

**2021/22 UKRI-BBSRC sLoLa CALL
GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS version 1.1**

Version history

Version	Description	Date
1.0	Initial publication <i>Je-S information and application deadlines to be confirmed</i>	6 May 2021
1.1	Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sLoLa call webpage link updated • Je-S information and application deadline for outline stage updated • Formatting updated 	6 July 2021

CALL SCOPE

Applicants should refer to the sLoLa call webpage for details of the call scope, including scientific focus, requirements, exclusions and available resources.

<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/strategic-longer-and-larger-grants-frontier-bioscience-2021-2022/>

APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS - SUMMARY

Stage	Assessment
Call registration (mandatory)	The aim of the call registration is to ensure outlines are appropriately targeted to this call, to provide an early indication of the level of demand and to allow institutional-level demand moderation steps to be taken if necessary. The UKRI-BBSRC Office will provide non-peer review feedback on the suitability of projects for the call
Outline stage	Outline proposals will be assessed by the Strategic LoLa Committee (SLC) only. There will be no external peer review. The SLC will invite submission of full proposals for outlines that have the potential to be highly competitive at the full stage.
Full stage (invite only)	Full proposals will be assessed in two phases: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. External peer review with the opportunity for a PI response and assessment by a multidisciplinary panel. Highly rated proposals will be shortlisted for interview. 2. The SLC will conduct interviews with the shortlisted applicants and make a final funding recommendation to BBSRC.

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APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS – OUTLINE STAGE

The outline stage is mandatory and only open to applicants who have registered for the call. Submission to the outline stage is subject to UKRI-BBSRC feedback on fit to scope and any institutional-level demand management steps that have been imposed (this will only be implemented if essential to control demand).

How to apply

Submit outline proposals through the Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) System. The deadline for submission is **31 August 2021, 4 pm**. Submit using the following information:

1. Log in the Joint Electronic System (Je-S)
2. Select Council: BBSRC
3. Select Document Type: Outline proposal
4. Select Scheme: Standard Outlines
5. Select Call/Type/Mode: 2021 Strategic LoLa Outlines
6. Select 'Create Document' and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the form.

In addition to the Je-S proposal form, the only attachment that should be provided is the Case for Support. No other attachments (e.g. covering letter, CVs, letters of support) will be accepted.

Submission must be made on a single Je-S proposal form, regardless of the number of Research Organisations involved in the sLoLa proposal.

Resources

The Je-S form should include a summary of anticipated resources that would be requested at the full stage. **Detailed justification of the resources requested is not required at the outline stage and resources requested may be refined at the full stage.**

Case for Support (outline stage)

The Case for Support must be structured using the headings below and must not exceed **six pages of A4**. Any references included must be within the page limit. At a minimum, font size 11 in Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size must be used with a minimum of single line and standard character spacing. Page margins should be no less than 2 cm.

The following four headings should be used:

Section 1: Science Case (at least two pages recommended)

- Identify the overall aims of the proposed sLoLa research programme, set in the context the call's frontier bioscience scope, current knowledge, and the leading edge within the research domain(s).

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- The high-level objectives for the planned sLoLa must be included (typically 3-5 bullets) with an explanation of how these will be tackled. If a full proposal is invited, it is expected that the high-level objectives will appear unchanged unless feedback from the outline assessment process indicates otherwise.
- Highlight features which are particularly original or unique. Explain how the research programme is an ambitious, transformative approach that will result in a step change in knowledge that will have a major impact on the research area.
- *Please note when preparing this section that the SLC will assess the overall scope and potential of the research at the outline stage but a detailed scientific assessment will not be made.*

Section 2: Statement of added value (up to one page recommended)

- Justify the need for sLoLa funding, describing the added value of funding through this mechanism. Outline a clear strategy for how the research team's outputs (experiments, data and results) will be fully integrated to deliver 'greater than sum of parts' outcomes which could not be achieved through a series of smaller scale, shorter projects (e.g. Responsive Mode awards).
- Outline how the proposed research complements and does not overlap with other research funded in this area nationally and internationally, including UKRI-BBSRC's research portfolio. For information on UKRI-BBSRC's portfolio, please see [Gateway to Research](#) and downloads on the call webpage.

Section 3: Strategic Case (up to one page recommended)

- The significance and importance of the proposed research, including how the sLoLa award will enhance the international position of UK bioscience in the research area.
- How the research programme will have an impact on the broader health and vitality of UK bioscience. Where applicable, this might include: plans for ensuring the longer-term legacy of data, software, technologies and other community resources, skills and national capability developed during the project, as well as identifying potential routes towards economic or societal impacts where these may already be evident.

Section 4: Ability to deliver (up to two pages recommended)

- The contribution to the project of each named Investigator (PI/Co-I), including a clear time commitment. This should be in the form of a succinct personal statement, providing evidence of the skills, expertise and experience they will bring to the project. The team should demonstrate it has sufficient expertise covering all aspects of the proposed research; for example, ensuring all theoretical, experimental and data analysis needs of the project have been considered.

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- Personal statements should highlight each investigator's expertise and role, as well as any key research outcomes and broader impacts directly relevant to the project. Include any engagement in previous collaborative projects by the investigators. Extensive general biographical information and journal-based metrics such as impact factor, H-index or other surrogate measures of an individual researcher's contributions, should NOT be included.
- The leadership track record of the Principal Investigator (in particular) and co-investigators (where relevant) should be described, demonstrating capability to lead and manage a complex multi-investigator project. This should include evidence of relevant past experience, prior collaboration between applicants if applicable, and any significant professional development activities. Where Early Career Researchers are included in the applicant team, ability to mentor and support their development should be demonstrated.
- The resources or facilities that will be available within the team and their institutions to underpin the research.

Assessment process: outline stage

Outline proposals will be assessed by the SLC only; there will be no external peer review stage.

The purpose of the outline stage is not to conduct a detailed scientific evaluation but to assess the extent to which the proposal addresses the purpose, scope and eligibility requirements of the sLoLa call. Please refer to the assessment criteria in [Annex 1](#) and scoring definitions in [Annex 2](#).

Based on their assessment, the SLC will decide which applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Feedback from the SLC will be provided to **all** applicants to the outline stage. Feedback provided to those applicants who are invited to make a full proposal may include comments on:

- essential information that should be part of a full proposal
- any parts of the outline that should not be included in a full proposal
- the framing of the research objectives
- any suggested modifications to the scale or timescales of the project
- any additional work or collaborations not outlined in the application, where they are deemed to be essential to the success of the project, or concerns as to the composition of the project team
- any other advice required

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APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS – FULL STAGE

The full application is only open to proposals invited by the SLC following the outline assessment.

How to apply (invited full proposals)

Full proposals must be submitted on a single Je-S proposal form, even if they are multi-institutional bids. The award will be made to the lead institution, which will be responsible for the management of the award.

Applicants should also refer to the [Je-S help](#) text and [BBSRC Grants Guide](#), in addition to this call guidance, when preparing a proposal.

Proposals must be submitted through the Je-S System. The deadline for submission is **TBC**. Submit using the following information:

7. Log in the Joint Electronic System (Je-S)
8. Select **Council:** BBSRC
9. Select **Document Type:** Standard Proposal
10. Select **Scheme:** Responsive Mode
11. Select **Call/Type/Mode:** 2022 Strategic Longer and Larger Grants
12. Click **Create Document**

Submissions must be made on a single Je-S proposal form, regardless of the number of Research Organisations involved in the sLoLa proposal

Overview of submission documents

The following documentation is required:

Document	Description	Page limit
Case for Support	The overall maximum page length for the combined Case for Support is 16 pages. It must be self-contained - external links are not permitted. References must be included within the page limit. See detailed information below for Case for Support requirements.	Maximum 16 pages
Justification of Resources	A narrative description of the resources required for the project.	Maximum 4 pages All resources requested (directly incurred, directly allocated and exceptions, including PI and Co-I

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	<p>Changes to indicative costs provided at the Outline stage are permitted. We recommend contacting us if the budget increases by more than 10% from the outline stage.</p>	<p>time) must be fully justified. Items that would ordinarily be found in a department, for example non-specialist computers, should include justification both for why they are required for the project and why they cannot be provided from the Research Organisation's own resources (including funding from indirect costs from grants).</p> <p>Please see the Je-S guidance for further details.</p> <p>Specific resources for elements of data-intensive bioscience within the proposed research programme, such as data management, can be requested. For additional information, please see paragraph 5.10 of the UKRI-BBSRC Grants Guide.</p>
<p>CVs</p>	<p>Required for all named applicants and named research staff only. CVs are not required for named technicians.</p>	<p>Maximum 2 pages per investigator and named researcher, combined into a single PDF</p> <p>Please note that as part of our commitment to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (sfдора.org/), BBSRC applicants are advised not to use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions. More information on the Peer Review Framework and the statement on responsible use of metrics from UKRI can be found at https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-we-makedecisions/</p>

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Work Plan	A diagrammatic work plan and supporting narrative that relates to the management strategy, identifying appropriate time points and deliverables for each objective. A Gantt chart is recommended.	Maximum 2 pages
Data Management Plan	https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/policies-standards/data-sharing-policy/	Maximum 2 pages
Justification of Animal Usage (if applicable)	<p>All applications involving animal usage overseas are required to submit a signed statement confirming that this research would be conducted in accordance with regulatory systems in the UK and that all applicants understand the requirements.</p> <p>If the research involves the use of specific animals (rodents, rabbits, sheep, goats, pigs, cattle and Xenopus) overseas rather than in the UK, applicants need to complete additional questions that can be found at NCR3S: Use of Animals overseas</p>	Variable – please refer to Animal Use in Research
Letters of Support	<p>Only directly relevant Letters of Support should be submitted.</p> <p>These can include letters from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Department (or equivalent) Recommended for lead Research Organisation. This should confirm any institutional resources committed to the project. Letters from multiple departments/ organisations should be combined into a single pdf. • Collaborators (required for all named collaborators providing a contribution to the sLoLa project) 	<p>Please provide Letters of Support from the Head of Department (or equivalent) and Collaborators in a single combined pdf, where relevant.</p> <p>Please provide separate attachments for each Project Partner, where relevant.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project Partners (required for all named Project Partners providing a contribution to the sLoLa project) <p>Other letters of support are not permitted.</p>	
Equipment Business Case (if applicable)	<p>BBSRC's normal rules relating to research equipment apply. See UKRI-BBSRC Grants Guide from section 5.15.</p> <p>For all equipment above the OJEU threshold of £115k (net VAT and Import Duty; £138k inc VAT) a business case is required.</p>	Maximum 2 pages

Case for support

The Case for Support should build on the information provided at the outline stage and any feedback but should be a self-contained document. **Neither the outline proposal nor any feedback from the SLC will be made available to external reviewers;** it will be assessed independently on its own merits. **The Full Stage panel will be provided with a copy of the feedback sent to the applicants at the Outline Stage.**

The Case for Support must be structured using the headings below and must not exceed **sixteen pages of A4**. References must be included within the page limit. At a minimum, font size 11 in Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size must be used with a minimum of single line and standard character spacing. Page margins should be no less than 2 cm.

The following five headings should be used:

Section 1: Science Case (11 pages recommended)

Background

- Introduce the topic of research and explain its academic and wider context.
- Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of past and current work in the subject area both in the UK and internationally.
- Provide a summary of the results and conclusions of your recent work in the research area(s) relevant to the proposal.

Programme and methodology

- Identify the overall aims of the proposed sLoLa research programme, set in the context the call's frontier bioscience scope, current knowledge, and the leading edge within the research domain(s).

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- Provide the individual measurable objectives for the planned sLoLa and explain how these will be tackled. This should include a detailed description and justification for the methods and approaches to be employed.
- Describe the programme of work, indicating the research (experimental and data analysis) to be undertaken and the milestones that can be used to measure its progress. The detail should be sufficient to indicate the programme of work for each member of the research team. Identify any potential risks within the research programme and strategies to mitigate these risks (e.g. alternative approaches).
- Identify any facilities or resources you will need to access.
- Explain why the proposed project is of sufficient timeliness and novelty to warrant consideration for funding. Highlight features which are particularly original or unique. sLoLa proposals are expected to be ambitious and potentially transformative, resulting in a step change in knowledge that will have a major impact on the research area.

Section 2: Statement of added value (up to one page recommended)

- Justify the need for sLoLa funding, describing the added value of funding through this mechanism. Outline a clear strategy for how the research team's outputs (experiments, data and results) will be fully integrated to deliver 'greater than sum of parts' outcomes which could not be achieved through a series of smaller, shorter grants (e.g. Responsive Mode awards).
- Outline how the proposed research complements and does not overlap with other research funded in this area nationally and internationally, including UKRI-BBSRC's research portfolio. For information on UKRI-BBSRC's portfolio, please see [Gateway to Research](#) and downloads on the call webpage.

Section 3: Strategic Case (up to one page recommended)

- The significance and importance of the proposed research, including how the sLoLa award will enhance the international position of UK bioscience in the research area.
- How the research programme will have an impact on the broader health and vitality of UK bioscience. Where applicable, this might include: plans for ensuring the longer-term legacy of data, software, technologies and other community resources, skills and national capability developed during the project, as well as identifying potential routes towards economic or societal impacts where these may already be evident.

Section 4: Ability to deliver (up to two pages recommended)

- The contribution to the project of each named Investigator (PI/Co-I), including a clear time commitment. This should be in the form of a succinct personal statement, providing evidence of the skills, expertise and experience they will bring to the project. The team should demonstrate it has sufficient expertise covering all aspects of the proposed research; for example, ensuring all theoretical, experimental and data analysis needs of the project have been considered.

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- Personal statements should highlight each investigator's expertise and role, as well as any key research outcomes and broader impacts directly relevant to the project. Extensive general biographical information and journal-based metrics such as impact factor, H-index or other surrogate measures of an individual researcher's contributions, should NOT be included.
- The leadership track record of the Principal Investigator (in particular) and co-investigators (where relevant) should be described, demonstrating capability to lead and manage a complex multi-investigator project. This should include evidence of relevant past experience, prior collaboration between applicants if applicable, and any significant professional development activities. Where Early Career Researchers are included in the applicant team, ability to mentor and support their development should be demonstrated.
- The resources or facilities that will be available within the team and their institutions to underpin the research.

Section 5: Management strategy (up to one page recommended)

- Describe how the project will be managed to ensure effective working of the investigators and wider team, effective utilisation of resources, and successful delivery of the planned outcomes. The management approach should be appropriate to the nature and scale of the programme.
- Provide details about the governance, advisory and management structure, details of the approach to project and risk management, and the monitoring strategy for the proposed programme.
- An independent advisory board is required for large-scale programmes.

Assessment process: full stage

Proposals will be assessed by external peer reviewers and applicants will be invited to respond in writing to the reviewers' comments. Proposals will then be assessed by a multidisciplinary panel that includes members of the SLC, BBSRC Core Committees and Pool of Experts. Owing to current working restrictions it is not anticipated that proposals will be assessed at the Responsive Mode Committee meetings.

Applications that are ranked highly (expected at minimum to be those rated within the Exceptional and Excellent scoring range) will be further assessed by the SLC at interview. Interviews are expected to be held in Summer 2022 (applicants will be advised to hold these dates once they are known).

The SLC will provide a recommendation to UKRI-BBSRC, which will make the final funding decision.

The criteria and scoring definitions are provided in [Annex 1](#) and [Annex 2](#).

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Conditions of award

Awards will be made under standard [UKRI Research Grant Terms and Conditions](#) to the lead organisation, which will be responsible for the management of the award.

Reporting and Monitoring

As a condition of a sLoLa award, in addition to standard reporting requirements, the PI must complete an interim report during the third year of the grant. A report template will be provided. Continuation of funding for the full period of the grant depends on the successful assessment of this interim report.

We will also allocate a project officer for the duration of all sLoLa awards. They will provide a primary point of UKRI-BBSRC contact for the PI, monitor progress and issues, attend advisory board meetings, and provide guidance during the course of the grant.

ANNEX 1: ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND SCORING DEFINITIONS

Assessment criteria

Applications to the sLoLa scheme will be assessed with reference to the scope of call (see call text) and against the following assessment criteria:

Research excellence

The project should fully address the scientific scope of the call and meet the highest current international standards in its area of research. The project should have a coherent focus on addressing a significant research challenge employing ambitious, creative and innovative approaches. Justification should be provided regarding how the project will lead to a distinctive and significant advancement with regard to both current state of knowledge and ongoing research efforts within the field.

Importance and transformative potential

The scientific significance and importance of the proposed research should be clearly articulated. This should include how establishing or enhancing a unique, world leading research activity will ensure international competitiveness of UK bioscience. Proposals should also address how the research programme will have significant impact on the broader health and vitality of UK bioscience and consider the potential for longer term legacy and sustainability, impact on capability, and economic and social impact.

Added value of funding via sLoLa grant

The need for longer and larger-scale funding through the sLoLa programme must be articulated clearly, with the benefit and added value of supporting a coherent programme of inter-related objectives and other research activities rather than individual project grants clearly demonstrated.

Proposals should include consideration of how the proposed research programme fits with and complements other active UK research in the area or related areas, including the relationship to UKRI-BBSRC's portfolio of investments and overall strategy.

Ability to deliver

The work should be undertaken by a world-class research team comprising the full complement of skills, expertise and experience needed to achieve the expected outcomes, drawn from the breadth of the UK's diverse talent pool and underpinned by an appropriate institutional environment(s).

Projects must also demonstrate that they have the appropriate leadership expertise and experience within the team to deliver the complexity and scale of work proposed. This includes responsibility for setting research direction, maintaining focus and momentum, as well as supporting the development of individuals and generally ensuring the successful functioning of the team.

Management strategy

The proposal must demonstrate that a robust plan is in place to ensure effective working of the investigators and wider team. This strategy should ensure coordination of information and resources, integrated working across the team, management of diverse people and talent, the ability to address problems and to generally ensure the successful delivery of the

planned outcomes. This should include information about governance and advisory structures, risk management, progress monitoring and project management.

Resources

The resources requested should be fully justified and appropriate relative to the anticipated project outcomes.

Use of the assessment criteria

At each assessment stage of the call the assessment criteria will be used as follows:

Assessment criterion	Outline stage	Full stage
Research excellence	Y	Y
Importance and Transformative Potential	Y	Y
Added Value of Funding via sLoLa Grant	Y	Y
Ability to Deliver	Y	Y
Management Strategy	N	Y
Resources	N	Y

In addition, at **full stage** the following will also be assessed:

Data management plan

Research proposals are expected to comply with UKRI-BBSRC's data sharing policy and all proposals must include a data management plan. It is vital that a robust data management plan is in place to ensure the research programme has a successful legacy which is maximally impactful for the wider bioscience community. For the UKRI-BBSRC policy please see the statement at <https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/policies-standards/data-sharing-policy/>.

Ethics and animal usage

Applications proposing to use animals must abide by the guidance on Animal Use detailed in the [UKRI-BBSRC Grants Guide](#).

ANNEX 2: SCORING DEFINITIONS

The standard UKRI-BBSRC scoring framework (below) will be used at each stage of the assessment, with reference to the assessment criteria.

Outline stage

Outline proposals must score within the 'exceptional' or 'excellent' range (minimum 5.0) to be considered for progression to the full stage. Volume management may dictate that a higher scoring threshold is used.

Full stage (panel assessment)

Full stage proposals must score within the 'exceptional' or 'excellent' range (minimum 5.0) to be considered for progression to interview. Invitation to interview is subject to volume management requirements and recommendation by the panel, so a higher scoring threshold may be used.

Full stage (interviews)

Using information from the full stage panel assessment and interviews, proposals will be scored and ranked by the SLC to produce a final funding recommendation to BBSRC.

Standard UKRI-BBSRC Scoring Framework

Score Range	Definition	Guidance
6.0 – 6.9	Exceptional Fully addresses the scope of the call and all of the assessment criteria, meeting the majority of them to an exceptional level. Likely to have a significant impact.	Fundable
5.0 – 5.9	Excellent Fully addresses the scope of the call and meets the majority of the assessment criteria to a very high level	Fundable
4.0 – 4.9	Very Good Addresses the scope of the call and meets the majority of the assessment criteria to a high level.	Fundable
3.0 – 3.9	Good Work that addresses the scope and scientific objectives of the call to a reasonable standard and meets the majority of the assessment criteria to an adequate level.	Fundable in principle but unlikely to be funded
2.0 – 2.9	Not Competitive Work that does not adequately address the scope and scientific objectives of the call and does not meet the assessment criteria to an acceptable level.	Not Fundable
1.0 – 1.9	Unfundable Work that does not address the scope and scientific objectives of the call and does not meet the assessment criteria to an acceptable level.	Not Fundable