



Natural  
Environment  
Research Council

**NERC RESEARCH GRANTS AND  
FELLOWSHIPS HANDBOOK**

**GRANTS AWARDED ON FULL ECONOMIC COST  
BASIS**

**Edition 2023 – 1.0**

**April 2023**

# NERC RESEARCH GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS 2023

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**Edition 2023-1.0 April 2023: for research grant and fellowship applications from 1 September 2005 (after introduction of full economic costing) only.**

## Foreword

This handbook sets out the regulations governing research grants and fellowships awarded by the Natural Environment Research Council. It sets out the application procedures and eligibility requirements. It also outlines the funding and facilities available to grant-holders, and details the responsibilities of NERC, grant holders and research organisations. It must be read in conjunction with the core [terms and conditions](#) that have been agreed across all research councils.

The handbook focuses on grants and fellowships awarded through NERC Discovery Science (Responsive Mode) and Strategic Research (Research Programmes). NERC Studentships and Training Grants are not covered by this handbook, but are instead governed by the [Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants](#)

The main changes to the regulations will be made in updates of the handbook. However, NERC reserves the right to amend these regulations at any time and without prior notice. The regulations in effect at any time will be those contained in the most recent version of [this handbook](#), available on the NERC website.

## **Changes and points to note (Edition 2023 – 1.0 April 2023).**

NERC is part of the [UKRI Simpler and Better Funding Programme](#) and all our processes are under review and subject to change and simplification. Where guidance is included on additional attachments throughout this handbook, that is only applicable where the attachment is still required on the opportunity. All opportunity requirements will be explained in the announcements of opportunity on the [Funding Finder](#) on the UKRI website.

During 2023, there will be a move from running opportunities via JeS to running them via The Funding Service (TFS).

Call has been updated to opportunity throughout the handbook in line with new UKRI terminology.

Paragraphs, 14, 16 to 19 and 149 – The next Pushing the Frontiers opportunity closing on 20 July will run through TFS. We are piloting a new process to further reduce the information we request at the application submission stage. You will only include an indication of the likely cost of the project, so you will not request permission in advance to exceed the limit.

Paragraph 39 - updated to reflect the updated KE opportunity criteria

Paragraph 47 - UKRI is updating the individual eligibility policy to make the application process more inclusive and consistent across research council funding opportunities. Anyone previously eligible for funding will continue to be so.

Paragraph 48 - UKRI is also updating role names for use in TFS and these will also be updated in the next available edition of the handbook.

Section F – the detail throughout this section is based on the application process in Je-S. As opportunities are increasingly run on TFS, the process is different and will be detailed in the

relevant announcement on the funding finder.

Paragraphs 153 and 154 – the next Large Grant full proposal opportunity and the Independent Research fellowship opportunity will run on TFS.

Paragraphs 183 to 187 – Updated information on accessing Antarctic logistics support

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## Section A - INTRODUCTION

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### General Principles

1. The NERC research grant and fellowship schemes provide financial support for environmental scientists in UK universities and other approved institutions to conceive and develop their own projects. The scientific research carried out under NERC grants should be ethically sound, innovative and of the highest quality, and must fall within the NERC scientific remit.
2. New grants are awarded on the basis of a proportion of the full economic cost (fEC), calculated in accordance with the TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing) methodology (Universities and other Higher Education bodies) or by an equivalent methodology by other Research Organisations. The proportion of fEC supported is 80%.
3. Grants awarded by the NERC are made to Research Organisations on the basis of the terms and conditions detailed in the NERC Research Grants and Fellowships Handbook (including the [Terms and Conditions for Research Council fEC Grants](#)).
4. Grants support eligible scientists or teams of scientists ('Investigators'), for a specified period to carry out a defined programme of research, or research related activity, including technology development where it has clear application for future research. The Investigators will be involved in the leadership and management of the research project.
5. Grant and fellowship applications are normally assessed through independent scientific peer review. In evaluating applications and selecting the best research, NERC uses the knowledge, advice and expertise of its [Peer Review College](#) or an equivalent panel of experts. Membership of the NERC Peer Review College comprises NERC grant holders, other research practitioners and public and private sector representatives of the science user community. There is an expectation that all NERC grant applicants should play their part in NERC peer review activity. There is a shared responsibility for delivering this essential part of the grants process.
6. Grant-holders will be given the freedom to develop the work in their own way, but NERC is obliged to retain adequate control over the use of public funds. Whilst there will be scope for flexibility in planning and executing the research, major changes from the programme originally proposed will need the prior approval of NERC.
7. NERC encourages collaborations between scientists and all applicants should consider the possibility of collaboration with other scientists in the UK and overseas and multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary team approaches when formulating applications. Part of the assessment of an application will be based on the relationship with similar work being carried out elsewhere, and whether full advantage will be taken of opportunities for consultation and co-operation.

## Section B – TYPES OF AWARD

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8. NERC supports a number of grant and fellowship schemes through its Discovery Science (Responsive Mode) and Strategic Research (Research Programme) funding. Whilst the exact conditions and closing dates vary, applicants for all of the schemes outlined below must meet the eligibility criteria set out in Section C.

### Discovery Science (Responsive Mode) Funding

9. NERC discovery science spans the full breadth of sciences and methodologies required to advance our understanding of the Earth system and to reveal people's impact on environmental processes. It is driving policy change and catalysing innovation in the UK and worldwide.
10. NERC discovery science funding supports environmental research driven by curiosity and imagination rather than our strategic priorities. We welcome, multi and interdisciplinary research, designed, supported, and delivered in partnership with other research funders and research users. Discovery science grants can support pure, applied, technology-led or policy-driven research that addresses, or provides the means to address, clearly defined scientific questions. Applications do not need to be hypothesis-driven and may instead focus on an exploratory approach or the development of a new technology.
11. Discovery science is a key component of delivering the strategy of NERC and is intended to facilitate the identification of the next generation of strategic priorities. By providing early-career researchers with the opportunity to develop their careers, together with its support for cutting-edge areas of science, Discovery Science plays a crucial role in sustaining the UK's position as a world leader in environmental science research.
12. Discovery Science funding schemes are listed below:
  - Standard Grants (including New Investigator Grants) – schemes now closed.
  - Pushing the Frontiers – new scheme from 2022
  - Exploring the Frontiers – pilot scheme in 2022
  - Large Grants
  - Urgency Grants
  - Fellowships

### Standard Grants

13. The last opportunity for this scheme closed in January 2022.

## Pushing the Frontiers Grants

14. The Pushing the Frontiers scheme has two closing dates per year. One in January and the other in July. The opportunities will be published on the UKRI website [funding finder](#). Applications must be submitted to NERC by 16.00 (4PM) and applications will not submit after that time. **The next opportunity (closing 20 July 2023) will be running on The Funding Service (TFS)**. We are piloting a new process to further reduce the information we request at the application submission stage and focus on information required for the expert review and assessment process. The funding limit for applications to the opportunity is £1 million (100% fEC). The total cost includes facility costs (where applicable – see Section F). In the application you will only include an indication of the likely cost of the project by selecting one cost range:

- up to £800,000
- £800,000 to £1 million
- £1 million to £2 million

Most applications will be expected to be under £1 million. We recognise that a small number of projects have exceptional costs that require the budget to exceed the £1 million limit. A third option (£1 million to £2 million) is available to recognise this limited number of cases. No further information on costs will be submitted at the time of application.

## Exploring the Frontiers Grants

15. The Exploring the Frontiers scheme ran as a pilot opportunity in 2022, with a closing date in June. The maximum for the complete application was £100k (100% fEC). The total cost included facility costs (where applicable). The funding limit was fixed for this scheme and a case could not be made to exceed the limit.

## Process to Exceed the Published Funding Limit

16. For the next Pushing the Frontiers opportunity (closing 20 July 2023), you will only include an indication of the likely cost of the project, so you will not request permission in advance to exceed the limit. Where NERC shiptime and/or marine equipment costs are not calculated prior to submission, these costs will not count towards the funding limit.

17. The following are examples of costs which would be allowed to fall outside the funding limit. It is not an exhaustive list:

- GEF Ocean Bottom Instrument(s)
- GEF seismometer(s)
- FAAM/BAS Twin Otter aircraft (the facility will be able to advise on eligible instrument or aircraft costs)
- EISCAT Radar facility,



- BGS Rock Drill (Remote Drill Two/RD2)
  - RV Prince Madog
  - BIFoR FACE facility
  - other NERC ship-time or marine facility related costs
- 18.** Please note the BGS Rock Drill, BIFoR FACE facility and the RV Prince Madog are not NERC Facilities (but we have agreed their costs can be outside the scheme limit).
- 19.** For applications in the funding frame we will request further details about the costs required under each fund heading and justification for those costs. This will enable us to remove costs associated with NERC services and facilities and award those costs notionally. Where the costs requested exceed the £1 million limit, further justification will be required and we reserve the right to reduce the amount requested.

### **New Investigator Grants**

- 20.** The last opportunity for this scheme closed in January 2022. The definition of a New Investigator is in Section C and is still relevant for some opportunities.

### **Large Grants**

- 21.** Large grants support adventurous, large scale and complex research tackling big science questions that cannot be addressed through other NERC schemes. Research funded via this scheme is expected to have the potential to be world-leading. Applications will often involve multidisciplinary approaches via inter or intra-institutional collaboration, although this is not a requirement. Large grants can address any areas of science within the NERC remit, including NERC strategic priorities or new curiosity-driven research challenges.
- 22.** Large grants provide funding for up to five years with costs, as required by the research, up to a maximum of £3.7 million. This limit applies to the total (100%) fEC of the project. The total cost includes any Associated (Project) Studentships and facility costs (e.g. ship time, aircraft time). Applications with a more modest budget are also encouraged. The minimum budget that can be sought in total for a Large grant is £1.2 million (100% fEC).
- 23.** Applicants must first submit an outline application that will be assessed by members of the Peer Review College, plus independent experts as required. Selected applications will then be invited to proceed to the full application stage. The closing date for submission of large grant outline applications will be in March each year and the Large grant full application closing date will be in November in the same year. Each opportunity will be advertised on the [funding finder](#) on the UKRI website and applications must be submitted to NERC by 16.00 (4PM) on the published closing date. Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the NERC Office to discuss any questions on the Large grants scheme procedures or seek feedback regarding the most appropriate route for funding the proposed research. Enquiries should be sent to [largegrants@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:largegrants@nerc.ukri.org).

## Urgency Grants

24. Exceptionally, an application for a research grant may be submitted at any time for rapid consideration under the Urgency procedure. This is permitted only in cases where the application has been prompted by an unexpected and transient scientific opportunity created by the occurrence of sporadic natural events such as earthquakes, droughts, floods or ephemeral events in ecosystems.
25. The following situations **will not** be accepted as grounds for an Urgency application:
- Time-limited logistical events, such as an unforeseen opportunity to participate in a particular experiment or observational programme or the unexpected availability of staff or facilities etc.
  - Opportunities created by deliberate direct human actions or decisions.
  - Events where planning could have allowed support for study via published funding opportunities, such as seasonal, relatively frequent, or periodic natural events.
  - Events that are expected to be imminent but have not yet occurred, such as forecast extreme weather conditions, volcanic eruption etc. Urgency grant funding cannot be used to undertake operational monitoring for the purpose of forecasting the occurrence of hazardous natural events.
  - Responding to unexpected research findings.
  - Continuation of monitoring or other existing projects for any reason.
  - Collection of data to inform urgent policy or national/international decision making.

NERC reserves the right to limit the number of Urgency applications considered or supported relating to the same event or location.

26. The maximum funding that may be sought for an Urgency application is £100,000 (100% fEC) and includes any facilities costs. The [funding opportunity](#) is on the UKRI website funding finder. NERC will fund eligible UK research organisations at 80% FEC. The maximum duration of an Urgency grant is 12 months. Urgency grants are expected to focus on urgent data collection and essential initial analysis only. A clear strategy for taking the research forward once the urgent phase is completed is required. Subsequent additional funding may be sought by applying for another Grant in the normal way.
27. Joint applications are not allowed in the Urgency grant scheme, unless one component is a NERC centre, due to the difference in funding models. This does not mean that NERC will not accept applications involving the participation of more than one Research Organisation, but the costs from all participating organisations must be included in one application. Items of equipment costing more than £10,000 may not be requested via the Urgency grant scheme. No studentships are awarded under this scheme.

- 28.** Prospective applicants **must** first contact [urgencygrants@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:urgencygrants@nerc.ukri.org) with an outline of the proposed work and the reasons for the urgency. The outline (maximum of 1 side of A4, font size 11, Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11) must be sent no later than 4 weeks from the first occurrence of the scientific opportunity to confirm eligibility. The outline is expected to include:
- A brief description of the urgent opportunity including its origin and timing.
  - Justification for urgency (relating to environmental science).
  - Objectives and methods of the proposed research.
  - Organisations and Investigators involved.
  - An estimate of the funding required.
  - A proposed start date and duration.
  - Potential Project Partners/co-funding and other funders approached to support the work.
  - Potential nominated reviewers.
- 29.** Following approval, full urgency applications must be submitted to NERC via the Je-S system within 10 working days. NERC will not accept more than one Urgency application from an individual Investigator (either as Principal or Co-Investigator) in a 2 year period.

### **Independent Research Fellowships (IRF)**

- 30.** The aim of the NERC Independent Research Fellowship scheme is to enable outstanding research scientists to devote their time to research and to produce work of international importance with the expectation that they develop into science leaders. The IRF scheme supports applications from theoretical and observational scientists.
- 31.** NERC IRFs are early career fellowships and provide support for five years, giving successful fellows time to develop their research, start to build a research group and become internationally recognised. Up to two years can be spent at a collaborative institution in the UK or overseas. Section F contains details of the application procedures.
- 32.** NERC currently awards approximately 14 IRFs each year.
- 33.** The yearly closing date for applications will be in October. Opportunities will be published on the [funding finder](#) on the UKRI website. Opportunities close at 16.00 (4PM) and applications will not submit to NERC after that time. To ensure that NERC receives your application please aim to submit in good time ahead of this closing time.

34. A summary of the annual IRF timetable:

October	IRF application deadline
November-January	Office checks and peer review
February	Sift panels
March	Interview panels
April	Award outcomes announced

35. There are no funding limits for IRF applications, but the fellowship applicant must be the only named researcher on the application and no equipment (costing more than £10,000 including VAT) can be requested.
36. NERC IRFs must be at least 50% within NERCs remit and all applicants should ensure that the majority of the work proposed within their fellowship application is within NERC remit.
37. All Fellowships may be held full or part-time and NERC welcomes applications from candidates who wish to work on a part-time/flexible basis in order to combine domestic responsibilities with a career.
38. NERC recognises that mobility is not the only means to acquire the skills and experiences necessary to build a research career. NERC also recognises the need for having a fixed institution to provide unique facilities or opportunities, and other circumstances where moving would be unsuitable, such as domestic arrangements.

### Knowledge Exchange Fellows

39. NERC knowledge exchange (KE) fellowships are intended to enable the sharing and flow of knowledge and expertise between NERC remit researchers and their stakeholders, partners and user communities with the aim of generating impact from NERC remit research. KE fellows can work anywhere between 20% and 100% of their time on a work plan of their own choosing.
40. NERC KE fellowships are available for all career stages and can last between one to three years, giving successful fellows time to communicate impact with end users. NERC currently awards approximately 12 KE Fellowships each year. There are no funding limits for KE Fellowship applications.
41. There may also be other opportunities for KE fellowships associated with specific priority areas or NERC programmes. Opportunities will be published on the [funding finder](#) on the UKRI website. The Je-S system closes at 16.00 (4PM) and applications will not submit to NERC after that time. To ensure that NERC receives your application please aim to submit in good time ahead of this closing time.

### Strategic Research

42. NERC's Strategic Research funding supports research into environmental areas of major economic and societal importance and aims to address key science challenges and priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Further information can be found at [Strategic Research](#)

[funding](#). Strategic Research grants are generally awarded under the same terms and conditions as Discovery Science research grants. Strategic Research may also award Research or Knowledge Exchange Fellowships.

43. Strategic Research opportunities are advertised on the [funding finder](#) on the UKRI website. The individual announcement of opportunity (AO) for each opportunity will give details of the funding available, closing dates and contact details for further information. The appropriate Programme Manager will be able to provide advice on the specific terms and conditions that apply to that opportunity.

### **Funding Across Research Councils**

44. Discovery Science applications, under the Pushing the Frontiers, Exploring the Frontiers, Large Grant and Independent Research Fellowship schemes, that extend beyond the remit of NERC may be assessed under the [Cross Council Remit Agreement \(CCRA\)](#).

### **Funding for International Collaborations**

45. NERC is working internationally with other funding organisations to help support excellent research collaborations. Information is available on the [UKRI website](#) and the [funding finder](#). Agreements are now in place with the [US's National Science Foundation \(NSF\)](#), [FAPESP \(Brazil\)](#) and [Fonds National de la Recherche \(FNR\)](#) in Luxembourg. The UKRI website includes the guidance for applicants and will be updated as new agreements are set up. The very first stage for the NERC-NSF Lead Agency process is for the Principal Investigator to contact the proposed lead funding agency to confirm which will lead. This step is important as it affects the later process that applicants need to follow, which includes a preliminary/outline application or letter of intent stage before any full application can be submitted to NERC or NSF. For the discovery science grant schemes, total costs requested including those from these collaborating organisations must not exceed the scheme maximum.
46. Where an “international co-applicant” agreement is in place, NERC will fund specified direct costs for the international collaborators and team. NERC has an agreement to fund collaborations involving [IIASA](#). For new opportunities published from November 2022, NERC will accept applications where there is a co-investigator from Norway. NERC will pay 100% of the eligible direct costs only (not Estates and Indirect costs) and the maximum requested can be 30% of the total cost of any application for all eligible international costs (not per collaborator or country/scheme). All funding will be provided to a UK grant holding organisation (lead or component). As further agreements are made, they will be updated on the UKRI website and the next available edition of the handbook. Unless specified in the opportunity, all other international collaborators are required to be Project Partners and fund their own involvement (minor incidental expenses can still be requested).

## Section C - ELIGIBILITY

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### Principal Investigator

47. UKRI is updating the individual eligibility policy to make the application process more inclusive and consistent across research council funding opportunities. **Anyone previously eligible for funding will continue to be so.** Further details of the new policy will be announced in due course and the handbook will be updated in the next available edition. The updated eligibility will apply to opportunities running through The Funding Service first and will be documented in the funding finder announcement for the opportunity. Where the eligibility criteria differs in the funding finder announcement and the handbook, the criteria in the former applies.
48. At the same time UKRI is also updating role names for use in The Funding Service and these will also be updated in the next available edition of the handbook.
49. Potential applicants should contact NERC ([researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org)) in advance of the submission deadline if they have any doubts concerning their eligibility to apply for a research grant from NERC.
50. The Principal Investigator on the application must be resident in the UK and be employed by an eligible UK Research Organisation (Higher Education Institution, Research Council Institute or a recognised Independent Research Organisation). Employment should be at lecturer (or equivalent) level or above. NERC staff at Band 6 level and above are eligible to apply as Principal Investigators, if they have at least three years' postdoctoral experience and have been employed by NERC for at least one year. Exceptionally, NERC Centre Directors may make a case to NERC for experienced staff, without a PhD (e.g. engineers) to be eligible as a Principal/Co-Investigator. We would not usually expect an individual to apply as a Researcher or a Researcher Co-Investigator once they have applied as a Principal/Co-Investigator unless a change in employment circumstances has occurred which means they are no longer eligible to apply as a Principal/Co-Investigator. Individuals cannot be named as both investigators and researchers in applications to the same opportunity. Staff at BBSRC Research Organisations, at Band E level or above, are also eligible to apply as a Principal Investigator. Individuals who previously completed a fellowship but did not get a permanent position at the end of their fellowship can be named as a Researcher.
51. Holders of research fellowships from the Research Councils and University Research Fellowships from the Royal Society are eligible (subject to other rules in this handbook). Fellowships awarded by other funders (charities, public sector organisations and eligible UK Higher Education Institutions) are also eligible to apply as Principal Investigators as long as the fellowship has a status equating to that of at least lecturer level and has been secured in open competition. The fellowship's terms and conditions must also allow the fellow to apply for further grants and funding. A statement from Departmental Heads confirming that these conditions are met should accompany any application submitted.
52. At the time of application the Principal Investigators must either:
  - Be employed by the Research Organisation submitting the application, or if not

employed by the submitting Research Organisation (providing they are not in receipt of funding by non-eligible organisations), have an existing written formal arrangement with the organisation that enables him or her to carry out research there and receive all necessary management and infrastructure support from the organisation and that commits the Research Organisation to take full responsibility for the research and its proper governance.

- Or be scheduled to move to the submitting organisation before the proposed start date of the grant in such a way that would ensure that the criterion stated above is met by the time the grant starts. Applications should include a confirming statement from the employing Research Organisation where the grant is to be held.
- In addition, the Principal Investigator must have a contract of employment that extends to beyond the duration of the proposed grant (or if not employed by the submitting organisation, a formal non-salaried arrangement as described above that extends to beyond the duration of the proposed grant); Or an assurance from the submitting organisation that, if the application is successful, the pre-existing contract of employment, (or pre-existing formal commitment to provide support if not employed at the organisation), will be extended beyond the end date of the grant. Confirmation of this assurance from Departmental Heads should accompany any grant application. The exception to this is Research Council fellows whose award does not extend beyond the proposed end date of the grant. Research Council fellows may apply for the cost of their salary to the end of the application if their fellowship does not extend beyond the proposed end date of the grant.

**53.** As the first funder to sign the [Technician Commitment](#), UKRI recognises the value of technical expertise to the UK research workforce. To reflect this, NERC welcomes applications from eligible facility staff as either principal investigators or co-investigators. Other senior university research personnel with appointments resourced from the central funds of their institutions at the time of application may also apply if they carry both a level of responsibility and range of duties appropriate to a person with substantial research experiences e.g. they occupy a post equating to at least lecturer level.

**54.** The following are not eligible to apply as Principal Investigators: research assistants, junior technicians, other researchers who are employed on short-term projects or Research Council grants, holders of fellowships that were not awarded following open competition.

Please note: It is incumbent upon individuals to check their own eligibility prior to submission of any application to NERC.

**55.** Principal Investigators and Co-Investigators whose time is not fully funded on other Research Council grants, but who are not paid a salary by the Research Organisation (e.g. Emeritus or honorary staff) should show their hours attributed to the project, but with zero salary cost request. Estates and Indirect costs can be requested. If a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator is retired, the expectation is that their involvement in the project would be covered by a contract with the Research Organisation. The cost of their time attributed to the project is thus likely to be a Directly Incurred cost.

**56.** NERC will not accept applications from a Principal Investigator who has been sanctioned for failure to participate appropriately in NERC peer review activities or for not

completing NERC's required output and performance measures on previous grants (see also Section G).

### **New Investigator**

57. The Discovery Science Standard Grant (New Investigator) opportunity is now closed, but applications from individuals who would be classed as a New Investigator are welcome under the replacement schemes (Pushing the Frontiers and Exploring the Frontiers). Other NERC opportunities may still have a New Investigator stream (such as the [Global Partnership Seedcorn Fund opportunity](#)). Further eligibility criteria may apply for specific opportunities. An applicant for a New Investigators' opportunity must be eligible to apply as a Principal Investigator, but in addition, eligibility is restricted to those Investigators at the outset of their independent scientific career. Applicants must therefore be within five years of first becoming eligible for NERC funding as a Principal Investigator (account will be taken of any career breaks) and must not have received competitive research funding from any source, as a Principal Investigator, that included post-doctoral research assistant staff support costs.
58. Holders of NERC fellowships are eligible to apply as New Investigators under relevant opportunities during the period of their fellowship, until they have received research funding as a Principal Investigator. This scheme is not intended to support those whose independent research career is already established, so those in senior positions are not eligible to apply.

### **Co-Investigator**

59. Co-Investigators must meet the eligibility criteria for a Principal Investigator above, but replacing the phrase "submitting organisation" with "eligible organisation".
60. NERC will not accept applications from a Co-Investigator who has been sanctioned (as a Principal Investigator on another grant) for failure to participate appropriately in NERC peer review activities or for not completing NERC's required output and performance measures on previous grants (see also Section G).

### **International Co-investigator**

61. An international Co-Investigator must meet the same criteria as above, but can be employed by organisations where NERC has a specific agreement to fund some international costs. Since 1 January 2020, it has been possible to include costs for collaborators based at IIASA and an agreement between UKRI and Norway starting in November 2022 applies to NERC opportunities published from that date. An international co-investigator can not take over as Principal Investigator on a grant.

### **Researcher Co-Investigator**

62. A Postdoctoral Research Assistant (PDRA), who is not eligible to be a Principal or Co-Investigator, but has made a substantial contribution to the formulation and development of the application and will be closely involved with the project (if funded) may be identified as a 'Researcher Co-Investigator'. Applicants who are eligible to be either Principal Investigators or Co-Investigators may **not** be included on grant applications as PDRAs or Researcher Co-Investigators.



A Researcher Co-Investigator must:

- Be a named researcher on the project and seek part or all of their salary as a Directly Incurred cost (unless in receipt of a salary from a fellowship). The expectation is that the researcher would be employed at least 50% FTE on the grant, but there may be circumstances where this may be less (for example, they might be full time for the first two years of a five year grant to conduct a particular piece of the research).
- Be employed by the same Research Organisation as either the Principal or one of the Co-Investigators (but not necessarily at the time of application). Following a change to the [Terms and Conditions guidance](#), Research Staff, excluding investigators, employed on a grant are able to work remotely, including homeworking and from overseas, on a permanent basis if the research project allows as long as organisational policies are adhered to.
- If applying from a NERC or BBSRC Research Organisation be employed at Band 6 (NERC) or unified Band D (BBSRC). Band 6 NERC Staff are no longer eligible to apply once they have applied as a Principal/Co-Investigator.

A Researcher Co-Investigator may not take over from the Principal Investigator.

## Fellowships

- 63.** The fellowship applicant is the Principal Investigator. No Co-Investigators are allowed.
- 64.** NERC Fellowships are open to applicants of any nationality, even those currently based at non-UK research organisations, although all Fellowship applications must be submitted through and held at an eligible UK Research Organisation. Successful applicants from the Non-European Economic Area who require a visa to work in the UK will be eligible to be considered under the [Tier 1 \(Exceptional Talent\) visa route](#). Further information is available on the UKRI website under [International Fellows](#). Visa costs may be included as Directly Incurred within the fellowship application.
- 65.** Applicants are not eligible to apply if they hold a tenured academic post or academic position at lecturer level (or equivalent in institutions other than universities). NERC staff in Bands 5 and 6 only can apply for a fellowship and if successful, would have to resign from their position in order to take up the fellowship.
- 66.** Applicants for NERC Independent Research Fellowships must expect to submit their PhD thesis before the fellowship interview would take place (March following the closing date) and if successful would not be able to take up the fellowship until the intent to award the PhD has been confirmed by the awarding university.
- 67.** The time-based eligibility cap (a maximum of eight years of post-doctoral research) has been removed from the IRF criteria.
- 68.** A current NERC Postdoctoral Fellow may apply for a subsequent NERC Independent Research Fellowship as long as they meet the eligibility criteria above. Applications will be considered in competition with other applications in that round and should be, in themselves, discrete projects. The initial fellowship should be identified on the application form. NERC Advanced Fellows and NERC IRFs cannot apply for a further NERC IRF.

- 69.** In addition to Independent Research Fellowships, NERC supports a small number of fellowships through research programmes with the intention of supporting individuals and their research within strategically valuable areas. Details concerning eligibility criteria and the requirements of these fellowships will be included within the opportunity announcement information.
- 70.** Applicants may only have one fellowship application under consideration by UKRI (which encompasses all fellowship schemes led by any of the Research Councils and/or Innovate UK). Applicants cannot therefore submit applications to both a NERC fellowship competition and any concurrent UKRI fellowship competition.

### **Knowledge Exchange Fellowships**

- 71.** Applicants can hold a position where they would be eligible to apply as a principal or co-investigator for a grant. Applicants would generally be expected to apply for the knowledge exchange fellowship for a percentage of their full-time equivalent (FTE) only.
- 72.** Applicants can be at an earlier career stage and not yet be eligible as a principal or co-investigator for NERC grants, but may apply for up to 100% of their time through this fellowship.
- 73.** Applicants do not need a PhD. However, current PhD students are expected to have submitted their thesis before taking up the fellowship.

### **Project Partners**

- 74.** On research grant applications the Principal Investigator may also name formal Project Partners, who will not receive funding directly from the award, but will have an integral role in the proposed research. Minor Directly Incurred costs may be requested to facilitate collaboration. Named Project Partners may include UK or overseas Research or User Organisations, but an organisation should only be named as a Project Partner if it is providing specific contributions (either in cash or kind) to the project. There is no limit to the number of Project Partners. Project Partners must be separate Research Organisations to those submitting the application.
- 75.** Project Partners should ensure the availability of the necessary facilities and infrastructure and it is the responsibility of named Project Partners to read and comply with the [terms and conditions](#) relating to UKRI funding. A letter of support of up to 2 sides may be required as part of the application. The individual [announcement of opportunity](#) will detail the requirements for the opportunity.
- 76.** Fellowship applications do not have a separate Project Partner section. Any significant collaborators (from outside the host Research Organisation) should be named and their role described in the Partnership Details section of the form and a letter of support should be attached from each person named in that section. Collaborators from the host Research Organisation submitting the application should not be named in this section and should not provide a letter of support. Internal collaborators can be mentioned in the section on “Choice of Host Institution”.

## Eligible Research Organisations

- 77.** NERC research and fellowship grants for all schemes may be held at approved UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Research Council Institutes (RCIs), Independent Research Organisations (IROs), Public Sector Research Establishments (PSREs) and Catapults. Full details of [approved organisations](#) can be found on the UKRI website. These organisations are eligible for grant funding from all Research Councils.
- 78.** IIASA eligibility applies to NERC funded opportunities announced after 1 January 2020, in line with the new funding for UK Membership of IIASA. Individual Announcements of Opportunity will name IIASA as an eligible co-I. IIASA will not be eligible for funding through some opportunities from UKRI funds. An IIASA Co-I may not take over from the UK Principal Investigator. All IIASA funding will go via the UK Research Organisation and is restricted as detailed in Section E and on the [UKRI website](#).
- 79.** Further international co-investigator agreements may be introduced. An agreement with Norway applies for new opportunities from November 2022.
- 80.** To apply to NERC, Research Organisations must also be registered as users of the Research Councils' [Joint Electronic Submission system](#) and have had their costing methodology validated. UKRI are developing a [new Funding Service](#) and some pilot opportunities are being run through that system.

## Section D – GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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81. NERC Grants are awarded to Research Organisations on the basis of the [Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants](#). Information is included in this section where it is not covered in the Terms and Conditions or the [associated guidance](#).

### Responsibilities of the Grant Holder (Principal Investigator)

82. In order to support the peer review system Principal Investigators (lead and non-lead) of awarded NERC research grants and fellowships, submitted to closing dates from July 2012, are required to consent to membership of the NERC Peer Review College (PRC), if a membership invitation is issued by NERC during the period of award (grant acceptance to grant closure). Failure to accept membership without adequate reason, or unsatisfactory performance as a PRC member, could lead to the application of sanctions in the form of withdrawal of eligibility to apply for NERC research grants for a period of 12 months.

### Permission for Research, the Use of Animals, Research Ethics and the Utilisation of Genetic Resources in NERC-funded Research

83. Any application requesting Antarctic Logistic Support by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and which involves experimentation on live animals will be subject to scrutiny by an Animal Welfare & Ethical Review Body convened by BAS and including external representation (by a veterinary surgeon and by a Home Office advisor). The purpose of this Body is to ensure that procedures which would be regulated by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 if conducted in the UK, meet the requirements of this legislation even though UK law is not applicable in Antarctica or South Georgia, where BAS operates. It is BAS policy to involve the Animal Welfare & Ethical Review Body to ensure that experiments performed in the Antarctic or at South Georgia meet the same Home Office requirements as if the procedures were to be conducted in the UK.

### Starting Procedures

84. Re RGC 5 of the [UKRI Grant Terms and Conditions](#), exceptionally, the start date may be delayed by more than three months (for example due to sea-time scheduling issues or in the case of Antarctic fieldwork). Permission must be sought from NERC in advance by submitting a completed request for a delay to the starting date, via the Je-S system, to the UKRI Grants Team. This should detail the reasons for, and duration of, the required extension.

### Extensions

85. It is not NERC policy to financially supplement an existing research grant or fellowship. An application for a funded extension to an existing or previous research grant must therefore be submitted as a new application and must demonstrate that the request is for funding a direct development of, but not a supplement to, the earlier work. Applications for extensions will be considered in competition with other applications for funding and should be, in themselves, discrete projects.

## Money Follows Researcher / Transferring Grants in Europe

86. Transfer of funds into other European countries is permitted under the [Money Follows Researcher scheme](#) and allows researchers to take the remainder of their research grant to European countries where the Research Funding Organisation (RFOs) has signed up to the scheme. Full details of the scheme are on the [UKRI website](#).

## Data Availability

87. NERC expects all applicants to have thoroughly considered how they will access any datasets that they expect to use or access for the duration of the application, in particular, the use of non-UK and non-open access datasets. Applicants are required to provide a list of all datasets required for the application. Applicants should consider and note the risks of not being able to access such data sets, including providing evidence of alternative datasets (and their access policy; evidence of access agreements).
88. Applicants working with overseas partners are encouraged to review their partner country's data access, field site access and transportation of physical samples policies before agreeing working partnerships and submitting joint applications. Applicants must ensure that data produced by the proposed research activities will be released to the UK PI, including full rights to bring any data back into the UK for its storage as part of the grant terms and conditions and in line with [NERC data policy](#).
89. NERC believes that datasets collected as a result of projects are an important resource that must be adequately managed. Investigators should therefore make sure that a NERC Environmental Data Centre is aware of any significant datasets to be compiled as a result of their projects, so that the long-term future of these data can be planned. A mandatory, single page, outline Data Management Plan (ODMP) is required for all applications submitted via JeS. The ODMP will identify data sets likely to be made available to NERC Data Centres for archiving and reuse at the end of the grant. For some opportunities from 2022, we will only request an ODMP for successful projects to save investigator effort. The ODMP and Case for Support for successful applications will be made available to the [NERC Environmental Data Centres](#) and where appropriate, used by them to draft, in collaboration with the Principal Investigator, a full Data Management Plan (DMP). This full DMP should be mutually agreed between the Data Centre and the Principal Investigator within three to six months of the start date of the grant. At the end of an award Investigators are required to offer the appropriate Data Centre a copy of any dataset generated, so that the data can be made available for other researchers to use.
90. NERC reserves the right to access all unpublished papers, records, data or collections resulting from the work carried out under a grant, some of which may be required to be deposited with NERC. Similarly NERC reserves the right to use information on the outcome of awards to report on achievements e.g. in annual reports. NERC may, at any time, require detailed information on the results of work funded through grants for use in scientific or financial audits.
91. [NERC Environmental Data Centres](#) will give advice on issues relating to charging, licensing and exploitation of datasets. NERC policy in this area is described in more detail in the [NERC Data Policy Handbook](#) and the accompanying [Guidance Notes](#). Advice is also available from [NERC's data management coordinator](#). NERC funded

grants that include third party data are advised to document the metadata with the appropriate NERC Environmental Data Centre. Similarly, social science data that is collected as part of a NERC grant should be submitted to the [UK Data Archive](#) and the metadata stored with the appropriate NERC Environmental Data Centre.

### **Associated (Project) Studentships**

- 92.** Associated (Project) Studentships can be requested on Large Grant applications. Funds for part of or all of a student's PhD work cannot be requested on applications to other Discovery Science opportunities or Fellowship opportunities. The individual announcement of opportunity for Strategic Research funding will give details of whether Associated Studentships can be requested. An Associated Studentship should constitute a distinct project, providing added value to the research grant. The main research grant project should still be viable without the studentship and should have distinct objectives that are not reliant upon the studentship. The student is expected to be able to develop novel research ideas while benefiting from working in a group environment. NERC will not accept applications where a student is the only dedicated researcher/staff member on a grant, including individual component grants of joint applications. All Associated Studentships must also meet the relevant success criteria. Please follow the appropriate links: [Large Grant associated studentships](#), [Research Grant Associated Studentships](#).
- 93.** An Associated Studentship provides funding for up to 48 months for a research student to carry out a well-defined programme of work within the research grant, leading to the award of a PhD/DPhil. The Associated Studentship includes the student's maintenance grant and university fees, which should be requested on the application form as an Exceptions cost and will be paid at 100% (unless co-funding is in place).
- 94.** Additional costs should be requested on the research grant application form for items such as fieldwork expenses, conferences and consumables. These should be requested as a Directly Incurred cost and will be paid at 80% FEC. No further funding is available for Associated Studentships beyond that requested on the grant.
- 95.** The latest rates for the [minimum stipend and university fees](#) can be found on the UKRI website. Where London Allowance is selected, £2000 will be added to the first year rate. To calculate the total cost for both the maintenance grant and tuition fees the first year rate will be multiplied by the duration of the studentship (between 36 and 48 months). Indexation for future years will be added in line with award practice by NERC.
- 96.** For research grant applications requesting Associated Studentships, the period of the studentship must fall within the start and end date of the grant, whilst funding from the grant is being used. If there is a delay to the student starting, then a no-cost extension to the research grant should be requested.
- 97.** In line with other NERC studentships, Associated Studentships can be funded for between three and four years (for example, taking the first 42 months from the research grant and the remaining six months from a NERC Training Grant). In situations where the initial Associated Student has terminated and a replacement student is found, the research grant can be used to fund the replacement student initially then the remaining funding could be found from a NERC Training Grant.

- 98.** The student has to meet the eligibility requirements as set out in the [Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants](#). Students do not need to be nominated in advance to NERC. Research Organisations should provide details of the student within one month of their start date, through the Je-S Studentship Details Portal (SDP).
- 99.** Associated Students should not be included in the number of FTEs used in the calculation of a Research Organisation's Estates or Indirect costs. Investigators should not include supervision of Associated Students in their estimate of the number of hours they will spend on the research project.
- 100.** Co-funded Associated Studentships are now encouraged on some Research Programme opportunities. The co-funding can be through industrial partners or other appropriate funders (not Research Council training grants such as Doctoral Training Partnerships or Centres for Doctoral Training) and applicants must include details of these arrangements in the application.
- 101.** Associated Studentships must comply with the regulations governing other NERC research studentships, including those covering institutional and student eligibility. The Research Organisation must make the same level of provision for training and supervision that would be expected for any other NERC research student; this is particularly important if there is an Associated Student working in the Antarctic. Studentships based at Independent Research Organisations, Research Institutes, Public Sector Research Establishments and Catapult Centres must be associated with a university as the degree-awarding body. An Associated Studentship may be held as a CASE award, if appropriate.
- 102.** Where there are funds for an Associated Studentship on the grant, and the original student terminates their studentship within the first year, a replacement student can be funded through the grant. No additional funding will be provided. Any shortfall should be found from other departmental funds (including NERC Training Grants,) or by virement of Directly Incurred funds from the research grant. If the student terminates more than one year into the studentship and/or there would be less than two years remaining on the grant by the time the replacement student started, the excess funds can either be vired into Directly Incurred costs and used to fund some technician or researcher staff effort or used to part-fund a replacement studentship, where other funding, such as that from a Training Grant, can be used to support the studentship once the research grant is finished.
- 103.** If the original or replacement studentship is a student eligible for payment of fees only, the stipend component can be vired into the Directly Incurred fund heading and used as required.

## Section E – FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

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- 104.** All grants are awarded subject to the [UKRI Terms and Conditions](#). Additional conditions may be included in grant award letters where required. This section has been reduced to remove repetition of information included in the Terms and Conditions and associated [guidance](#).

### Funding of Fellows and Fellowships

- 105.** Research Council Fellows (or others wholly funded by a sponsor external to the Research Organisation) cannot request their salary on a research grant on which they are a Principal/Co-Investigator, during the period of their fellowship award. If the fellowship was awarded under fEC terms and conditions, Fellows cannot claim Estates or Indirect costs on the research grant during the period of their fellowship award. If the fellowship was awarded under non- or pre-fEC terms and conditions, Estates and Indirect costs may be claimed.
- 106.** NERC fellows can apply as a Principal or Co-Investigator for European Research Council (ERC) research grants. If successful, the NERC fellowship should be reduced to 50% to enable the fellow to spend the required 50% of their time on the ERC project. The NERC fellowship would then be extended accordingly, ensuring the same time overall is available to complete the NERC fellowship. The ERC grant would provide 50% of the fellows salary with the NERC fellowship providing the other 50%.
- 107.** NERC Fellowship applications cannot request individual items of equipment (over £10,000), visiting researchers, research assistants or Associated (Project) Studentships. This £10,000 funding limit cannot be used to part-fund equipment costing more than the £10,000 limit. Only the Principal Investigator (fellow) can be listed as staff on fellowship applications. Directly Allocated costs can be included to support pool staff time.

### Funding for Eligible International Co-Investigators

- 108.** The following rules apply to IIASA and Norwegian co-Investigator funding:
- IIASA/Norwegian Co-Is can request a maximum of 30% of the full economic cost (FEC) of the grant application (NB not 30% of the maximum grant size by scheme and not 30% each)
  - IIASA/Norwegian organisations will be paid at 100% of the justified direct costs, through a UK lead or component grant
  - Eligible costs are as follows;
    - IIASA/Norwegian co-investigator salaries provided that it is demonstrated that the funding of investigator salaries within Research Grants is the standard practice of the Norway Co-Investigator's employing organisation
    - Directly incurred (DI) costs (e.g. Travel & Subsistence, consumables)



- IIASA/Norwegian Research Assistants
- Ineligible costs are;
  - Estates and other indirect costs
  - Capital costs
  - Equipment over £10k (anything under £10k can be requested under DI costs)

## Details on Directly Incurred Costs

### Requesting International costs

- 109.** All costs to be incurred by the International Co-Investigator(s), whether salary, fieldwork or travel and subsistence, must be entered in Je-S under 'Directly Incurred Costs', and should be marked as an 'Exception' using the tick box.
- 110.** To enable UKRI to meet transparency and external audit requirements all overseas costs must be entered into this section using the format 'Organisation; Country; Cost Category; Cost Description'. For example:
- The University of Bergen; Norway: Staff; 1x PDRA
  - The University of Bergen; Norway; Other Directly Incurred costs; 5 x workshops
  - The University of Bergen; Norway: Travel and Subsistence; 4 x flights to partners

### Visiting Researchers

- 111.** Distinguished researchers from the UK or overseas may be funded to visit the Investigator's institution in order to give full time advice and assistance on research in a particular field for up to 12 months during the project. Visiting Researchers will normally receive the same salary and conditions as other staff of an equivalent status within the Research Organisation. NERC will only pay their salary for the time that they will be directly working on the proposed project. Estates and Indirect costs will be paid where a visit exceeds 6 months. NERC will not fund a Visiting Researcher on a fellowship. Reasonable expenses will be paid for travel to and from the UK by Visiting Researchers, but not their families. The amount requested for the visit should be reduced if a contribution has been received from other sources or if the visit will be partly funded by the Visiting Researcher's own institution.

### Equipment

- 112.** The threshold for individual items to be classed as equipment is £10,000 (inclusive of VAT). In line with changes under [Simpler and Better Funding](#), application requirements will be detailed in the opportunity documentation on the funding finder. For large Capital opportunities, more information will be required at application stage, whereas for Discovery or Strategic research opportunities, where the assessment focus is on the research excellence, information may be requested for those applications in the funding frame only. Where required, for items of equipment costing between £10,000 and the

UKRI Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT), additional information is required in the justification of resources, including evidence of an evaluation of the use of existing relevant capital assets. Applications requesting single items of equipment costing more than £138k (£115k ex VAT) must be accompanied by a business case (up to 2 sides of A4 outlining the strategic need for the equipment). The thresholds apply to individually capitalisable assets, rather than by accumulating the value of a number of assets, except where individual assets are clearly intended to be used together as a combined asset. These thresholds apply during the application process as the trigger to determine which application process needs to be followed. They do not impact the procurement process when organisations will need to conform to the OJEU tendering limits that apply to their organisation.

- 113.** From January 2020, NERC have paid 100% of the cost of equipment on successful DS Standard and Large grants. NERC will pay 100% for equipment on the DS Pushing the Frontiers and Exploring the Frontiers grants. For other opportunities, there continues to be a requirement for Research Organisations to make a contribution towards the cost of any equipment and this is expected to be at least 50% of the full cost. Applications should cite the full cost of the equipment, confirm the % being required from NERC and provide confirmation that the remaining funds have been secured in the Justification of Resources or business case.
- 114.** The requirement for additional justification or a business case will not apply to equipment to be used for instrument development. An application or group of applications forming a single project will be classed as instrument development where it is wholly or mainly focussed on creating a novel instrument, or will substantially improve research capability not available using any existing instrument, or will substantially improve research capability beyond what currently exists, in a way that opens up significant new scientific opportunities. Instrument development might involve the construction of a wholly new instrument from its basic components or it might involve substantial modification of an existing instrument. Finally it might involve the integration of two or more existing instruments into a new combined one. In this latter case the proposed integration would need to be technically non-trivial and lead to a capability significantly beyond that of using the component instruments independently. The expectation is for the Research Organisation to contribute at least 50% of the cost, NERC will consider funding up to 100% of instrument development where the potential for Research Organisations to contribute to the costs of instrument development is limited.
- 115.** Equipment purchased from grant funds is primarily for use on the research project for which the research grant was awarded, and belongs to the Research Organisation. In certain circumstances NERC may wish to retain ownership throughout the period of the grant and possibly beyond. In such cases, the grant will be subject to an additional condition.
- 116.** Equipment requested in a research grant application may be available from one of the NERC equipment pools, and could be loaned to the Research Organisation for the duration of the award. If this is the case it will be made clear in the award letter. Pool equipment will be supplied fully serviced and in a condition safe to use; advice will be given on any maintenance required.

## Sub-contracting

117. NERC considers eligible institutions to be best placed to determine how their work is undertaken. If this involves sub-contracting aspects of the work to non-eligible institutions due, for example, to the lack of appropriate expertise in eligible institutions, this is acceptable. In such circumstances, NERC would pay the awarded eligible institution which in turn would sub-contract to the service provider as appropriate. This is, of course, without prejudice to the eligibility status of these other non-eligible institutions. Funds requested for sub-contracting should be included in the 'Other Directly Incurred Costs' section of the Je-S application form and NERC would provide 80% of any sub-contract costs. Organisations undertaking sub-contracting should refer to the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) for information on the training and development opportunities that should be made available to researchers by employers. Organisations that are eligible to receive funding directly from NERC cannot be sub-contractors. Except where providing a service only, or where an opportunity allows overseas research organisations, non-UK HEIs are expected to fund their participation in projects so will be project partners, not subcontractors or PI/Co-Is.
118. An organisation will generally not be listed as a Project Partner and a sub-contractor. A harmonised change to the [grant terms and conditions guidance](#) from August 2021 has introduced the concept of Dual Roles: An organisation or individual can act as both a Project Partner and Subcontractor, however this must be fully justified and will be subject to peer review. Project partner related costs are expected to be minor. Where the project needs work to be undertaken that is more significant and includes costs other than travel and subsistence, then the organisation/individual may need to be included as both a Project Partner and a Subcontractor.
119. Except in instances where the service provider is from the public sector, the conferring of any IP, author or other rights to it by the contractor in relation to the research grant application for which it was contracted to provide a service, is not permissible. The inclusion of an acknowledgement in any resulting material of the sub-contracted organisation's contribution to the research is however acceptable. Should there be an intimation or desire on the part of the contractor and/or subcontractor not within the public sector, for other than such an acknowledgement e.g. co-author status on resulting publications, then the interaction between the parties concerned would be deemed to equate to a collaboration, in which case any costs incurred (either direct or indirect) can not be met by NERC.

## Use of Scientific Support and Facilities (S&F)

120. Applicants for NERC grants and fellowships may also apply to NERC for access to any of the NERC-supported scientific services and facilities. Further information is on the UKRI website under [Facilities and resources](#) and in Section F.

## Contaminated Land: Applications in Real Environments

121. Costs associated with the **Contaminated Land: Applications in Real Environments (CL:AIRE)** scheme should be listed as a Directly Incurred cost. Investigators must receive formal written approval from CL:AIRE before any Application can be made to NERC, and copies of this approval must be included with the application. Further details

can be found on the [CL:AIRE](#) website.

### **Independent Research Fellowships: International Ocean Discovery Programme (IODP)**

- 122.** NERC IRF award holders are eligible to apply for support through IODP in addition to the funding awarded through their IRF. Due to the varied and wide range of factors affecting the suitability and feasibility of an IRF award holder receiving IODP support, prospective applicants must contact the [NERC IODP](#) ([daniel.knight@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:daniel.knight@nerc.ukri.org)) and fellowships ([fellowships@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:fellowships@nerc.ukri.org)) teams well in advance of any submission.

### **Access to NERC Data**

- 123.** NERC has extensive holdings of environmental data. It is the policy of NERC to make its data available to anyone, either free of charge, or at rates intended to recoup only the costs of servicing the request. If applications are to involve access to data held by NERC, Investigators should discuss their requirements in advanced with the appropriate [Environmental Data Centre](#) and identify any costs on the application form under the Directly Incurred cost heading. The data centres can also facilitate access to data held outside of NERC. Contact the relevant data centre for more information.

### **Grant Payment Details**

- 124.** Payments will normally be made to Research Organisations under the Research Councils' Profiled Payments procedures, as follows:
- Payments will normally be made on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the final month of the quarter, plus or minus 30 days. NERC reserves the right to amend the payment profile at its discretion. Research Organisations will be advised, in advance, of any such change. Changes to payment profiles may affect the overall value of the award.
  - A single payment will be made to the Research Organisation for all grants held. Details of the payment will be made available.
  - Payment for the purchase of equipment will normally be made in the initial year of the research grant. No allowances will be made for future inflation.

## Section F – APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

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### Application Procedures

- 125.** Any applicant to a DS Large, Pushing the Frontiers or Exploring the Frontiers opportunity may submit no more than two applications to that opportunity closing date as an investigator, only one of these may be as the lead Principal Investigator (The PI on a non-lead application is a Co-I for these purposes). Involvement of a UK investigator in a submission to NSF (under the [NSF-NERC Lead Agency agreement](#)) counts as a submission as non-lead PI/Co-I to the next Pushing the Frontiers opportunity. Applicants can only submit one fellowship application to any fellowship opportunity. Individual Strategic Research funding announcements of opportunity will advise on the number of applications permitted per investigator. NERC must be notified of any change in the named Principal or Co-Investigator(s) in an application submitted to NERC still undergoing peer review.
- 126.** An institutional-level [submission policy](#) took effect from the July 2015 standard grant (including new investigator) closing date and now applies to the Pushing the Frontiers opportunity. This is based on historic application and award data and limits the number of applications an individual research organisation can make, where that organisation fails to meet a 20 per cent success rate quality threshold. Where a research organisation submits more applications to any round than allowed under the cap, NERC will office-reject any excess applications, based purely on the time of submission through the Je-S system (last submitted = first rejected). Any lead or component application from another research organisation linked to the rejected application will also be rejected. If any applications are subsequently rejected based on rule adherence or remit, a research organisation cannot submit alternative applications. Further information has been sent to Research Organisations and is available on the [UKRI website](#).
- 127.** From 1 April 2022, you can submit time-sensitive grant applications to UKRI at the same time as submitting applications to other, non-UKRI funders when they also allow duplicate submissions. See [Duplicate Submissions](#).
- 128.** Applications for the same research project cannot be submitted to more than one Research Council. Applications submitted to the same NERC opportunity should be distinct in content and must not duplicate work outlined in one or more other applications e.g. workpackages cannot be identical in any two applications. Any support sought or received, in the last three years, from any source for research in the same field as the application must be detailed in the “Related Applications” or “Other Support” sections of the Je-S form. An application may not be submitted for a project for which a grant or fellowship has already been awarded. The same research project may not be submitted to concurrent NERC research grant rounds (Discovery Science or Strategic Research). There are further rules on resubmissions of applications later in this section.
- 129.** The Research Councils aim to ensure that there are no gaps between the Councils’ subject domains and that there is equality of opportunity for applications at the interface between traditional disciplines. The Research Councils have substantially revised their

[protocol for assessing and funding applications that straddle their](#) remit and this protocol can be found on the UKRI website. If applicants are uncertain about which Research Council they should apply to, contact: [nercremit@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:nercremit@nerc.ukri.org).

- 130.** Applications requesting the use of Antarctic Logistic Support will only be accepted by NERC if the Pre award Operational Planning Support Questionnaire (OSPQ) has been submitted to the Antarctic Access Office at BAS, before the associated deadline, and subsequently approved by the NERC Antarctic logistics panel. All applications submitted to NERC will require confirmation that this approval has been received and the Pre award Operational Planning Support Questionnaire (OSPQ) should be submitted with the application, as a Technical Assessment attachment type, specifically detailing the date that logistics approval was received and quoting the logistic bid reference number.
- 131.** Applications must be submitted using the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). To use this system, the applicant's Research Organisation must be registered as a Je-S user. Full details are available on the [Je-S website](#). Further information can also be obtained by contacting the Je-S Helpdesk by email at [JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org) or by telephone on 01793 44 4164. Applicants can now also [create or connect their ORCID identifier](#) (ORCID iD) in Je-S. UKRI are developing a [new Funding Service](#) and some pilot opportunities are being run through that system.
- 132.** Applicants must ensure that their application is received by NERC by 4pm (16.00) on the relevant closing date. The Je-S system has an automatic cut-off for opportunities at 16.00 on the closing date and applications will not submit to NERC after that time. Applicants should leave enough time for their application to pass through their organisation's Je-S submission route before 16.00 on the relevant closing date. Any application that is incomplete or does not meet the eligibility criteria of NERC, will be rejected and will not be considered. All component applications must use the same opportunity as the lead application or the whole application (lead and components) will be rejected. Any grant application received that exceeds the maximum funding limit and does not have prior authorisation will be rejected by NERC.
- 133.** All attachments, with the exception of letters of support and services/facilities/equipment quotes, submitted through the Je-S system must be completed in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11), with margins of at least 2cm. Please note that Arial narrow, Calibri and Times New Roman are not allowable font types and any application which has used either of these font types within their submission will be rejected. References and footnotes should also be at least 11 point font and should be in the same font type as the rest of the document. Headers and footers should not be used for references or information relating to the scientific case. Embedded diagrams or pictures or numerical formulae may contain text that is smaller than 11 point but applicants should ensure that the font is legible. Text in tables and figure labels not within embedded diagrams should be at least 11 point. If applicants are not able to use Arial font and are unsure whether the font type they plan to use will meet NERC guidelines then they should contact the NERC Grants Team at [researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org) before submitting their application for confirmation of whether or not the font type they plan to use is acceptable. The correct attachment type should be used in Je-S as that determines whether attachments are visible to reviewers and/or moderating panel members. Letters of support must be on headed paper and signed/dated. Attachments must not exceed the page limits

specified for the attachment type and scheme, regardless of the number of component Research Organisations. Attachments should be converted to PDF and checked prior to attaching to the application in Je-S, as PDF conversion of documents with any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc.) can result in changes, such as missing data or increased document length. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that font size and margins remain the same when documents are converted to a pdf.

- 134.** Where applicable on the opportunity, each Project Partner must provide a letter to confirm that support and facilities will be made available of up to 2 sides of A4. The letter of support should be provided on headed paper with a date and the signature of the named contact in the collaborating organisation. It should confirm the organisation's commitment to the proposed project, identify the value, relevance and possible benefits of the proposed work to the partner, the period of support, the full nature of the collaboration and how the partner will be involved in the project and provide added value. Partner contributions, whether in cash or in kind, should be explained in detail in the case for support, including the equivalent value of any in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions can include staff time, access to equipment, sites or facilities, the provision of data, software or materials. The letter should be written when the application is being prepared and targeted specifically to the project. NERC reserves the right to remove all other letters from applications.
- 135.** On submitting the application through Je-S to NERC, each Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator, and Project Partner is confirming their consent of the use of data by NERC. As part of its normal business as a publicly funded award-giving body and in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act 2018, NERC will use personal data provided on the grant application form and acquired subsequently in connection with an application and any resulting grant.
- 136.** For all applications for NERC grants (research grants and fellowships), the Principal Investigator must submit the relevant Je-S form, together with a Case for Support. Applicants referring to websites should note that referees may choose not to use them. For guidance on page limits and information required in the case for support you should refer to the relevant opportunity documentation on the [funding finder](#). Any application in which the Case for Support does not comply with the specifications will be rejected. All parts of the Case for Support must be submitted as one document and must not be attached separately under other attachments types. For any opportunities still requiring the two sections below, some guidance is provided, but the track record section has often been superseded by opportunity requirements.
- 137.** The Previous Track Record should:
  - Provide a summary of the results and conclusions of recent work in the technological/scientific area that is covered by the research application. Include reference to both NERC and non- NERC funded work. Details of any relevant past collaborations.
  - Indicate where your previous work has achieved significant academic or socio-economic impact.
  - Outline the specific expertise available for the research at the host organisation and that of any associated organisations and Project Partners.

- 138.** The Description of the Proposed Research should address the following points:
- Underlying rationale, scientific and technological issues to be addressed.
  - Specific objectives of the project, including their potential relevance to UK and international research work in the field, relevance to the NERC Strategy (Annex A) and anticipated achievements and outputs, including datasets.
  - Methodology and approach.
  - Risks and mitigation strategies.
  - Programme and/or plan of research, evidence of access to required facilities, data, collections.
  - Management of both project and resources, identifying the training and career development opportunities for personnel working on the project.
- 139.** The Outline Data Management Plan (a separate attachment) should: identify data sets likely to be made available to NERC Environmental Data Centres for archiving and reuse at the end of the grant ([guidance available](#) on the UKRI website). One page should be used only for this purpose. For most grants, the costs associated with management of the data once it has been passed to the Data Centres will be funded separately from the grant and should not be included in the grant application. In a few opportunities, not supported directly from the NERC budget, the data management costs do need to be included in the grant application and this will be made clear in the Announcement of Opportunity (AO). Any costs associated with preparation of the data by the Investigators team should be included on the grant application.
- 140.** The Case for Support and the Outline Data Management Plan for successful applications will be made available to the NERC Environmental Data Centres and where appropriate, used by them to draft, in collaboration with the Principal Investigator, a full Data Management Plan (DMP). This full DMP should be mutually agreed between the [Data Centre](#) and the Principal Investigator within three to six months of the start date of the grant.
- 141.** The Justification of Resources (JoR) should be submitted as a separate attachment in the Je-S system. It should include justification for all Directly Incurred Costs, Investigator effort, use of pool staff resources and any access to shared facilities and equipment being sought. Up to 2 pages of A4 are allowed for this purpose. No justification for Directly Allocated Estates and Indirect Costs is required. If resources are not fully justified, they will be subject to reduction. An example of a [well-written JoR](#) can be found on the UKRI website. Guidance on what should be included is also available in the [Je-S Helptext](#) (under the Standard Applications then Case for Support and Attachments section). This has been agreed by all Research Councils. The JoR should also include full justification of all sea-time and facility costs requested on applications. For High Performance Computing (HPC) no cost estimates are required, but an estimate of the use of ARCHER2 in thousand Compute Units (kCU) should be included and an application must be attached when use of ARCHER2 exceeds 500 kCU (in any one year) for the whole project.



- 142.** For all items of equipment costing between £10,000 (including VAT) and the UKRI Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT), but excluding that to be used for instrument development, the Research Organisation will need to provide evidence of an evaluation of the use of existing relevant capital assets. The Justification of Resources should be used to:
- confirm that the piece of equipment is not readily available for use within the host institution, or any other assessable location (for instance by making reference to any asset registers consulted);
  - provide evidence that all other reasonable options have been considered;
  - explain, if the equipment requested will replace existing equipment, what will happen to the existing equipment;
  - set out what contribution the Research Organisation will be making towards the cost of the equipment.

Requests for all single items of equipment above the UKRI Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT) (excluding that to be used for instrument development) must be accompanied by a business case outlining why NERC should invest in this item of equipment. The business case will be subject to peer review and separate consideration for funding. The business case should be no more than 2 sides A4 and is additional to the Justification of Resources and the Case for Support. There may be duplication between the Case for Support and the business case but it is important that the business case contains sufficient information to allow separate peer review assessment. A separate business case must be provided for every capital item of equipment over the UKRI Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT). These should be submitted by the component Research Organisation requesting the equipment in joint Large grant applications.

- 143.** Research Assistants, whether named or unnamed, should be requested at a salary level commensurate with the skills, responsibilities, expertise and experience necessary to carry out the proposed research activity. This level must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources. Research Assistants must be employed and working at the same Research Organisation as at least one of the Investigators on the grant.
- 144.** Funds for technicians and other support staff who will be dedicated to the research project, or who will undertake work directly related to the proposed project and whose time can be fully supported by an auditable record (e.g. timesheets) during the life of the project, may be sought as directly incurred costs. The need for these staff must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources. Funds for technicians and other support staff who will undertake work directly related to the proposed project, but whose time will be shared with other projects or activities and will not be supported by an auditable record, should be claimed as Other Directly Allocated Costs. The need for these allocated pool staff must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources. Infrastructure Technicians should be identified separately from Estates costs. As this category of technician represents another overhead which was previously a component of the Estates costs, it does not need to be justified in the Justification of Resources.

- 145.** Successful grants will include funding for the basic salary, National Insurance and superannuation costs for staff to be supported by the grant. An element for future pay awards will be added to grants by NERC. This will be based on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflators issued by the Treasury. Where individuals opt for a personal pension plan (in place of their employer's scheme), NERC will normally meet the cost of this, provided the cost does not exceed the USS/JSS contribution. There is no barrier to the recruitment of scientific staff from overseas, provided that they have permission to work in the United Kingdom. The Research Organisation is solely responsible for the procurement of work permits.
- 146.** Where support is requested for an Associated (Project) Studentship the studentship must be justified fully in the application. All costs for the student's travel and subsistence, consumables etc. must be itemised as Directly Incurred costs on the grant application form. Associated studentships may not be included in Urgency grants, Fellowships, Pushing the Frontiers or Exploring the Frontiers grants.
- 147.** UKRI recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities and are committed to ensuring that individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career(s) such as breaks and delays, disruptive working patterns and conditions, the loss of on-going work, and role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic. Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts of the impact that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the track record and career development of those individuals included in the application and will be asked to consider the capability of the applicant and their wider team to deliver the research they are proposing. Where disruptions have occurred applicants can highlight this within their application, if they wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.
- 148.** UK Research and Innovation announced changes to requirements on 'Pathways to Impact' in January 2020. As a result of this change, a separate Pathways to Impact statement is no longer required, but applicants must still consider how they will or might achieve impact throughout their projects and include this as part of their Case for Support. Applicants should refer to specific opportunity guidelines and assessment criteria when embedding impact within their Case for Support. Activities to realize impact do not have to be cost-incurring, but relevant costs can be included and must be fully justified within the Justification of Resources statement.

### **Pushing the Frontiers**

- 149.** The next Pushing the Frontiers opportunity closing on 20 July 2023 and all future opportunities will be submitted on The Funding Service (TFS) and not the Je-S system. The new process for submitting applications on TFS will be detailed in the announcement on the funding finder and has been removed from the handbook.

### **“Standard Grant” Format Requirements**

- 150.** Some current announcements of opportunity may still refer to “Standard Grant” format requirements. This will be phased out, but detail is retained in the current handbook:

Document/ attachment type	Requirements where the Announcement of Opportunity refers to “Standard Grant” format requirements” only.
Application Form	Je-S proforma (All component applications must use the same opportunity as the lead application or the whole application (lead and components) will be rejected.
Case for Support	Incorporating the Previous Track Record (up to 2 sides A4) and Description of Proposed Research (up to 8 sides A4
Outline Data Management Plan (ODMP)	up to 1 side A4
Justification of Resources	up to 2 sides A4 for all Research Organisations in the proposed grant, including justification for items of equipment between £10,000 and the UKRI Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT)
C.V.	CVs are required for named research staff (including Researcher Co-Investigators), Visiting Researchers, all Principal and Co-Investigators named in the application (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV). There is a Je-S validation requiring the same number of CVs as named investigators and researchers on the application.  Note: Only CVs for the PI, any Cols and named researchers will be sent out for peer review. Other submitted CVs e.g. from Project Partners should not be attached and will not be made available to reviewers or panel members.
Project Partner Letter of Support	From any named Project Partners (up to 2 sides A4 each). There is a Je-S validation requiring the same number of attachments as Project Partners
Letter of Support	Letters of support should generally be from Project Partners. No further letters of support should be attached, except in exceptional cases where permission has been received from <a href="mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org">researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org</a> . Letters of support can only be attached to the lead application. Applicants should ensure than any letter of support adds value to the scientific case e.g. where access to data is being granted. NERC reserves the right to not make letters of support available to reviewers and panel members where they do not add value to the scientific case.
Facility Form	Use only for application forms for Ship-time/Marine Equipment (SME), Autonomous Deployment (ADF), and for High Performance Computing (HPC) when use of ARCHER2 exceeds 500 kCU (in any one year) for the whole project.
Technical Assessment	Mandatory for any <a href="#">NERC Facility</a> selected on the Je-S proforma except those listed in the previous row. The full list is on the NERC website. The attachment should be a quote from the relevant facility.
Non-UK Components	To be used only where specific guidance requires this attachment. For example, where NERC and an International Funding Organisation have a <a href="#">joint agreement</a> (e.g. NSF or FAPESP)

Equipment Section attachments.	Under the Equipment Section up to three quotations for each item of equipment requested over £25K can be attached and there is a Je-S validation requiring three quotations and a Business Case (up to 2 sides A4) for each item of equipment over the UKRI Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT) (see paragraph 157).
Other attachment	This attachment does not go out to reviewers and should not be used, except where a Head of Department is required to confirm the eligibility of one or more of the Investigators. If the document does not fit within any of the attachment types above, it probably should not be submitted. Contact <a href="mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org">researchgrants@nerc.ukri.org</a> if unsure.
Application Cover Letter	This attachment does not go out to reviewers, so should not be used except to flag up a significant issue to the NERC Office (e.g. a request not to use a certain reviewer). This attachment should be used to <a href="#">declare any relevant interests</a> .

## Urgency Grants

- 151.** For Urgency Grant applications the details of what is required will be provided via the [opportunity on the funding finder](#) on the UKRI website. The details have been removed from this edition of the handbook as they are subject to change as we reduce the paperwork required in applications and gradually move to a new funding system.

## Large Grants

- 152.** Applicants must first submit an outline application. It will be assessed by a panel comprising members of the Peer Review College, and independent experts, if required, against the criteria potential excellence and fit to scheme. Applicants whose outline application is successful at the sift meeting will be invited to submit a full application at least 4 months before the closing date for full applications. Lead Research Organisations should check the eligibility of all organisations involved before submitting the application. NERC will not automatically check eligibility until the full application is received, although advice can be provided on request.
- 153.** The current large grant outline opportunity closed in Je-S in March 2023. For those applicants who are invited to submit a full application, details of how to apply through The Funding Service (TFS) will be available on the [funding finder](#).

## Fellowship Grants

- 154.** For Discovery Science Independent Research Fellowship (IRF) applications the detail of what is required in the next opportunity will be on the UKRI [Funding Finder](#). The 2023 opportunity will be on The Funding Service and not JeS so further detail has been removed from the handbook at this point.

## **Knowledge Exchange Fellowships**

- 155.** For Knowledge Exchange Fellowship rounds, the requirements will vary from those for NERC IRFs and where appropriate they will be detailed on the opportunity documentation on the UKRI [Funding Finder](#).

## **Strategic Research Fellowships**

- 156.** For Strategic Research Fellowship rounds, the requirements may vary from those for NERC IRFs and where appropriate they will be detailed on the opportunity documentation on the UKRI [Funding Finder](#).

## **Joint Grant Applications submitted via Je-S (not TFS)**

- 157.** The following guidance applies where a research application consists of more than one component application, which enables funding to be awarded directly to different Research Organisations. Any component applications must use the same opportunity as the lead. Alternatively, a single application may include Co-Investigators from the non-lead Research Organisation and funding for a number of Research Organisations. In this case the award would be made to the lead/submitting Research Organisation which would pass funds on to collaborating Research Organisations (including Directly Allocated and Directly Incurred costs).
- 158.** The Principal Investigator's Research Organisation will normally be the administering Research Organisation. There is no limit to the number of component Research Organisations requesting direct funding.
- 159.** There will be one overall lead Principal Investigator and lead Research Organisation with responsibility for the management of the project as a whole. In addition, each constituent Research Organisation must name a Principal Investigator who will have responsibility for the input of the component organisation.
- 160.** The following information should be common to all application proformas and text such as "See Lead Application" should not be submitted:
- Title of application
  - Objectives
  - Summary
  - Academic Beneficiaries
- 161.** Where the named attachments are permitted on the opportunity, for each component Research Organisation we require:
- CVs for named research staff (including Researcher Co-Investigators) and Visiting Researchers at the component Research Organisation (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV). These should be attached to the relevant component Research Organisation application.

- CVs for all Principal and Co-Investigators named in the application (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV).
- Business case for items of equipment above the UKRI Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT) (up to 2 sides A4 for each item)
- Price quotations/documentary evidence of estimated cost for equipment costing more than £25,000.
- Facilities forms, where relevant.

**162.** Where the named attachments are permitted on the opportunity, the following should be included in the lead Research Organisation application pro-forma or submitted as attachments to the lead Research Organisation application **only**:

- Nominated referees.
- Project Partners.
- Letters of support from named Project Partners.
- Case for Support (all parts)
- Outline Data Management Plan (ODMP)
- Justification of Resources (including any justification for items of equipment between £10,000 and the UKRI Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT)).
- Pre Award Operational Support Planning Questionnaire (for applications requiring Antarctic Logistic Support)

**Summary of Requirements for Joint Grant Applications (relevant only where named attachments are permitted on the opportunity)**

<b>Document Type (refer to the opportunity to check whether the attachments are permitted)</b>	<b>Common to all applications</b>	<b>Submitted by Lead Only</b>	<b>Submitted by Individual components</b>
Title of application (pro forma) *	✓		✓
Objectives (pro forma) *	✓		✓
Summary (pro forma) *	✓		✓
Academic Beneficiaries (pro forma) *	✓		✓
* The title and content of all the sections above should be the same on all components. Do not use “see lead” (or similar) as the individual grants of any successful projects are included on the website and in reporting systems, like “Grants on the Web”.			
Nominated referees (pro forma)	✓	✓	
Project Partners (pro forma)	✓	✓	

Associated (Project) Student details (pro forma)			✓
Facility (pro forma)			✓
Case for Support (all parts as one attachment).	✓	✓	
Outline Data Management Plan (ODMP)	✓	✓	
Business Case for items of equipment above the UKRI Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT)	✓		✓
Justification of Resources	✓	✓	
Letters of support from named Project Partners	✓	✓	
CVs for all Principal and Co-I Investigators, named research staff and Visiting Researchers from all component Research Organisations			✓
Price quotations/documentary evidence of estimated cost for equipment costing more than £25,000.	✓		✓
Pre Award Operational Support Planning Questionnaire (for applications requiring Antarctic Logistic Support)	✓	✓	
Facility forms (Ship-time/Marine Equipment/ADF, High Performance Computing involving ARCHER2, if total use likely to exceed 500 kCU (in any one year) for the whole project			✓
<a href="#">Technical Assessment/quote</a> for all other NERC facilities selected.			✓
<a href="#">Non-UK component.</a>	✓	✓	

### Strategic Research and Other Schemes

- 163.** Details of the application procedures for Strategic Research and other schemes can be found in the relevant Announcement of Opportunity which will be published on the [UKRI](#)

[website](#). As NERC publishes new opportunities into 2023, it is expected that they will progressively be managed using the UKRI Funding System and not Je-S. The guidance on the funding finder applies to those opportunities, which may vary from that in this handbook.

## Resubmission of Applications

- 164.** For the Pushing the Frontiers grant scheme and the International Ocean Discovery Programme (IODP), unsuccessful applications can be resubmitted after a period of at least **nine months** from the closing date of the original submission. Resubmitted applications will be assessed alongside all other applications and will not receive preferential treatment. No account will be taken of previous reviews or feedback comments from the Moderating Panel in assessing a resubmitted application. Please note that unsuccessful applications to the NERC research fellowship scheme cannot be submitted to responsive research grant schemes until at least nine months after the closing date of the original fellowship submission.
- 165.** Applications which duplicate 40% or more of the stated Objectives and/or work packages of an unsuccessful submission involving the same PI or Co-I(s) will not be accepted if submitted within nine months of the closing date for the funding round to which the original application was submitted. Applicants are reminded that directly resubmitted applications should be noted at the appropriate point in the Je-S submission procedure.
- 166.** For an application to be considered significantly different (and therefore not a direct resubmission) NERC would expect more than 60% of the stated Objectives and/or work packages to be identified as 'new' i.e. not listed in applications previously submitted to NERC by the applicants. Any decision regarding whether an application is deemed to be significantly different will be made by NERC and will be considered as final.
- 167.** Applications for the same research project cannot be submitted to more than one Research Council. Unless specifically invited, or if prior approval from the NERC Office has been obtained, applications that have already been considered by another Research Council must not be submitted to NERC. Applications where resubmission has been approved, must be accompanied by a covering letter explaining the circumstances of the previous application, its outcome and the modifications subsequently made to the application. It is expected that substantive changes will have been made to any resubmission. Acceptance of such applications remains at the discretion of NERC.
- 168.** An application may not be submitted for a project for which a grant or fellowship has already been awarded. The same research project may not be submitted to concurrent NERC research grant (Discovery Science or Strategic Research) rounds. Applications with overlapping content cannot be submitted to the same opportunity. A fellowship application should not have been previously submitted as a research grant application. Applicants can not submit a similar application (less than 60% different) as a Large grant outline at the same time as a Highlight Topic full application.
- 169.** An application that is unsuccessful in a Strategic Research opportunity (including the Highlight Topic opportunity), but which is within the NERC remit, can be resubmitted into a Discovery Science opportunity (or relevant Strategic Research opportunity). Those that are rejected on the basis of Strategic Research programme remit can be resubmitted at



any time. However, those that have been through the peer review process cannot be resubmitted until at least nine months after the original closing date. This includes where applicants choose to resubmit their unsuccessful application as a Large grant outline application.

### **Applications Requiring Use of NERC Scientific Support and Facilities**

- 170.** Applicants for NERC grants may also apply to NERC for access to any of the NERC scientific support and facilities. Further information on [NERC scientific support and facilities](#) is on the UKRI website. Prior to submitting the grant application, the applicants must first contact the facility to seek agreement that they could provide the service required and obtain a technical assessment (here termed a “quote” since it includes the calculated cost of providing the service to the grant). Applicants should contact the relevant facility **at least two months** prior to the grant or fellowship application closing date to ensure that the facility can provide the quote in time to be submitted as part of the grant application. Advice on the application procedure for a particular facility should be sought from the [relevant facility contact](#). For most facilities and schemes, the quoted notional costs of using the facility should be included in the grant application at the time of submission and should be entered under the directly incurred other costs heading. On the Je-S application proforma the facility(s) box should be ticked and the relevant facility(s) selected from the drop-down box, the units and costs fields should be entered here too. There is a system validation requiring a “technical assessment” (quote) for some facilities. For some facilities the costs will then be removed from the grant and awarded notionally (where NERC provides the funding directly to the facility). If the relevant facility costs have not been requested on the grant application, they will not be added later. **Therefore, it is extremely important that these costs are included at the time of submission.** Different rules apply for ship time/marine equipment and High Performance Computing (HPC) which are covered below.

### **Applications Requesting Ship Time and/or Marine Equipment**

- 171.** Principal Investigators bidding for ship time or marine equipment are required to speak to Marine Planning to discuss their requirements before submission of their online Ship-time and Marine Equipment or Autonomous Deployment (SME/ADF) application form. Failure to do so may result in their request not being included in the NERC Marine Facilities Programme. This requirement is to ensure that a realistic start date and relevant costs are included in the grant application, and to confirm that NERC can supply the required capability. The Marine Planning contact email is [marineplanning@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:marineplanning@nerc.ukri.org).
- 172.** Applicants wishing to utilise NERC’s marine facilities must complete an online Ship-time and Marine Equipment (SME/ADF) application form through the [Marine Facilities Planning](#) webpage. SME/ADF forms need to be submitted and then assessed and approved by Marine Planning well in advance of the grant application deadline and to the following timescales. NERC Marine Planning should also be informed of your application by emailing [marineplanning@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:marineplanning@nerc.ukri.org). Please note that timescales should be worked back from any deadlines imposed by a PI’s institution which may be in advance of a opportunity deadline. A pdf of the approved SME will then need to be attached to the Je-S submission and the SME/ADF number included in the facilities section of the Je-S form.

- Discovery Science Pushing the Frontiers/Independent Research Fellowships – SMEs/ADFs must be submitted at least two months before the opportunity deadline to allow time for assessment and approval by Marine Planning. Costs are not required for these applications.
  - Discovery Science Exploring the Frontiers
  - Discovery Science Large Grants – SMEs/ADFs should be submitted at least two months before the opportunity deadline to allow time for assessment and approval by Marine Planning and the production of costs to include in the application. SMEs are required at both the outline and the full application stage as costs are required for both stages of the submission process.
  - NERC Strategic Research Opportunities – the deadline for SMEs/ADFs may vary depending on the particular opportunity and will be detailed in the announcement of opportunity. PIs are encouraged to submit their SME/ADF and start discussions with Marine Planning as soon as possible. If costing is required, the two month deadline will apply, unless agreed and advised otherwise with the Strategic Research programme manager(s).
  - Non-NERC funding streams – SMEs/ADFs should follow the guidelines for Large Grants, with SMEs submitted at least two months before the opportunity deadline. This includes the equivalent of both outline and full stage applications.
- 173.** For applications which include a request for Mooring Equipment from the National Marine Equipment Pool (NMEP), then the [NERC Moorings Policy](#) will apply. The Principal Scientist is required to submit a Risk Management form two months prior to the relevant closing date or deadline. Advice can be gained from NERC Marine Planning at any time ([marineplanning@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:marineplanning@nerc.ukri.org)).
- 174.** For applications which include Seismic/Geophysics Operations, it is the responsibility of the Principal Scientist for the cruise to conduct an environmental impact assessment and/or ascertain whether Marine Mammal Observers are necessary. These costs should be included at the time of grant application.
- 175.** The SME/ADF number should be included on the Je-S grant application form under Services and Facilities. A pdf of the final approved SME/ADF form should be attached to the submission as a Facility Form but it should be noted that it will not be included as one of the documents sent to peer reviewers. You are therefore advised to include all necessary cruise detail information within your Case for Support.
- 176.** PIs should notify Marine Planning as soon as they have knowledge of their grant funding outcome. If funding is approved, PIs must also confirm funding on the SME/ADF workflow on the Marine Facilities Planning website.
- 177.** Applications must have confirmed funding by 1<sup>st</sup> April to be considered for the following financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March). Funded applications received after 1<sup>st</sup> April closing date will only be scheduled in the following year's programme on an opportunistic basis if a suitable time window remains and there is enough time to obtain diplomatic clearances. Otherwise these applications will be carried over to the next year. Publication of the NERC Marine Facilities Programme will occur as soon as possible in

the summer/autumn for the following financial year.

178. No research grant involving a ship time application will be allowed to commence until the application has been formally allocated a place in the NERC marine facilities programme, unless approval has otherwise been agreed between Marine Planning and the Strategic Research Programme Manager.
179. The **RV Prince Madog**, operated by the [Prince Madog Offshore Services](#), is run on a pay as you go basis. It is not a NERC Facility, therefore all costs need to be covered by funding secured by the researcher. Queries relating to the vessel, facilities, equipment and technical support should be directed Bangor University, Telephone +44 (0)1248 382902.

### **Applications involving High Performance Computing**

180. Grant applications with High Performance Computing (HPC) requirements should indicate in the appropriate place on the Je-S form that Research Council Facilities are required and select the relevant facility/ies: ARCHER2 and/or JASMIN. Applicants should contact the relevant consortia leader prior to submission of the grant application to get an estimate of the required usage. Applicants intending to use JASMIN and who have large storage requirements, large or complex workflows, compute and/or cloud requirements should contact [support@jasmin.ac.uk](mailto:support@jasmin.ac.uk) to discuss capacity and feasibility of these needs. The HPC “new” application form is only required as an attachment to the grant application form where the total use of ARCHER2 is likely to exceed 500 kCU (in any one year) for the whole project. The NERC contact for High Performance Computing is: [hpc@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:hpc@nerc.ukri.org).

### **Applications involving Cross-Council Large Facilities at Harwell**

181. The cross-Council large facilities, [Diamond \(DLS\)](#), [ISIS \(pulsed neutron and muon source\)](#), the [Central Lasers Facility \(CLF\)](#) and [Research Complex at Harwell](#) are free at the point of access. Applicants should indicate in the appropriate place on the Je-S form that Research Council Facilities are required and select the relevant facility/ies but enter “0” for cost, units and proposed usage. Applicants are required to apply directly to the facility for access.

### **Applications for Antarctic Logistic Support**

182. Logistic support in Antarctica for NERC-funded projects is provided by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), which is a NERC Research Centre. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of BAS, will NERC sanction funding applicants to negotiate their own logistic arrangements with a commercial operator. In the event that BAS cannot support the fieldwork as proposed, applicants will be advised of what is feasible, thereby enabling the application to be modified accordingly. Very occasionally, the proposed logistics cannot be supported because it is evident that an unacceptably high level of risk is inherent in the plan. At its discretion, BAS may broker arrangements with other national Antarctic operators, or commercial logistic providers, to facilitate Antarctic fieldwork operations (especially in ‘deep field’ locations) and to ensure that NERC resources are used in the most efficient and effective manner.

**183.** To ensure that BAS is able to consider the likely logistic support requirements at an early stage, before applications have been developed in detail, applicants must complete a Pre award [Operational Planning Support Questionnaire \(OSPQ\)](#). Applicants must email the Antarctic Access Office (AAO) at BAS ([afibas@bas.ac.uk](mailto:afibas@bas.ac.uk)) stating their name, institution and application title. The AAO will set up a new, numbered Pre award OSPQ and send a link to the online form to the applicant along with instructions for completion. The Pre award OSPQ should be submitted to the AAO **no later than three months prior to the submission deadline** of the intended opportunity or as indicated on the funding finder.

**184.** Reminders of the deadlines will be posted on the [BAS website](#) Pre award Operational Planning Support Questionnaires are considered by a logistics panel, convened at BAS, shortly after the deadline for receipt of those requests. In all cases, feedback will be provided to the applicants, by the AAO.

If your proposed project is entirely ship-based, there is no need for you to submit a Pre award OSPQ. Instead, you should contact NERC Marine Planning ([marineplanning@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:marineplanning@nerc.ukri.org)) at an early stage to discuss your project planning requirements before completing a Ship-time and Marine Equipment (SME) application form. If your activity is both field and ship-based you will need to complete the Pre award OSPQ **and** an SME form.

**185.** Subject to the logistic requests receiving approval, the AAO will send applicants a feedback letter containing the Pre award OSPQ which must be included as an attachment (technical assessment) with their funding application to NERC using the Je-S system. On the Je-S proposal proforma, under Research Council Facilities, the facility box should be ticked and Antarctic Logistic Support selected from the drop-down box. For costs to include, see paragraph 187. The reference number and approval date of the Antarctic logistic requests should be clearly stated in the relevant sections.

**186.** Approval of the Antarctic logistics requests will be valid for a 12 month period from the date of application to BAS. Any funding applications that request Antarctic logistic support without having received prior logistic approval will **not** be accepted by NERC. Please note that the technical assessment will not be sent with the application for Peer Review.

**187.** There are three types of [costs for Antarctic fieldwork](#) which are treated differently on the grant. Applicants are advised to discuss their detailed requirements with Will Mossman, e-mail [afibas@bas.ac.uk](mailto:afibas@bas.ac.uk) at the NERC Antarctic Access Office.

- Provision of Antarctic fieldwork support by BAS is not costed in grant applications; the support is provided free of charge to Investigators, as part of BAS National Capability. This includes use of Antarctic research station facilities, together with use of BAS ships and aircraft, and fieldwork support by Field General Assistants.
- Items that are eligible costs and will not be removed from the grant (e.g. travel to and from RAF Brize Norton, travel to BAS and any required training, other training costs).

- Items that should be costed into the application, but will be removed from the grant and awarded to BAS (flights to and from the Falkland Islands, meals/accommodation/transport relating to Stanley/Punta Arenas/Mount Pleasant, fieldwork clothing, additional aviation fuel, specialist clothing, e.g. diving suits). These costs should be clearly labelled with the pre-fix “Antarctic logistic support” under Directly Incurred Costs. The total costs to be removed from the grant and awarded to BAS should also be included under Cost for Antarctic Logistic Support within the Research Council Facilities section of Je-S.

### **Assessment of Applications**

- 188.** Information on [assessment of applications](#) for Discovery Science and Strategic Research can be found on the UKRI website and in individual Strategic Research Announcements of Opportunity.

## **Section G – MONITORING AND REPORTING**

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### **Final Expenditure Statements**

**189.** <https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/reporting-your-projects-spending/>

### **Annual Reporting of Output and Performance Measures (OPM)**

**190.** [Reporting your project's outcomes – UKRI](#)

## Section H - ENGAGING THE PUBLIC WITH NERC SCIENCE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

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### Why you should engage with the public

- 191.** NERC is committed to engaging the public with the science it funds, a commitment that is set out in the Higher Education & Research Act 2017 and endorsed in the UKRI [Statement of Expectation on Economic and Societal Impact](#). NERC award holders have a responsibility to consider where best to engage the public (non-researchers, such as the public, journalists, schoolchildren, teachers, industry and policy-makers) with their research.
- 192.** Public engagement describes “the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.” Engaged research is meaningful for both parties and encompasses interactions over any or all stages of the research process (from issue formation to evaluation and dissemination). There are a number of courses available to increase knowledge and skills in public engagement and communications.
- 193.** Public engagement activities can achieve economic and societal impacts. Researchers can request resources and time to undertake relevant public engagement activities to achieve impact. Applicants should outline their ideas for outcome-focussed engagement in the case for support.

Public engagement work should be reported annually through the ResearchFish system.

Please see the [NERC public engagement webpages](#) or contact the [NERC engagement team](#) for more information or advice about public engagement.

### Media and communications

- 194.** Award holders are asked to inform the UKRI press office of planned media activities to promote NERC-funded research and share any notable coverage of NERC-funded research. Grant holders can either contact the UKRI press office directly or ask your research institute’s communications team to share press releases and media plans with the UKRI press office in good time. The UKRI communications team is keen to support the media engagement work of all the award holders and research institutes that receive its funding, and can do so through a range of channels to maximise the impact of communications about NERC-funded environmental research. Please contact:

General enquiries: 01793 444000 [communications@ukri.org](mailto:communications@ukri.org)

Press enquiries only: 01793 234136 [press@ukri.org](mailto:press@ukri.org)

If the award involves Antarctic Logistic Support by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), award-holders are asked to inform the BAS press, public relations and education office (Tel: 01223 221448, email: [lmca@bas.ac.uk](mailto:lmca@bas.ac.uk)).

**195.** Award holders are asked to contact the UKRI press office when they have a paper accepted for publication and advise of the date of publication and any media promotion (as above). There are a variety of ways NERC can promote research, including the editorial platform Planet Earth Online and its quarterly print edition. For Planet Earth Online and publications enquiries: [request@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:request@nerc.ukri.org).

Please tag @NERCscience if promoting NERC-funded research on Twitter or Instagram and email [socialmedia@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:socialmedia@nerc.ukri.org) for further information about NERC's digital channels.

Scientists often have to deal with contentious issues. Speaking to journalists or a questioning public in these circumstances can be intimidating. The UKRI communications team can offer advice, guidance and support. Please contact: 01793 234136, [press@ukri.org](mailto:press@ukri.org).

## Websites

Websites can be an ideal way to communicate with certain audiences but should only be developed if there is a clear goal and audience in mind. The Research Organisation's communications team might be able to assist with developing websites. Public-facing websites should meet level AA of the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#) as a minimum, and award holders should consider their ability to meet these when developing new content. The GOV.UK's guidelines on [understanding WCAG 2.1](#) may be helpful.



## Section I - PUBLICATION OF WORK

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### Publication of Work/Open Source Software (OSS)

196. NERC attaches great importance to the dissemination of results and all NERC award-holders are expected to publish the results of their research in the appropriate journals. They are, however, invited to consult NERC if other arrangements seem desirable. All published papers should acknowledge any support received from NERC and should cite the award reference number(s) using the following form of words: "This work was supported by the Natural Environment Research Council [NERC grant reference number xxx]. This is essential in helping to publicise the work of NERC and providing an indicator of the success of the investment. Please help us to ensure continued funding for environmental science research remains a priority by acknowledging NERC when you publicise your research project.
197. It is important, when formulating an application for a grant, that sufficient time for the preparation of manuscripts is incorporated into the design and timing of the proposed project.
198. NERC is committed to the principles articulated in the [UKRI Policy on Open Access](#) and to ensuring that the ideas and knowledge derived from its research, survey and monitoring activities are made available as widely, rapidly and effectively as practicable. The most up to date guidance is available on the [UKRI website](#).
199. NERC reserves the right of access to all unpublished papers, records, or collections resulting from the work carried out under an award, some of which may be required to be deposited with NERC. Similarly NERC reserves the right to use information on the outcome of fellowships, grants or studentships in annual reports, strategic plans, and for scientific and financial audit, and may from time to time require current and former award holders to provide detailed information on the results of work funded.
200. NERC funded projects that aim to produce software outputs must specify a proposed software exploitation route at the start of the project. At completion of a project, the software must be exploited either commercially, within an academic community or as OSS.

### Deposition of organisms in culture collections

201. Where published work includes the description of new species or subspecies or other novel organisms, Principal Investigators are expected to make these available to other researchers through deposition in a recognised culture collection. Recognised collections are considered to be those which publish catalogues of holdings and which make organisms available for sale to all UK researchers with appropriate expertise.
202. Organisms should be offered to the most appropriate UK culture collection. If no UK collection is able to accept them, they should be offered to a recognised overseas collection. If no collections will accept the organisms it is expected that the Principal Investigator should make them available to the scientific community for a minimum period of 2 years following publications of any paper describing those organisms.

- 203.** Principal Investigators should note that the requirements of intellectual property rights may mean that organisms may have to be lodged in a culture collection registered for this purpose under the 1977 Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the purpose of Patent Procedure.

#### **ORCID identifiers**

- 204.** Researchers can now [create or connect their ORCID identifier](#) (ORCID iD) in the Research Councils' grants system (Je-S) by logging in to their personal information page. This is an important first step towards improving the flow of research information across the higher education sector.
- 205.** ORCID offers a platform for researchers to capture their scholarly activities throughout their careers even if they change name, publish under different variations of their name, move institutions, or switch fields. This helps them get exposure and recognition for their work. Increasingly it will be a tool to link and re-use research information unambiguously across multiple systems whether that's for funders, publishers or their university.

## Section J – EXPLOITATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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- 206.** NERC is committed to turning scientific and technological knowledge in universities and other research organisations into commercial success for the benefit of the UK. NERC has a strategy to improve the commercialisation of NERC science and activities in our research centres. Recipients of NERC funding **must** endeavour to ensure that the outcomes of research are exploited and used to the advantage of the UK. Commercialisation includes contributing to new products and services and the management of intellectual property rights as outlined below.
- 207.** Scientific research gives rise to inventions such as new devices, materials or processes, ideas, know-how and other results which are often manifest as data. Such products are referred to as intellectual property. It is NERC's policy that any such intellectual property generated from NERC supported research should be exploited. However, NERC's policy requires that intellectual property rights be properly conferred on all parties. It is the responsibility of Principal Investigators to respect the intellectual property of others when used in their research (e.g. models) and to accord it all appropriate recognition.
- 208.** Please refer to the [UKRI Grant Terms and Conditions](#).
- 209.** Further information on [commercialisation and intellectual property \(IP\)](#) is provided on the NERC section of the UKRI website.
- 210.** Award holders are expected to notify [innovation@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:innovation@nerc.ukri.org) when NERC funded intellectual property is exploited. This information should also be included in the annual ROS return.
- 211.** NERC [Environmental Data Centres](#) will give advice on issues relating to charging, licensing and exploitation of datasets. NERC policy in this area is described in more detail in the [NERC Data Policy](#) and the accompanying Guidance notes.

## Section K – NERC SCIENTIFIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

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- 212.** NERC provides a wide range of [scientific services](#) for the environmental sciences research community. Any individual or group of researchers eligible for a NERC training award or research grant may apply for access to any of the services and facilities listed. For some of these, access is provided after the costs have been notionally awarded to the grant holder, subject to peer-review and prioritisation of applications by the relevant facility steering committee to ensure that the highest quality science is supported. In a small number of cases, facilities are funded on a pay-as-you-go (PAYG) basis. Researchers can only apply to PAYG facilities once they have secured funds to cover the full costs from one or other of the NERC funding modes or other sources (although limited support may be available for students and small proof-of-concept studies depending on the facility). Spare capacity in any of the facilities may be made available to non-NERC researchers or commercially.
- 213.** [Application procedures](#) are outlined on the UKRI website. Prospective applicants must first seek the advice of the appropriate NERC or facility contact before a formal application is submitted. It is incumbent upon the Principal Investigator to ensure the logistics of the proposed project. NERC does not consider itself to be responsible for any element of the logistics that are not included within the application. Applications for the use of facilities to support student training should be made by the student's supervisor.
- 214.** It is important to state on the fellowship or grant application forms what scientific support and facilities are required, with whom contact has been made to discuss the work, and whether a separate application has been made to the relevant facility. When submitting through the Je-S system, applicants will have to either select a facility from the drop-down list or tick a no facility used box before being able to submit an application. Most facilities also require the attachment of a technical assessment/quote or a facility form – see section F.
- 215.** A full listing of individual [Scientific support and Facilities contacts](#) (and Swindon Office alternates) can be found on the NERC website.

### **Applications for the Provision of New Scientific Support and Facilities (S&F)**

- 216.** The S&F Assessment of Strategic Need process will identify where there is a need for new S&F to underpin delivery of NERC strategy, including Discovery Science. However, NERC is always interested in receiving ideas for additional S&F. In the first instance contact the scientific support and facilities management team ([sfmt@nerc.ukri.org](mailto:sfmt@nerc.ukri.org)).

## ANNEX A – FURTHER INFORMATION

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### NERC Contact Points

For the most up-to-date listing of [NERC contact points](#), who can provide advice on NERC funding policy.

Queries relating to the [Je-S system](#) (including fEC queries) should be directed to the Je-S Helpdesk

All queries concerning maintenance and updates to existing grants (research grants, fellowships and training grants) should be directed to the [UKRI Grants Team](#)

For advice on specific scientific issues, please contact the Programme Manager ([first point of contact](#)) for the appropriate research area, which are listed on the website.

**Other NERC Webpages:** [Natural Environment Research Council \(NERC\) – UKRI](#)

[NERC Science Remit](#)

[NERC Science Topics](#)

[Current Opportunities](#)

[Statement of Council Policy on conflicts of interest](#)

[Managing conflicts of interest in peer review](#)