



# FAQ – Centre for Law and Social Justice Outline Stage

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## Guidance for Higher Education Institutions

### 1. How are you defining social justice for this funding opportunity? What is in scope?

We are taking a broad approach to social justice and would be open to work on any issue related to developing a fair, just, and equitable society. From healthcare to housing, from employment to human rights, from the environment to the justice system, and beyond to anything where you can clearly explain its relevance to social justice. We also acknowledge that there can be different and sometimes competing notions of social justice and would be open to work which explores this, while maintaining a focus on delivering real change for people. This could include work which considers social justice across generations.

### 2. How are you defining 'arts and humanities methods' for this funding opportunity?

The arts and humanities incorporate a wide range of subjects and methods and we are open to them all. This investment is focused on legal research but covers the full spectrum from the more traditional historical, philosophical, and doctrinal approaches to legal scholarship to work combining literary, language, or cultural studies with legal scholarship and on to the plethora of creative approaches used to engage communities in the co-creation and co-delivery of research. Indeed we are keen to see legal scholarship brought into conversation with more areas of arts and humanities research for the enrichment of both. You can find a full list of all the areas which fall within the remit of AHRC, and which therefore we would consider to be primarily in the arts and humanities in Section 7 of our [Research Funding Guide](#).

### 3. How are you defining early career researcher (ECR)?

We would normally expect someone identified as an ECR to be either:

- within eight years of their PhD award (this is from the time of the PhD 'viva' oral test), or equivalent professional training, OR
- within six years of their first academic appointment (the first full or part time paid employment contract that lists research or teaching as the primary function).

These periods exclude any career break, for example due to:

- family care
- health reasons
- reasons related to COVID-19, such as home schooling or increased teaching load

However, we are open to the inclusion of all people who identify as early career. In cases where you are including an early career researcher who doesn't meet our normal criteria above, we would expect to see some explanation for the identification and the assessors may take that into account when judging your proposal.

#### 4. What do you mean by 'consortia-based applications'?

We are looking for proposals which will bring together multiple organisations and groups around shared priorities. You must include more than one higher education institution and at least one non-academic partner. These collaborations must extend across and beyond academia to, for example, policy, practice, third sector, and/or communities, and be mutually beneficial. We also expect to see evidence of co-creation of the proposal and plans for co-delivery of the Centre.

#### 5. Can we include Project Co-Leads from various higher education institutions in consortium applications, aiming to reflect the principles of EDI and equitable partnerships?

This is perfectly acceptable and encouraged. As noted above we hope to see proposals which bring together different types of institution to help shape the Centre in a way which will enable it to have the greatest reach and impact.

#### 6. Are you open to different structures for the Centre?

We are absolutely open to considering a variety of different structures for the Centre. We recognise there are various ways to structure the leadership and work and that this will need to reflect the partners and partnerships involved. We encourage you to work with your collaborators to define the best structure to enable you to deliver against the three objectives we have set for the Centre, reflecting on the underlying principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion and equitable working. The most important aspect is that we receive clear and well-articulated proposals.

#### 7. Can we have more than one project lead?

Unfortunately, our funding system does not currently allow for more than one project lead to be listed on a proposal. This is something that UKRI is looking at and we hope to have an update next year, but it is unlikely to be in place even for the full application stage.

#### 8. If we can only list one project lead, how can we demonstrate the shared leadership of the Centre?

You could demonstrate shared leadership in any way you see fit, but some simple examples would be:

- describing how your collaborators have contributed to the development of the proposal and how they have shaped your priorities
- describing how your proposed centre would deliver against the needs of your collaborators and what role they will play in that work
- describing what role your collaborators will play in the overall management, delivery, and direction of the centre, including how they will influence use of any flexible funding
- describing what impact the legacy of the Centre will have on your collaborators and what role they would play in that.

## 9. How should different partners feed into developing applications? Does every partner need to contribute to every section?

It is essential that all your partners are able to shape your priorities, work packages, budget etc and we would expect all partners to be as involved in developing and completing the application as they want to be and have the capacity to be. However, we are aware that not everyone has the capacity to contribute to every section and there is no expectation that they do so. We hope this is less of an issue at the outline stage as we have tried to keep the application form as short as possible. At the outline application stage we would advise that the vision, approach, and consortium capability sections are probably the most important for partners to contribute to, but this may vary depending on the nature of your collaboration.

## 10. What funding can we include in proposals for collaborators outside of higher education institutes to enable and support their participation?

Collaborators based in organisations which aren't eligible in their own right to apply for UKRI funding can receive funding in one of two ways. One or more members of their staff can be listed as a Co-Project Lead, or they can be commissioned for specific pieces of work, such as consultancy, in either a project partner or collaborating organisation role. Where they are being commissioned for specific pieces of work and so are not involved in the leadership of the proposed centre you would need to follow whatever standard internal process your organisation has for tendering or commissioning work and the collaborator can include any costs which they would normally include as part of their charges.

Where your collaborator is providing a Project Co-Lead, the type of funding available to them depends on their type of organisation. This table provides a useful summary.

	Business and civil society in receipt of a subsidy	Civil society and community	Government
Staff – Salary	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
Staff – National Insurance/ Superannuation	No	Yes	No
Travel and subsistence	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other Direct Costs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Overheads and indirect costs	No	Yes	No

In most cases all costs directly associated with delivering the work of the Centre can be applied for. The exceptions are that:

- we normally wouldn't expect to provide salary costs to Project Co-Leads from government, although we have provided some examples in the funding opportunity details where this is fine
- you can only include indirect costs, overhead costs, and the cost of national insurance and superannuation for civil society and community organisation who are not in receipt of any subsidy.

### 11. The application form has limited word counts, how much detail are you looking for at the outline stage?

In part the word count limits reflect ongoing work across UKRI to reduce the length of applications and the burden on applicants and assessors, especially for a multi-stage application process. At this outline stage a lot of what we're asking for is a high-level overview of what we can expect to see in a full application. For example, we don't ask for a full budget or justification of resources, simply the headline figures and a short explanation of how you anticipate using the funds to meet the approach you've set out. Similarly, we've asked for an outline project plan, but don't expect you to drill down into the details and timeline of every work package.

Our focus at this stage, as set out in the funding opportunity, is understanding how aligned your vision for the Centre is with our own. The assessing panel will be asked to consider your application as a whole but to prioritise consideration of how well your proposal:

- fits the funding opportunity, and particularly how it responds to the three objectives and the underlying principles around equality diversity, and inclusion, equitable partnerships, and public engagement;
- brings together appropriate, mutually beneficial partnerships which have shaped the development of the proposal and are likely to support successful delivery of a Centre.

We hope this provides reassurance that we are not looking for a full proposal's level of detail crammed into a shorter form and that the assessing panel will be briefed accordingly.

### 12. How much detail do we need to provide on the research themes of our proposed Centre?

In a similar way, we are not expecting you to fully flesh out your research themes but will need an outline of what themes you're proposing to focus on, how they respond to the four research areas we have set out, and how they will contribute to our three objectives for the Centre. We also want an overview of how the themes have been informed by your partnerships and/or public engagement to date.

### 13. Are we required to address all four research themes in the funding opportunity, and can we include additional themes?

We expect you to cover the four themes set out in some capacity, but how you do this is up to you. You are welcome to bring in new areas and to adapt the themes to the particular social justice issues which are important to the members of your consortium. There is also no expectation that you cover all the topics listed under each of the themes, as these are only indicative.

### 14. How can we show that we included the 'public' in the development of the bid?

Involving the public, especially those with lived experience, in shaping your thinking and plans can enrich, strengthen and add value to your proposal to host and develop our Centre for Law and Social Justice. You can use any example or evidence of engaging the public or community organisations in

your proposal: for example, covering how you created a dialogue with people, how many people were involved, including any EDI data, and the outcomes of this dialogue. This can include quantitative and qualitative (such as quotes from participants) information.

#### 15. Are you expecting all the details to be finalised at this stage?

No. We acknowledge that collaborations of this type and the associated management structures, workplans, budgets etc. take time and effort to formalise. That is why we are holding an outline stage so that, hopefully, fewer applicants and institutions have to commit the time and effort required to produce a high quality full proposal. We accept that, for example, proposed partnerships might still be early in development and may change and that work plans and responsibilities may need to shift in response.

#### 16. Does that mean we can make changes between the outline proposal stage and full proposal stage?

Within reason, yes. We would not expect to see a completely different full proposal but we would expect to see changes made in response to feedback and, as noted above, acknowledge that things might change as partnerships are finalised between the outline and full application stage. Another reason for holding an outline stage is precisely so that we can feed into the development of proposals at an early stage.

#### 17. Is there space in this for a project that considers the ways in which law may impede social justice?

Absolutely. While we are working from a firm belief that social justice is much more difficult, if not impossible, to achieve without a legal framework, we are open to work addressing how the law may impede social justice and how this could be addressed.

#### 18. What are your expectations around how proposals should balance planned work and keeping the Centre flexible to respond to emerging topics?

We would expect the Centre to retain some level of flexibility to respond to emerging topics and opportunities, and this is why we have included the option of including some flexible budget. However, the right balance will vary depending on your application and what your partnerships need. We are open to different approaches and the most important thing is that you provide clear reasoning for your choice.

#### 19. To what extent should the Centre be internationally facing?

While we expect the Centre to have clear plans for impact in the UK, international research and partnerships which support this are encouraged. This centre aims to support research into social justice with a focus on legal scholarship, it's reasonable to expect that research efforts may have a global or international dimension. This is because social justice challenges often transcend national boundaries and addressing them may require international collaboration and research. There is also

opportunity to build on international work and research in social justice and we would be keen to see the Centre bring relevant international learning to the UK.

In building any international aspects you may wish to consider the following:

- **Nature of the Research:** If your proposed Centre's research, objectives, and challenges are inherently global in scope, then extending research beyond the UK may be necessary to address these challenges effectively.
- **Alignment with Funding Opportunity:** Ensure that the international dimension of the research aligns with our objectives for the Centre.
- **Partnerships and Collaborations:** Assess the need for international partnerships and collaborations. If addressing the research objectives and social justice issues requires working with international partners, this should be reflected in the proposal.
- **Relevance to the Centre's Vision:** Consider whether extending research beyond the UK is essential to achieving the Centre's vision, advancing knowledge, and making a significant impact on society, the economy, or the environment.
- **Equitable Partnerships:** In line with our emphasis on equitable partnerships, you should evaluate whether international collaborations contribute to diversity and inclusivity and ensure that relevant communities and stakeholders are involved.
- **World-Leading Research:** If your research has the potential to impact world-leading research and address pressing global challenges, extending research beyond the UK may be necessary to achieve this impact.

In summary, the extent to which research should extend beyond the UK is contingent on the specific objectives, challenges, and strategic direction of your proposed Centre.

## 20. Is there a limit to the number of international partners?

We do not have a specific limit on the number of international partners. However, there is a limit on the amount of funding available for international Project Co-Leads. We would encourage you to think about the importance of having the relevant expertise and partnerships to deliver against our objectives for the Centre and the priorities of your proposal, and also to consider the necessity for equitable working whether in the UK or internationally.

## 21. Do the assessment criteria also include participatory involvement of the front-line services?

Participatory involvement of front-line services is indeed considered within the assessment criteria, particularly in the "approaches" section, which encompasses partnership working and co-creation through a participatory approach. This approach aligns with the assessment criteria, and it's also a key consideration in forming the evaluation panel. While the panel will comprise research expertise, we aim to include a broader range of expertise, including those representing lived experience, policy knowledge, and practitioner insights, where possible. The panel's composition will be balanced to ensure it covers these aspects that are integral to the centre's goals. So yes, participatory involvement is part of the assessment criteria; you can find more details in the application form, which specifies its primary location within the criteria.



## 22. How many applications do you expect to take through to the full proposal stage?

No more than 10, but the exact number will depend on the quality and range of applications received.

## 23. How many centres are you planning to support?

We are only planning to fund one Centre for Law and Social Justice.

## Guidance for Business, Government, and Civil Society Applicants

### 24. Am I eligible to apply?

In short, yes, but probably not as the Project Lead. For various legal and policy reasons the organisation hosting the Project Lead needs to meet our standard eligibility criteria as listed in our [Research Funding Guide](#) (see section 2, essentially these are recognised higher education institutes, research institutes and independent research organisations). However, Project Co-Leads can be based at a wider range of organisations across business, government, and civil society, including community groups, and can be funded as part of this funding opportunity. Indeed we see the value in proposals which bring together people and organisations with aligned interests and priorities across research, policy, practice and beyond. That is why we are requiring applications to include and be shaped by organisations and people beyond academic research.

It's also worth knowing that you can be involved in applications in different ways depending on how you want to work with the proposed Centre. Hosting a Project Co-Lead is one option, you can also take part as a project partner or as a collaborating organisation. Project Co-Leads have more of a leadership role and will often have specific responsibilities around managing delivery of the proposed Centre, if funded. Project partners are those organisation working with the proposed Centre on delivering activities and can receive funding but would be making a significant in-kind or financial contribution. Collaborating organisations are those that are funded to work with the proposed Centre on specific, agreed activities. Whatever role you decide is right with your co-applicants we expect you to be as involved in the shaping of priorities etc. as you want to be (i.e. your proposed role shouldn't exclude you from helping to shape the application).

### 25. What costs can I include in my budget?

The exact answer depends on what your role in the proposed Centre is, but in general any costs directly linked to delivering work for the proposed Centre could be funded as part of the Centre budget.

Where you are acting as or providing a Project Co-Lead, the type of funding available to you depends on your type of organisation. This table provides a useful summary.

	Business and civil society in receipt of a subsidy	Civil society and community	Government
Staff – Salary	Yes	Yes	Sometimes
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In most cases all costs directly associated with delivering the work of the Centre can be applied for. The exceptions are that:

- we normally wouldn't expect to provide salary costs to Project Co-Leads from government, although we have provided some examples in the funding opportunity details where this is fine
- you can only include indirect costs, overhead costs, and the cost of national insurance and superannuation if you are a civil society or community organisation who are not in receipt of any subsidy.

Where you are acting as a project partner or collaborating organisation you can include any costs which you would normally include as part of an invoice for your work.

## 26. Which sections in the application form do I need to contribute to?

We see it as essential that you are able to help shape the priorities, work, budget etc. of the proposed Centre and we would expect you to be as involved in developing and completing the application as you want to be and have the capacity to be. However, we are aware that not everyone has the capacity to contribute to every section and there is no expectation that you do so. We hope this is less of an issue at the outline stage as we have tried to keep the application form as short as possible. At the outline application stage we would advise that the vision, approach, and consortium capability sections are probably the most important for you to contribute to, but this may vary depending on the nature of your collaboration.

## 27. Where can I get support for my application?

Your collaborators, particularly those who are leading the application, should be able to offer support and advice with regards to how best you can feed into the development of the proposal. You can also contact AHRC staff directly at [hcca@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:hcca@ahrc.ukri.org) if you have any questions about the funding opportunity. If you have any questions about or technical issues with the funding system then you should contact our help desk either by email or phone:

- [support@funding-service.ukri.org](mailto:support@funding-service.ukri.org)
- 01793 547490

## 28. If I am part of a successful application what are the terms and conditions and what will I need to report back to ARHC?

UKRI has a standard set of terms and conditions which would be used for this Centre and can be found [here](#). We are likely to add some additional terms conditions around the start date of the

Centre and any reporting requirements agreed with the successful applicant. Your contributions to the Centre may also be governed by any agreement or contract you sign with your co-applicants.

The exact reporting requirements AHRC will place on the Centre will be agreed with the successful applicants. This is likely to include, for the Centre as a whole, some level of quarterly and annual reporting to AHRC and an annual submission to ResearchFish. We try to keep the reporting to AHRC minimal and focussed on just the information we need for our own reporting and advisory structures. The Project Lead will be responsible for ensuring these reporting requirements are met and for working collaboratively and fairly with the partners involved to make sure everyone knows what is expected and how they need to contribute. We would encourage you to work with your collaborators to build some funded time into your contribution to the Centre to support reporting.

### 29. Is there a way to find and connect with others interested in applying for this?

Unfortunately we don't currently have a way to help connect people interested in applying for this. This is something we are looking at for future funding opportunities. You could try contacting local universities with law schools through contact details which are usually available on their website.

It's also worth considering that the application stage is only one point at which you could get involved in the Centre. The appointed Centre will have some flexibility to work with new partners. So, if you are unable to join an application or your application is unsuccessful, you may still be able to work with the appointed Centre.