

ELIGIBILITY FOR UKRI RESEARCH COUNCIL FUNDING

October 2006

11th Revision March 2021 v3

Please note the criteria below do not apply to Innovate UK or Research England

UK Research and Innovation promotes and supports research, postgraduate training and associated activities in UK research organisations. These may be supported in any field or discipline at the instigation of the Principal Investigator (Responsive Mode) or at the instigation of the Research Council (Calls for Proposals or Managed Mode).

All UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that receive grant funding from the Office for Students (OfS) or one of the UK higher education funding bodies are eligible to receive funds for research, postgraduate training and associated activities:

- HEIs based in England must be on the Office for Students (OfS) Register and categorised as 'Approved (fee cap)' on that list, which can be found here

<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/>

- HEIs based in Scotland must appear on the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) lists of eligible organisations found on their website <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/universities-we-fund.aspx> ;
<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/funding/colleges-we-fund.aspx>

- HEIs in Wales must appear on the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) list of eligible organisations found on their website

<https://www.hefcw.ac.uk/en/our-responsibilities/research-innovation-and-engagement/>

- HEIs in Northern Ireland must appear on the Department for the Economy list of eligible organisations that can be found on their website <https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/articles/higher-education-division>

Research institutes

Research institutes with a long-term investment by the research councils are eligible to apply for funding opportunities.

(Eligible research institutes – UKRI)

Other Independent Research Organisations (IROs) may also be eligible to apply for UKRI funding if they possess an existing in-house capacity to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the UK research base and are able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research programmes. For the purposes of this policy IROs also include Public Sector Research Establishments (PSREs) and Catapult Centres.

Organisations must also satisfy ALL the following conditions:

- 1) Organisations must be:

- a. A charity registered with the Charities Commission; or
 - b. NHS Trust (or equivalent); or
 - c. On the list of PSREs eligible to apply; or
 - d. A recognised Catapult Centre; or
 - e. More than 50% funded or in receipt of substantial capital investment from the UK Government (or any component part thereof); or
 - f. Private Company limited by guarantee.
- 2) They must be:
- a. Able to demonstrate they have satisfactory controls in place to manage research funding
 - b. Primarily based in the UK. (Research Organisations in UK overseas territories and crown dependencies will be treated as non-UK Research Organisations.)
 - c. Non-profit making
- 3) The organisation must be able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research programmes, as demonstrated by:
- a. Sufficient high-quality current research capacity. This requires:
 - i) a minimum of ten researchers with PhDs (or equivalent experience).
 - ii) a track record of staff, while employed at the organisation, leading or co-leading innovative research projects in the previous five years, including directing other postdoctoral researchers and/or research students. This should include evidence of the size and complexity of the projects and details of how they were managed and coordinated.
 - a. Sufficient financial support for research at the organisational level to ensure the availability of essential infrastructure and the long-term sustainability of research activity, as evidenced by research income averaging at least £0.5M pa over the previous three years.
 - b. Importance and relevance of the research capability to the Council(s) to which eligibility is sought.
 - c. Evidence of the organisation having a strong track record of maximising the wider impact and value of its research to the benefit of the UK economy and society.
- 4) Any funding received by an Independent Research Organisation must NOT be utilised in relation to:
- a. A company with which it is “Connected”
 - b. A company which it “Controls”

Within the meaning given to those terms in sections 1122-1124 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or

- c. A company, partnership or enterprise to which it is entitled to the beneficial ownership of more than 50% of the issued share capital of a company or share of the profits of a partnership or enterprise or the legal power to direct or cause the direction of the general management of the

company, partnership or enterprise. Where the operation or purpose of that company, partnership or enterprise is, or is intended to realise a profit for the benefit of shareholders or other investors in the company, partnership or enterprise.

ROs are eligible to receive funding from a Research Council in both managed and response modes unless specifically stated otherwise in the call guidance.

Organisations currently recognised as IROs are listed on the UKRI website at

<https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/>

Organisations that are eligible to apply for Research Council funding may work in partnership or collaboration with any other organisation, irrespective of its eligibility status, subject to the conditions of any grant awarded.

Where an Organisation is a potential co-funder (i.e. funds a specific Opportunity with and awarded by UKRI) they should not apply for an award for that same Opportunity.

How to apply

The Research Councils will jointly consider eligibility of IROs for research funding. Once eligibility has been approved, the IRO will become eligible for all Research Council competitive research programmes. This review will also need to determine that the IRO is able to meet the accountability and audit requirements. Organisations applying for IRO eligibility are advised to consult the UKRI Terms and Conditions (<https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/your-responsibilities-if-you-get-funding/meeting-ukri-terms-and-conditions-for-funding/>) as they will need to comply with them if they are awarded UKRI funding.

IROs should also note that UKRI only provide funding at 80% of Full Economic Costs. This may be less when UKRI is jointly funding the call with another funder. Organisations are entitled to include overhead costs (Estates and Indirect Costs) using their own rates (once verified by UKRI Funding Assurance) or the Dispensation Rate applicable at the time of application if their annual publicly funded research income averages less than £3m per annum over the last five years. (See <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-standards-and-data/funding-assurance-programme/>).

An IRO seeking eligibility for funding from any Research Council should contact the Je-S helpdesk, which manages the application process. UKRI will assess the application and will make a recommendation to BEIS if the organisation meets all the required criteria, unless prior approval has already been provided. A change in the status of an IRO would require re-consideration of an IRO's eligibility. Otherwise, once eligibility has been granted, it will last for a minimum period of 5 years unless it no longer meets eligibility criteria, fails to comply with UKRI grant terms and conditions or a point is reached where the IRO has received no funding during the previous five years.

Any approved organisation will be included on the list of eligible organisations published on the UKRI website.

Non-UK Organisations and businesses

In exceptional circumstances Research Councils may have requirements for which there is no capability in HEIs, RIs or IROs. Only in these specific circumstances Research Councils may fund organisations which do not otherwise satisfy the conditions for eligibility. Please refer to the eligibility conditions for individual calls to ascertain where this is applicable. Research Councils will not provide funding to an organisation to deliver a capability which is already funded by that organisation in support of its own strategic priorities.

Where the call allows you to apply, the eligibility process will be undertaken at the point of award.