to allow for the inclusion of these indexation costs.

Applicants are advised to speak to their research office for support in completing their resource costings.

With regards to resource costs, funding for investigator time and public engagement activities should be costed as normal with funds requested at 80% FEC. All equipment should be costed at 100% FEC under the equipment heading.

All other costs are expected to relate to the running of the National Facility and should be recorded under the exceptions heading and requested at 100% FEC, but reduced to reflect the cost sharing target.

Applicants, as part of the grant application, must propose a grant payment profile that sets out the expected pattern of expenditure over the lifetime of the grant. This payment profile for the facility must reflect the cost recovery targets for the recurrent (resource) costs set out in cost sharing, and the planned schedule for capital and equipment expenditure over the duration of a five-year grant.

Applicants may wish to provide different cost recovery options which vary on the amount of budget requested from EPSRC, with the maximum being £5.4 million.

For more information, see [EPSRC guidance for equipment funding \(EPSRC\)](#).

Grant conditions can be found in Additional information.

---

## How to apply

Applicants should ensure they are aware of and comply with any internal institutional deadlines that may be in place.

## Applying through Je-S

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

If you need help in applying, you can contact Je-S on 01793 444164 or by email [jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org).

When applying select:

- council: EPSRC
- document type: Standard Proposal
- scheme: Standard
- call/type/mode: Electron Paramagnetic Resonance National Research Facility

After completing the application you must 'submit document' which will send your application to your host organisation's administration

Your host organisation's administration is required to complete the submission process. Applicants should allow sufficient time for your organisation's submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the call closing date

EPSRC must receive your application by 16:00 on 25 May 2021.

Applicants should use the Je-S application form to address the call specifications. The following documents must also be submitted.

## **Case for support**

This is a mandatory document. The primary supporting document will be of a longer format than those submitted for standard proposals.

The overall page length will be up to 20 pages, and must include the following sections in single-spaced Arial 11 font or similar-sized sans serif typeface.

### **Track record of applicants**

Up to a maximum of two pages.

### **Service description**

Applicants should use this section to:

- describe and detail the service they propose to provide covering the elements detailed in key requirements for service
- include details of their long term vision and must describe how it sits within national and international EPR infrastructure landscape.

### **Operational details**

Applicants should use this section to:

- detail how they will meet the operational requirements
- provide a clear transition plan to cover the period between the end date of the current UK EPR NRF (April 2022), and the transition to a new facility provider enabling a smooth transition and continuity of service
- provide a clear communication and engagement strategy. It is necessary that sufficient detail is provided for assessors to understand how information about the available capabilities and access to the service will be disseminated including:
  - website
  - user meetings
  - outreach events
  - dissemination material.

### **People and management**

Applicants should use this section to:

- detail how they will meet the people and management arrangements
- as part of this section applicants should provide an organogram of the proposed organisational structure for the facility showing lines of authority, responsibility of key posts, and details of any identified deputies:
  - justification for the number and allocation of staff
  - plans for staff development and training
  - detailed arrangements for career progression for staff
  - information on how changes in key service staff will be handled, (continuity plans, short-term cover, contingency plans for unexpected loss of key staff).  
Recruitment policy and procedures
- provide details of the Risk Management Strategy which they will have in place
- provide details of their proposed user training provision, including the expertise and experience of those involved in training for the different levels of users. This should consider the needs of different user groups, for example:
  - post graduate or doctoral researchers
  - academic researchers
  - industrial users.

This should include how the service will engage with future generations of researchers, including the [Centres for Doctoral Training \(EPSRC\)](#).

## **Governance plan**

Applicants should use this section to:

- identify a governance structure for the service will be put in place
- provide details of this structure, which should include an independent steering or advisory committee, composed of independent or external representatives from relevant communities to review and advise on provision, performance, and strategy for the service
- identify a comprehensive set of KPIs that the service will aspire to meet
- identify the process in place for complaints and monitoring of user satisfaction, and provide details of the proposed feedback processes and how feedback will be used to implement improvements.

## **Additional documents**

In addition to the case for support, applicants must provide:

### **Justification of resources**

Mandatory, with a longer format of up to 4 pages.

The Justification of resources should explain the necessity of your requested resources for service provision, including implementing the impact activities. This helps reviewers make informed judgements about whether the resources requested are appropriate and justified

EPSRC recommend that you follow the 'Cost to the Proposal' headings used in the application form. For more information on what to do, see [how to write a justification of resources \(EPSRC\)](#).

EPSRC will expect the applicants to have looked at cost savings where possible to bring down the total costs. Applicants may wish to provide cost recovery options which could request different amounts of funding from EPSRC, with the maximum being £5.4 million. More space in the JoR can be provided to accommodate these alternative options.

## **Workplan**

Mandatory, one page.

The work programme should be illustrated with a simple diagrammatic work plan, such as a Programme Evaluation and Review Technique (PERT) or Gantt chart.

## **Grant payment profile**

Mandatory, one page.

Applicants must provide a grant payment profile that details the planned expenditure against each recurrent or resource and capital cost heading over the lifetime of a five-year award

The panel will consider the applications and will favour cost recovery plans which are maximised and realistic

The final profiles and percentages awarded are subject to negotiation with EPSRC.

## **CVs, where appropriate**

Up to two pages each.

CVs should be submitted as separate attachments using Attachment Type 'CV' in Je-S, and are required for key named personnel, for example:

- director
- deputy director
- technical director
- facility or service manager.

## **Equipment business case, where appropriate**

Required for any items or combined assets with a value above the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) limit.

## **Proposal cover letter**

Optional. Applicants can use the proposal cover letter to set out any other information they feel is relevant to their application. As the applicant is applying for a grant which has an interview assessment stage, they should inform EPSRC of any personal circumstances for EPSRC to consider

This letter will only be seen by EPSRC and will not be sent to peer review. For sensitive information the applicant should state clearly whether the information is confidential

The proposal cover letter should also be used to highlight anything that has been discussed and agreed with EPSRC staff beforehand. For example:

- declaration of interest
- additional information about eligibility to apply that would not be appropriately shared in the track record
- conflicts of interest for EPSRC to consider in reviewer or panel participant selection.

If you wish to attach any other document that does not fit the above types, please submit it under 'Other Attachment'. This will not be seen by reviewers or panel members.

Please note that on submission to EPSRC all non-PDF documents uploaded onto Je-S are converted to PDF, the use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion, which could affect the overall length of the document.

You should attach your documents as PDFs to avoid errors.

Read our [advice on writing proposals \(EPSRC\)](#).

EPSRC will not fund a project if it believes that there are ethical concerns that have been overlooked or not appropriately accounted for.

All relevant parts of the ethical information section must be completed. Read further [guidance on the ethical information section of the Je-S form](#).

EPSRC guidance can be found under Additional information.

---

## How we will assess your application

Proposals will be submitted via Je-S.

Each proposal will be initially assessed by postal peer review by at least three reviewers. Applicants will then be invited to respond to the reviewers' comments.

Following this, an expert panel will interview applicants and score the applicants against the following assessment criteria, using the:

- proposal
- reviews
- PI response
- responses at interview.

The interview panel will make the final recommendations to the EPSRC theme lead. EPSRC will aim to inform applicants on the decision outcome within eight weeks of the panel.



## Standard assessment criteria

Applicants should note that the assessment criteria differ slightly to the standard EPSRC criteria due to the nature of the programmes of work to be funded.

We also wish to highlight that due to the increased importance of appropriate management and governance procedures for a national research facility, the secondary major criterion is resources and management not national importance.

### Quality (primary)

Assessors will be asked to comment on the excellence of the application making reference to:

- the ambition, long-term vision, and transformative aspects identified
- the appropriateness of the proposed approach(es) and fit to the key facility requirements and operational requirements sections
- the quality of the science enabled
- engaging and adapting to the needs of a diverse user community.

### Resources and management (secondary major)

Assessors will be asked to comment on:

- the effectiveness of the proposed planning, management and governance and the fit to the people and management arrangements section
- whether the requested resources are appropriate and have been fully justified and cost recovery plans are maximised and realistic
- an unsatisfactory governance (including KPI's) plan will result in a delayed start for a successful proposal until the plan has been updated
- any resources requested for activities to either increase impact, for public engagement or to support responsible innovation.

### National importance (secondary)

Drawing upon what the applicant has said, assessors will be asked to comment on:

- how the proposed facility contributes to, or helps maintain the health of other research disciplines, contributes to addressing key UK societal challenges, contributes to current or future UK economic success or enables future development of key emerging industry(s)
- the extent to which the facility proposed has the potential to meet national strategic needs by establishing or maintaining unique world leading research activity (including areas of niche capability)
- how the facility fits with and complements other UK research funded in the area or related areas, including any relationship to the [EPSRC portfolio and our stated strategy](#).

### Applicant and partnerships (secondary)

- appropriateness of the track record of the applicant(s) to deliver the facility
- balance of skills of the project team, including collaborations.

## Call specific assessment criteria

### Advocacy for engineering and the physical sciences (secondary)

The proposal must demonstrate how the group will be advocates for the engineering and physical sciences. Applicants should specifically address how they will influence its policy makers on the importance of engineering and physical sciences.

Advocacy through public engagement activities can also be considered, as long as these activities are directly related to the programme of research applied for. This criterion will be solely assessed at the interview stage.

### Feedback

Feedback on the decision will be given by email after interview.

### Nominating reviewers

As part of the application process you will be invited to nominate up to three potential reviewers who you feel have the expertise to assess your proposal. Please ensure that any nominations meet the [EPSRC policy on conflicts of interest](#).

For more information about the reviewer selection process please see the related content links.

### Guidance for reviewers

For more information about the EPSRC peer review process, read our [guidance for reviewers \(EPSRC\)](#).

A standard reviewer form will be used for this call, however reviewers should note the nature of a National Research Facility when considering quality.

As such, reviewers are requested to comment on the quality of the potential research enabled by having such a facility in the UK. Within the quality field, reviewers should comment on how the proposed facility meets the key requirements of the facility including technical, operational and management aspects as detailed in the call document.

Read our guidance for [reviewing standard grants \(EPSRC\)](#).

---

## Contact details

Tracey Dale – [tracey.dale@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:tracey.dale@epsrc.ukri.org) – internal query contact

Sarah Newman – [sarah.newman@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:sarah.newman@epsrc.ukri.org)

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.

If you need help in applying, you can contact Je-S on 01793 444164 or by email [jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org).

The Je-S helpdesk is staffed Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Fridays 8.30am to 4.30pm (excluding bank holidays and other holidays).

---

## **Additional info**

EPSRC National Research Facilities (NRF) are defined as research facilities which provide resources that are of limited availability to UK researchers for one of several reasons including:

- the relative cost of the equipment and the supporting infrastructure required
- dedicated equipment and supporting infrastructure is not required in every university
- particular expertise is needed to operate the equipment or interpret the results
- progress is enhanced by sharing information or software.

EPSRC initiated an annual call for statements of community need to identify community requirements for NRF in 2019. The statements of community need were prioritised by an expert panel. This process assessed the:

- quality
- usage
- national importance
- strategic case and context
- impact
- justification for an NRF
- sustainability
- charging and access of the submitted Statements of Community Need.

This grant will have been funded under the NRF scheme and forms part of a portfolio of facilities. In line with the purpose of EPSRCs national importance criteria, investigators and researchers associated with this grant are expected to promote the aims of the associated research programme and be advocates for EPSRC.

## **Additional grant conditions**

Grants will be subject to the standard UK Research and Innovation grant conditions however the following additional grant conditions will be added to this call:

### **GAC 01 – Purpose of grant funding**

1.1 This grant has been funded under the National Research Facilities scheme and forms part of a portfolio of facilities. In line with the purpose of EPSRCs National

Importance criteria investigators and researchers associated with this grant are expected to promote the aims of the associated research programme and be advocates for EPSRC.

## **GAC 02 – Monitoring**

2.1 EPSRC will nominate a member(s) of UKRI staff (The Project Officers) who will be your primary point of contact with the research councils. The Project Officers will ensure that the project is being run in accordance with the terms and conditions and in line with financial due diligence.

The Project Officer(s) should have access to all documentation of Governance and Reporting bodies, in so far as it relates to the administration and application of the grant. As funding administrators, all UKRI staff have agreed to maintain the confidentiality required by all parties involved in research council funded research.

## **GAC 03 – Research Governance**

3.1 This grant must establish and run an Independent Advisory Board, or equivalent body, to oversee the day to day running of the project and provide advice on the strategic direction and activities of the project. The terms of reference of this group should be agreed with the EPSRC and it should have at least 50% independent membership and an independent Chair. The Project Officers will also be expected to attend and participate in Advisory Board and other appropriate meetings for the duration of the grant.

## **GAC 04 – Accountability**

4.1 The Grant Holder should establish an appropriate management structure, which must incorporate independent membership and clear lines of responsibility and authority. This should be in place within six months of the start date of the grant. The terms of reference and membership of any committees established must be agreed in advance with EPSRC. The Project Officers will be EPSRC main contact with the project, and must receive all meeting minutes of the committees. EPSRC reserve the right to attend any meetings.

## **GAC 05 – Project Review**

5.1 The Grant Holder must agree to comply with requests for additional financial or non-financial information outside of the stated reporting cycle. Regular monitoring will be conducted through the Project Officer, who will act on behalf of UKRI.

5.2 In addition to the requirements set out in standard UKRI grant conditions RGC 7.5 Disclosure and Inspection, RGC 2.4 Reporting on the Conduct and Results of Research, EPSRC and UKRI reserve the right to instigate a review of all or part of the grant at any stage during the lifetime of the award as well as after the grant has finished.

A Mid Term (year three) review of this grant will take place to assess the performance of the grant in line with the peer reviewed body of work, published scheme assessment criteria and Key Performance Indicators. EPSRC will give the Grant Holder due notice of the date of any review and will provide details of the

Terms of Reference and documentation required. Any review will be conducted by an expert panel, which will make recommendations to EPSRC for the grant's future.

## **GAC 06 – Progress Reports**

6.1 In addition to the requirements set out in the standard UKRI grant condition RGC 7.4 Research Monitoring and Evaluation, the Grant Holder is responsible for providing six month progress reports against non-financial performance metrics. A detailed list of performance metrics and instructions for reporting will be agreed with the Grant Holder upon commencement of the grant.

## **GAC 07 – Sanctions**

7.1 In accordance with RGC 11 Sanctions, EPSRC reserves the right to suspend the grant and withhold further payments if the performance output metrics requested are not provided by the stated deadlines or determined to be of an unacceptable standard by the EPSRC Project Officer(s).

The Research Organisation will be formally notified in writing if a suspension occurs. Any costs incurred during this period, irrespective of source, will be incurred at risk with subsequent EPSRC payments being withheld should any discrepancies remain unresolved.

## **GAC 08 – Grant Expenditure**

8.1 At the start of the grant the financial spend profile will be agreed by UKRI.

8.2 In addition to any reporting requirements set out in GAC 05 the Grant Holder must immediately notify the EPSRC Project Officer(s) of any accumulation, slippage or variation in expenditure greater than 5% of the annual profiled funding. EPSRC reserves the right to re-profile the grant if required.

8.3 Any deviation from the agreed allocation of funding and profiled costs must be negotiated and approved through written consent by EPSRC, acting on behalf of UKRI. The approval of profile changes should not be assumed and will be dependent on spend across all associated grants.

---

## **Timeline**

**○ 7 April 2021 09:00**

Opening date

**○ 3 June 2021 16:00**

Closing date

○ **September 2021**  
Panel interview

© 2021 Copyright UKRI