



## Additional Guidance for Applicants

### AHRC-funded Secondments in Architecture and Design within UKRI Innovation Scholars Programme

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This guidance should be read in conjunction with the funding opportunity. It is presented in the question-and-answer format as it provides more detailed information based on real-life queries received by AHRC. Please see the funding opportunity here: <https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/pre-announcement-enhance-your-career-through-an-architecture-or-design-secondment/>

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## HOSTING AND SECONDING ORGANISATIONS

**Question (Q): Are host organisations meant to find the secondees for their project or will they be matched to the secondees?**

**Answer (A):** We expect that every application is already submitted as a partnership endeavour, involving both the secondees and a group of at least two organisations, one of them being the one that employs the proposed secondees and the other one being the proposed hosting organisation. AHRC and UKRI will not be making those connections for applicants.

**Q: Is there a maximum number of co-hosts that are allowed (as a consortium approach)?**

**A:** There is no maximum number of hosts, however, there will be a requirement to have a collaboration agreement in place before the funding is awarded. We would expect every partner to justify why they are on the proposal and for the applicant to make a case to support the involvement of each of the hosts. We have allowed multiple hosts to not restrict the creativity in the projects and to allow a diverse range of people to apply.

**Q: If my proposed hosting organisation has a wide remit and design or architecture activities are only a small part of it, can I apply for this opportunity?**

**A:** Design or Architecture doesn't have to be the sole focus of the organisation, but we require at least one organisation (the hosting or the seconding organisation), or a department within it, to have

strong capabilities in design or architecture research and innovation, to provide a suitable environment for the secondee.

**Q: Which side of the partnership should represent architecture and design – the hosting or the sending organisation?**

**A:** It could be both or one of them. The minimum requirement is that the hosting organisation or a team or department within it has strong capabilities in design or architecture research and innovation, to provide a suitable environment for the secondee.

**Q: When are Collaboration Agreements required and what format should they follow?**

**A:** If you are successful in the application process, you must have the Collaboration Agreement signed by the host and seconding organisations prior to the project start day. AHRC might request a copy. Regarding the format and process, we suggest you use the Lambert toolkit recommended by the Government: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/university-and-business-collaboration-agreements-lambert-toolkit> The toolkit helps academic or research institutions and industrial partners who wish to carry out research projects together. It includes a decision guide, model research collaboration (one to one) agreements, consortium (multi-party) agreements, heads of terms and variation agreements for both collaboration and consortium agreements and guidance notes.

**Q: How will you judge whether an organisation that is not a research organisation or an independent research organisation has demonstrable, current, and ongoing capacity to undertake research and innovation activity?**

**A:** Please refer to the assessment criteria on [UKRI Funding Finder](#). In terms of suitability of the hosting organisation, it is the applicant's responsibility to make the case that the organisation you've chosen to host your secondment can undertake the research and innovation outlined in the secondment vision.

**Q: Which organisations that are not research organisations (ROs) or independent research organisations (IROs) are eligible to be a seconding or hosting organisation?**

**A:** Any organisation that is eligible to hold government funding for research and innovation through AHRC, UKRI and Innovate UK is eligible for this funding opportunity. For example, public bodies, charitable organisations, and businesses might become seconding or hosting organisations. However, please check the specific eligibility criteria on [UKRI Funding Finder](#). If you're a business, you will have to be registered (e.g., a limited company registered on company's house) because we would not be able to second a sole trader from a non-limited company. Likewise, a charitable organisation requesting funding must be an incorporated charity. The organisation must also have a presence in the UK and a UK bank account. So, an international company with no operational base in the UK would not be eligible.

**Q: Would the non-RO/HEI partner need to be a firm practising architecture or design, or would a professional association or representative body such as the Design Council be considered to have "capacity in architecture and design"?**

**A:** The partner having "capacity in architecture and design" doesn't have to be a private business practising architecture or design but it is the applicant's responsibility to make the case in your application that the organisation has the capability and capacity in design or architecture.

**Q: Would an NHS Trust be eligible to apply?**

**A:** UKRI research grants are open to NHS bodies, including NHS Trusts, with research capacity and therefore NHS bodies are eligible to apply and receive our funding if the application is successful. Further details on NHS eligibility can be found on the UKRI [eligibility pages](#).

**Q: In the case of business collaborators registered and with bank accounts in the UK but with overseas offices, does the collaboration have to be with the UK office?**

**A:** Yes, we expect the work to be undertaken in the UK office which needs to be capable of research and innovation. If you're applying as an employee of a private company, it needs to be in the UK. The registered partner **must** be a UK business, but multinational organisations are eligible. For example, this could include a business registered in the UK, with a UK bank account, even though they're part of a non-UK based multinational company.

**Q: Does the AHRC arts and humanities remit allow for research and innovation incorporating key elements which are integral to successful architecture and design, such as community engagement, business modelling, engineering and sustainable energy strategies?**

**A:** We do allow for secondment projects to incorporate these elements, provided that their use benefits the disciplines of architecture and design and the core of the project is within the AHRC remit. A project which is solely engineering, for example, would not be eligible.

**Q: If the post-doctoral researcher has a contract at the point of application that does not last for the duration of the grant, would they be eligible to apply if they have a written formal arrangement with their employer (research organisation) confirming that the research will be conducted as if they were an employee for the duration of the grant?**

**A:** We would want a letter of support from the organisation to state that, if funded, an employment contract would be put in place for the duration of the grant. Each secondee must have a contractual employment relationship with a UK organisation eligible to receive UKRI funding for the entire duration of the secondment.

**Q: What determines the eligibility of a public or third sector organisation to be a secondment host?**

**A:** Public and third sector organisation eligibility will be assessed in terms of their capabilities in design or architecture, to ensure that secondees have a supportive environment and networking/peer learning opportunities in these disciplines and within AHRC's remit. Each such organisation applying as a project partner (host) must explain in their letter of support the benefit the secondment will have to them as the host, to the secondee and to the architecture and/or design disciplines.

## SECONDEES AND SCOPE OF SECONDMENTS

**Q: Does the expected ability "to carry out research and innovation at a postdoctoral level (or equivalent)" mean that applicants must have previously completed a PhD? Or do you take professional experience into account?**

**A:** You do not have to have a PhD to apply for this call but will need to demonstrate in the application that you have equivalent professional experience/expertise. Please use the narrative CV template to provide relevant information about your academic qualifications and/or equivalent experience.

**Q: Is there a requirement for the secondee to have been employed by the host organisation for a minimum period of time prior to the project?**

**A:** There is no minimum period that you must have been employed for, prior to applying for an Innovation Scholars secondment. Please note you will need to be employed by the seconding organisation for the entire duration of the secondment.

**Q: I currently reconcile two or more jobs in two or more different organisations. Only one of them involves architecture or design. Can I apply?**

**A:** Yes, you are welcome to apply if you meet all the eligibility criteria. If you have two jobs or a portfolio of jobs, you will need to specify from which employing organisation you are applying. Please use the narrative CV template to provide information on your portfolio of jobs.

**Q: What is the shortest and longest allowed duration of a secondment?**

**A:** Minimum 3 months; maximum 36 months (full time, part time or hybrid). This could include breaks or changes of status from part time to full time and from full time to part time.

**Q: Is there flexibility to start date?**

**A:** Each secondment should start between 1st January and 31st December 2023. In exceptional circumstances, for example a serious illness or bereavement, a secondment might be allowed to begin later than 31st December 2023. Each request for a later start should be agreed with the receiving and sending organisations and submitted by the secondee, in writing, with a sufficient justification. AHRC will make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

**Q: If you are an academic secondee going into a business host organisation, can you also contribute directly to their commercial income generating activities (e.g. architectural projects) as well as your own “innovative research project”?**

**A:** Yes, providing you can make a case for how that will benefit you and your proposed career trajectory as a secondee and that it will not impinge on your capacity to undertake your innovative research project. There are three primary elements to the scheme in terms of benefit.

- 1) What is the benefit to you as an individual and your career, such as learning a new skill or gaining a new insight into your area by understanding work in a different environment?
- 2) How will your secondment benefit the host organisation?
- 3) How will this benefit architecture or design as fields of research and innovation, or bring wider societal benefits or impact (social, cultural, environmental or economic)?

There needs to be a strongly articulated research and/or innovation element because AHRC is a funder of research and innovation in the arts and humanities. Therefore, we can't fund projects which are essentially an income-generating standard service provision.

**Q: Does there need to be a specific project that the secondee is going to work on in their hosting organisation?**

**A:** Yes, we require for each secondee to work on a tailor-made research and innovation project or set of activities. Applications which simply propose that a secondee covers standard duties of one of the host organisation's staff members or contributes only to 'business as usual' activities, aren't eligible.

**Q: Could you explain what 'innovation' the secondments are expected to bring?**

**A:** One of the objectives of this funding opportunity is to intensify knowledge exchange between different sectors, resulting in innovative outputs. Therefore, AHRC requires that *“the secondee works*

*on a project or activities that contribute towards solving real-world challenges within the hosting organisation environment and the secondment results in at least one innovative output". This could be a process, service, product, training resource, research paper, public engagement event, etc. The innovative aspect should be evidenced by applicants in reporting.*

**Q: How do you define “opening potential new career prospects” for the secondee? Are you able to give some examples of meeting this success measure linked to the second objective of the funding opportunity?**

**A:** Examples of “opening potential new career prospects” include:

- an academic getting commercial experience during their secondment. For example, learning how to innovate or how to move something beyond the research space into product space
- an individual working in the business environment or corporate environment could use the Innovation Scholars secondment to gain valuable research skills
- taking your research or innovation in a different direction by working with a different organisation and assisting them with your skill to undertake a goal
- preparing outputs which, once published, could open new career avenues for the secondee

To sum up, it could be anything you can articulate which will enhance your career trajectory as a secondee.

**Q: Will remote working be seen as a disadvantage in the application? For example, in case of secondees who cannot travel regularly to another workplace due to caring responsibilities.**

**A:** No, the flexibility in terms of hybrid or part time options is there to help adjust your secondments to any kind of additional needs, including caring responsibilities. Please see the Equality Impact Assessment for this funding opportunity for more detail. We expect some projects could have an element that is undertaken remotely, whilst other projects will take place fully in e.g. an office location, design laboratory, studio location or “in the field”, for example, an archaeological site or museum. Applicants should justify the work and the way of working that they propose for the secondment.

**Q: Are senior academics eligible and/or encouraged to apply?**

**A:** Yes. This call is open to people on all career levels who have a doctorate or equivalent qualifications and capabilities to undertake research and innovation.

**Q: Could the project have more than one secondee involved? For example, if the secondee is the principal investigator (PI), could there be a Research Associate (RA) supporting the project in the sending organisation?**

**A:** No, the project is designed to support a single secondee undertaking the work. If you wanted to support more than one secondee, you will have to submit more than one application – one for each secondment.

**Q: The principal investigator could either be the secondee or a representative of the submitting organisation. Please can you explain in what circumstances the secondee should *not* be the PI?**

**A:** The only time we expect a secondee to be added as a named researcher on Je-S is if they cannot be listed as the PI. For example, in the case of a business, we would expect that the person who has financial authority to manage the grant, and therefore be listed as the PI on Je-S, may not necessarily be the individual who will undertake the secondment. If the applying organisation is a university, we would normally expect the secondee to be the PI but there may be reasons why this may not be

possible. In those circumstances, we would allow the PI not to be the secondee, and the secondee to be listed as a directly incurred named researcher.

**Q: Do usual AHRC eligibility rules apply for applicants on fixed term contracts? If the secondee is a member of staff who is on a contract that ends part way through the Innovation Scholars grant, can the organisation extend their contract to cover the period of the secondment?**

**A:** Yes, if you work on a fixed term contract, your employer will need to extend the contract to the end of the Innovation Scholars secondment. For example, if a person is a postdoctoral researcher at a university, they would be eligible to apply, and we would expect them to be treated in the same way as a permanent employee of the university during their secondment. To satisfy our eligibility criteria, we would want a letter of support from the RO/seconding organisation to confirm that the contract would be extended for the duration of the secondment if the application is funded.

**Q: If the proposed secondee is on a part-time contract at the point for applying for a secondment, how is this going to affect their application?**

**A:** Your mode of employment has no impact on your eligibility, both part-time and full-time employees are equally eligible to apply. We are mindful of job precarity; therefore, we expect your employer to put measures in place to provide you with a balanced and stable arrangement for the entire duration of the secondment. Your contractual situation in terms of %FTE on project and %FTE undertaking other work for your employer should not change throughout the Innovation Scholars project.

For example:

- we might fund a part time secondment at 0.5 FTE where the secondee's full-time postdoctoral role at a research organisation ends halfway through the Innovation Scholars secondment award. In such case we expect the research organisation (sending organisation) to underwrite the secondee as a full-time employee at this RO whilst they were finishing their secondment at the hosting organisation. We wouldn't want that person to be employed 50% of their time, just doing secondment work.
- if a secondee is employed at 0.6 FTE and doing 0.4 FTE on the Innovation Scholars project that finished half-way through their 0.6FTE postdoc role, we would expect them to be retained as an employee at 0.6 FTE.

**Q: Is community landscape architecture within remit? E.g. creating green spaces.**

**A:** Yes. There are two AHRC sub-disciplines relevant to community landscape architecture: Community and Social Architecture and Environmental Architecture. Please refer to the AHRC remit page [Check your proposal is suitable for AHRC funding – UKRI](#)

**Q: Does the entire project need to take place in the hosting organisation, or could you propose a project which requires part of the time to be spent within the seconding organisation, and the rest within the hosting organisation?**

**A:** AHRC may allow you to spend part of your secondment at your seconding organisation (your employer), but first your application would have to highlight the benefits of such an arrangement. If you're spending some of the secondment in the same environment you always work in, you'd have to clearly explain to us how you meet the "increasing porosity" and "working across sectors" objectives of this funding opportunity.

## FUNDING

**Q: Is there an upper limit to the salary that AHRC can cover per individual seconded? And does AHRC match the current salary rate of the seconded?**

**A:** Yes, we would match it (pro-rata if part-time on the secondment) as the awards are “buying the seconded out” of their current workplaces. The maximum amount of funding you can claim for is £200,000. Therefore, if there are no travel and subsistence cost, the most you can spend on salary in the project duration would be £200,000. There’s no salary cap but you have to frame the duration of the project, the flexibility of part time and full-time mode and travel and subsistence expenses to fit within that £200,000 limit.

**Q: Will the funding cover overheads if the host organisation requires them?**

**A:** The award will cover the salary of the seconded, and travel and subsistence incurred during the secondment. Other project costs such as overheads won’t be covered. These awards will be paid at 100% of the eligible costs and not the normal 80% for eligible organisations because they’re not fully economically costed (FEC) awards.

**Q: If there are costs associated with producing the “innovative output” of the secondment, can these be funded as part of the Innovation Scholars grant?**

**A:** The hosting organisation would have to cover such costs. The award will cover the salary of the seconded, and travel and subsistence incurred during the secondment. Other project costs won’t be covered. For example, if the seconded requires specific training to work in the hosting organisation, such as health and safety training or needs equipment for the project, their hosting organisation would need to cover the cost. As part of the application, we expect the hosting organisations to be explicit and specific about such costs, and evidence them in their letter of support.

**Q: Will the funding support commuting to the host organisation including frequent flights?**

**A:** As long as the flights are essential and justified, and you consider options with lower carbon footprint – yes. Please note that your application will be subject to a panel assessment and this will consider value for money. UKRI and AHRC are distributing public funding for research and innovation. Therefore, you need to ensure that the requests you make for funding are reasonable and that you’ve considered environmental sustainability and shown good due diligence in making them as reasonable and as best value for money as possible.

**Q: If the seconded is based in Northern Ireland and the host has offices in both the UK and in the Republic of Ireland, can the seconded be hosted in the Republic of Ireland office? This would save on carbon footprint (travelling by train instead of flying) as well as on time for the commuting seconded.**

**A:** The hosting organisation must have a suitable secondment environment in the UK, although UKRI may fund some international travel if it is justified. Part of the secondment must be based in an organisation in the UK. We are open to remote working as long as it is not international activity. Lower carbon footprint is an important factor but isn’t the only argument required to justify such an arrangement. AHRC wouldn’t be able to pay in a foreign currency such as Euros., the money would have to go to the UK based part of the company. Please contact us if you have a similar question, this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**Q: Is a specific research plan expected to be submitted as part of the application, including methodology, or just a topic area to be explored?**

**A:** You need to provide sufficient detail for the assessment panel to be able to understand what you're planning to do during your secondment and to assess whether the proposal is viable. You need to provide a compelling argument for why you should receive funding. You may wish to tailor this depending on the length of your proposed secondment:

- If you're undertaking a short three-month project, we'd expect you to be reasonably detailed about what you're proposing to do within that three months.
- If you are proposing a part time project which is going to take place over three years, we expect you to have a reasonable idea about what you're going to do to initiate the project, what the goals are, what methodology are you planning to use. However, we don't expect applicants to provide detail on the entire three years of your activity at the point of application as we appreciate the project will evolve.

**Q: You mentioned that a future career change (for example, away from academia) would be a legitimate benefit of the secondment. How would applicants indicate that in the application documents, given that their current employers might not welcome the prospect?**

**A:** Describe your planned secondment project in terms of increasing your perspective of the boarder architecture and design research and innovation landscape. In your application you don't need to be explicit about a future career change being the planned outcome of your secondment. If the secondment enables you to make a career move in the future, UKRI and AHRC would count that as an impact. For example, a project focused on enhancing an academic secondee's knowledge of innovation in a business environment may result in a de-risking of the business subsequently employing that secondee.

**Q: Is the Je-S application used for this funding opportunity a standard Je-S application form, including sections such as objectives, summary, academic beneficiaries etc...**

**A:** The Je-S application form is based on our standard Research Grants form but with around 25% of the sections removed to be proportionate to the needs of the scheme e.g. amount of funding available and scope of projects. On [UKRI Funding Finder](#) we have listed what information applicants should provide through the form. These are the compulsory documents that must be attached to your Je-S form:

- The case for support
- Your CV
- A letter from your project partner which is your hosting organisation

Please use the new, narrative CV template that we have on the Funding Finder. It is based on the Resume for Researchers and it allows you to describe in more detail what you have achieved so far. AHRC and UKRI hope this CV template is suitable for a diverse range of candidates.

**Q: Quite a lot of Je-S Guidance is focused on what businesses needs to do. Is this term being used in the guidance as a catch all term for any organisations that aren't a higher education institution or an independent research organisation?**

**A:** Yes, it is. When you first create an account on the Je-S system and you try to add your organisation, if it is not registered or showing on the organisations list, you will need to follow the 'business' path as described in the Guidance. This includes proving financial information as per the

spreadsheet which is available on [UKRI Funding Finder](#) under the “Additional information – Supporting documents” heading.

**Q: Is the organisation where the secondee is currently employed the one which should submit the Je-S application?**

**A:** Yes, the seconding/sending organisation must lead the application and name a principal investigator. If the application is successful, they will receive the funding to cover the secondee’s salary so must be registered in the UK and have a UK bank account. The hosting organisation must be listed as the project partner on the Je-S application.