

EPSRC New Investigator Award Scheme

Applicant Eligibility Guidelines

Eligibility

The New Investigator Award scheme is intended to support individuals who hold an academic lectureship position (or equivalent) and have not previously led a research group. We do not consider years post-PhD or job title to be a marker of career progression, and eligibility is determined on the basis of funding history.

Eligibility criteria are based on the objectives of the scheme; that is, to give an early career academic the opportunity to build their first research project, manage a team, establish research independence and build personal and professional development. As such, your role and previous experience is taken into account in the eligibility criteria, particularly the degree of involvement in previous projects. While we recognise that there are many individual circumstances, we will reject applications that are not in the spirit or do not meet the overall aspirations of the scheme, or where previous experience would duplicate the objectives of the New Investigator Award scheme.

We expect research offices to advise applicants on eligibility. If multiple ineligible applications are received from a single institution, EPSRC may seek to engage with the university before additional applications can be made.

Am I eligible contractually?

Applicants must comply with the [standard EPSRC terms for eligibility to hold research grants](#).

Investigators must be academic employees (lecturer or equivalent) of an [eligible organisation](#). Eligible organisations include:

- all UK higher education institutions that receive grant funding from 1 of the UK higher education funding bodies
- some research institutes
- NHS bodies with research capacity
- UKRI-approved independent research organisations
- public sector research establishments that have independent capability to undertake and lead research programmes and satisfy various financial and legal criteria

If you have a fixed-term appointment, you are eligible provided that your contract extends beyond the end date of the proposed research and your host research organisation provides you with the support they would normally offer a permanent employee. Extension of a fixed term appointment cannot be conditional on your application for an New Investigator Award being successful.

Current holders of postdoctoral-level fellowships are not eligible to hold EPSRC research grants.

These fellowships include (but are not limited to):

- EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowship
- Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship
- Sir Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- Leverhulme Trust Research Fellowship
- NERC Independent Research Fellowship
- Ser Cymru Fellowship
- Daphne Jackson Trust Fellowship

If you are employed in a staff post on a research grant, you are not eligible to be a principal investigator, unless you hold an early career fellowship and your university gives you the same stature as a permanent academic member of staff.

These early career fellowships include, but are not limited to:

- EPSRC Early Career Fellowship
- EPSRC Open Fellowship
- UKRI Future Leader Fellowship
- Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowship
- RAEng Research Fellowship
- RAEng Industrial Fellowship
- Royal Society University Research Fellowship (URFs)
- Royal Society Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowship

Where URFs have been in receipt of enhanced funding, the value of the enhanced funding does not affect eligibility for the New Investigator Award scheme, however postdoctoral research assistants (PDRA) time in excess of 6 months as part of the URF enhancement would then make an applicant ineligible.

Where a fellowship funds 100% of the principal investigator's salary, but does not cover other costs and allows or expects other grants to be held simultaneously, a New Investigator Award application can be submitted with no principal investigator's time subject to the rules of the fellowship.

Applicants must be resident in the UK.

Am I eligible with my application history?

The application to the New Investigator Award scheme must be the applicant's first to EPSRC as a principal investigator with the following exceptions:

- if your proposal was rejected at the outline stage
- Industrial CASE Studentship
- Overseas Travel Grant
- EPSRC studentship through doctoral training partnership and centres for doctoral training
- Workshop Grant
- EPSRC New Horizons, EPSRC Mathematical Science Small Grants Scheme, or other calls which specifically note in the call information that they do not affect the eligibility for the scheme

If you have previously submitted an EPSRC application in a joint proposal as the principal investigator of a child grant, you may still be eligible to apply, subject to meeting the rules around significant grant history.

If you have been a co-investigator on a previous application to EPSRC, you would be welcome to apply subject to meeting the other eligibility criteria. However, if you had a significant role in developing the application, or were responsible for leading a significant

work package (for example, in excess of £100,000 full economic cost, more than 6 months of PDRA time, or more than £20,000 in capital equipment), then you are unlikely to be eligible.

Applicants who have unsuccessful EPSRC early career fellowship, EPSRC Open Fellowship or UK Research and Innovation Future Leader Fellowship applications can still apply to this scheme.

Am I eligible with my funding history?

Eligibility is assessed at the point of application. If you hold or have previously held an award which duplicates the spirit of the New Investigator Award scheme, or a significant grant (as defined in our criteria below) you are not eligible to apply. In-flight applications do not affect your eligibility for New Investigator Award.

If applicants have been leading projects which included more than 6 months PDRA time, capital equipment in excess of £20,000 or single research grants over £100,000 full economic cost which have not been addressed by the exceptions above, eligibility will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. You will need to provide EPSRC with information about the value of the project and what your role was, both in terms of obtaining the funding and on the project itself.

Funding received from local sources while working overseas must be taken into consideration, and the same scheme eligibility principles apply.

Applicants who have previously directed the vision of a research group are not eligible to apply.

We require candidates and research offices to be satisfied at the point of application that the candidate is eligible for the scheme.

Fellowships

Previous holders of postdoctoral level fellowships are welcome to apply if they meet the other eligibility criteria, even if the fellowship was more than £100,000 full economic cost. However, if the postdoctoral level fellowship included more than 6 months of PDRA time or capital equipment over £20,000, then you are unlikely to be eligible.

Previous holders of early career level fellowships are not eligible.

Current holders of early career level and above fellowships which include more than 6 months of PDRA time are not eligible. Current holders of early career level and above fellowships which do not include PDRA time are eligible if they meet the other eligibility criteria, even if the fellowship was more than £100,000 full economic cost.

Co-investigators

If you have been a co-investigator on a grant funded by EPSRC, you would be welcome to apply subject to meeting the other eligibility criteria. Please note that applicants who have acted as co-investigators on a significant workstream with PDRA time, and have had significant input into the research proposal, would not be eligible to apply.

Equipment grants

If you have received a grant which was solely for capital equipment, which did not include PDRA or research time, then you are still eligible to apply if the other eligibility criteria are met, even if it was of significant value.

Collaboration with industry

If you have previously received a Knowledge Transfer Partnership, Innovate UK grant, or similar award based on collaboration with industry, you may still be eligible to apply for an NIA even if the value was in excess of £100,000 full economic cost, depending on your role in developing the proposal and directing the vision of the research.

I'm still not sure if I'm eligible

If you have read the guidance above, checked our frequently asked questions, and spoken with your research office and still do not know if you are eligible to apply, please contact us for advice prior to submitting an application under this scheme. Assessment of appropriateness for this scheme will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, based on the scheme principles, the individual circumstances of the applicant and their career path.

Please bear in mind that we cannot assess individual CVs or non-EP SRC fellowships on a case-by-case basis.

Email: researchcareers@epsrc.ukri.org

Once a proposal is submitted, acceptance to the scheme will be judged by EP SRC before the application is sent to expert peer review and is made on the basis of the content of the cover letter. If EP SRC assesses that the applicant is not eligible to apply for the scheme, the applicant will be asked to withdraw the proposal.