

Funding opportunity

MRC Centre of Research Excellence: round three: outline application

Opportunity status:	Closed
Funders:	Medical Research Council (MRC)
Funding type:	Grant
Total fund:	£50,000,000
Maximum award:	£26,250,000
Publication date:	25 September 2024
Opening date:	9 October 2024 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	13 February 2025 4:00pm UK time

Last updated: 17 December 2024 - [see all updates](#)

Apply for MRC Centre of Research Excellence (MRC CoRE) funding to tackle complex and interdisciplinary health challenges.

You must be based at a UK research organisation eligible for Medical Research Council (MRC) funding.

MRC CoREs will be funded for up to 14 years. Your award will initially last for seven years, with a further seven years based on successful review.

The full economic cost (FEC) of your MRC CoRE can be up to £26.25 million for the first seven years. MRC will fund 80% of the FEC. The maximum MRC contribution will be £21 million.

This is an annual funding opportunity. We expect to fund one or two MRC CoREs every year.

Who can apply

Before applying for funding, check the [Eligibility of your organisation](#).

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has introduced new role types for funding opportunities being run on the new UKRI Funding Service.

For full details, visit [Eligibility as an individual](#).

Who is eligible to apply

To be eligible to apply for MRC Centre of Research Excellence (MRC CoRE) funding you must:

- be employed by an [eligible research organisation](#)
- show that you will direct the project or be actively engaged in the work
- have the relevant expertise and experience to lead or contribute to an MRC CoRE and its research culture
- focus your application on tackling complex and multi or interdisciplinary health challenges
- at the outline application stage, be a member of the proposed MRC CoRE leadership team

The leadership team should have the relevant expertise and experience to lead or contribute to an MRC CoRE and its research culture and can be from a single eligible organisation or a partnership of eligible organisations.

Because of the long duration of MRC CoREs you do not require a contract for the full duration of the award. By submitting the application the research organisation is confirming support for the named applicants, that they are capable of leading the MRC CoRE and will accept its relevant terms and conditions.

Who is not eligible to apply

If you are employed by these organisations you cannot apply as project lead or project co-lead, but can participate as project partners on an application led by an eligible UK organisation:

- businesses
- charity and third sector organisations
- international research organisations

This does not include MRC Unit The Gambia or MRC/UVRI Uganda Research Unit at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, employees of these organisations are eligible to apply as project lead or project co-lead.

International project co-lead

While international organisations cannot lead an application, it is possible for international researchers to apply as part of the leadership team, as an international co-project lead. We expect international co-leads to make a major intellectual contribution to the design or conduct of the project and to provide clear indicators of commitment to the MRC CoRE. The contribution and added value to the research collaboration should be clearly explained and justified in the application, see Applicant and team capability to deliver.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.

We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances. This includes:

- career breaks
- support for people with caring responsibilities
- flexible working
- alternative working patterns

Find out more about [equality, diversity and inclusion at UKRI](#).

What we're looking for

MRC CoRE funding aims to tackle complex and interdisciplinary health challenges. MRC CoREs will support bold and ambitious research focused on a defined challenge. Tackling such challenges will be transformative to biomedical research, health research or both within 14 years, and will enhance approaches to the prevention, early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of disease, improving health and wellbeing for all.

MRC CoREs will be beacons of excellence in research culture, equality, diversity and inclusion, leadership models and innovation.

An MRC CoRE should be distinct in the context of other national and international activities and its research positioned in the context of ongoing investments across MRC and the broader landscape, synergising with or capitalising upon existing knowledge and investments where relevant. These major investments should be outward facing, harnessing the best talent in the

UK to deliver upon their proposed vision and providing a stimulating environment to train the next generation of researchers and technologists.

Applications can be from a single research organisation or in partnership across multiple organisations. Applications may include project partners.

We expect to fund one or two MRC CoREs every year.

For more information on the background of this funding opportunity, go to the 'Additional information' section.

Scope

What types of challenges should MRC CoREs tackle?

MRC CoRE challenges are expected to:

- be bold, ambitious, and innovative, and address a gap or opportunity which is not being adequately addressed elsewhere
- address substantial unmet needs in understanding or modifying human health and disease
- be specific, with major strategic objectives achievable within the 14-year timeframe which, if achieved, will transform the research field or area of health research
- align to the MRC mission
- require coordinated and flexible, major long-term funding

MRC CoRE challenges will be achieved through:

- fostering innovation and engagement to establish the capability and capacity to place the UK at the international forefront of impactful health research
- an outward facing position, harnessing and networking the best expertise in the UK
- bringing together creative and diverse approaches for cross-sectoral and multi or interdisciplinary, and novel ways of working
- distinct and disruptive research that drives breakthrough advances and addresses specific bottlenecks through knowledge generation, technological or methodological innovation, with clear translational relevance
- pursuing a compelling vision around specific questions of importance or critical knowledge gaps, not through open-ended research programmes
- developing a stimulating and supportive research environment

What areas of research should the challenge address?

For round three we welcome outline applications to address challenges across any part of MRC remit, including discovery, understanding mechanism, and development of concepts or interventions for prevention or treatment.

It is not our expectation that a single MRC CoRE will address the challenge of the field as a whole within 14 years. Your challenge should be built around a defined gap or opportunity, a major barrier or bottleneck that needs to be surmounted, or the breakthrough advance that is pivotal for our understanding and ability to prevent, diagnose and treat disease.

Your outline application must explain how the proposed MRC CoRE will be positioned in the context of ongoing investments and activities across MRC and the broader UK and international landscape, synergising with or capitalising upon existing knowledge and investments where relevant.

You should consider what you would need to put in place to promote or achieve equity of access to resulting knowledge, technologies, interventions, and therapies.

MRC CoRE research environment

MRC CoREs provide an opportunity for a different approach to research, creating collaborative and stimulating multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research environments. MRC CoREs are expected to adopt and maintain the highest standards in the way research is conducted and openly communicated; to support creative leadership approaches and a team science ethos, develop and nurture career paths and a training environment which supports a positive research culture.

Host research organisations

Applications can be from a single eligible organisation or a partnership of organisations.

When there are two or more eligible organisations involved, for administrative purposes it is necessary to identify a single project lead who must be affiliated with the lead research organisation.

Support from research organisations

Considerable, sustained and clearly defined support from the research organisation is essential to a successful application and will be an equal part of the assessment of applications for MRC CoREs. We expect research organisations to provide:

- laboratory space
- access to facilities and equipment
- access to necessary digital support infrastructure
- support to manage estates
- human resources services
- finance services
- underpinning of key staff positions

- access to additional sources of funding and support available to other researchers across the research organisations

Number of applications

An organisation may lead one outline application in round three. Applications from existing MRC units may be submitted in addition to other applications from the organisation and do not count towards the one application as lead organisation limit.

Organisations may freely participate as a partner in applications led from other organisations.

Duration

We will support MRC CoREs for up to 14 years. The duration of this award is for seven years, with a review point in year six to approve release of the second period of funding.

You should enter the duration of the project as 168 months (14 years). This reflects the maximum duration of an MRC CoRE.

The MRC CoRE start date can be from 1 April 2026 to 30 September 2026.

Funding available

You will be asked to indicate outline costs for the first funding period of seven years.

The FEC of your project for the first seven years can be up to £26,250,000.

We will fund 80% of the FEC. Any identified exceptions will be funded at 100%. The maximum MRC contribution, including any identified exceptions funded at 100%, is £21,000,000.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) indexation will be applied at the time of award. We will not supplement awards for inflation after they have started.

We will provide all the awarded funding to the lead organisation, to manage and distribute accordingly. Awards spanning multiple organisations will require a clear plan addressing award governance and management to ensure funds can be used flexibly to support changes in research delivery and opportunity across the course of the award.

We will support a limited number of interlinked research activities or themes, with funding focused on key strategic objectives, achievable during the 14-year lifespan. The MRC CoRE award should provide a platform to win additional grant support from all available funders. A minimum expectation is for doubling of the MRC CoRE associated budget through external funding by the mid-term point (year seven).

What we will fund

You can request funding for costs such as:

- directly allocated contributions to salaries of the leadership team and other established researchers, usually between 15% and 30% of their time, in line with their research contribution
- directly incurred salaries of research staff, technicians, and professional enabling staff, where there is a clear justification for their critical role in delivering the MRC CoRE
- recruitment of new researchers critical to addressing the research challenge, for example those switching disciplines or sectors, or from overseas, where 100% salary may be requested for up to three years, before other grant support is established
- research consumables
- if required, up to £500,000 start-up costs for routine equipment (items over £10,000 that constitute normal elements of a well-founded laboratory). All items will have to be fully justified at the full application stage and may not include generic departmental equipment
- by exception and with the permission of MRC head office, mid-range or large equipment critical to establish platforms or facilities. However, it is anticipated for most mid-range equipment MRC CoREs will apply to the MRC annual mid-range equipment opportunity in competition with the wider community. Mid-range or large equipment is a single item costing over £138,000 (£115,000 excluding VAT). Research organisations are expected to contribute to such equipment in most cases, and to justify their level of contribution.
- travel costs
- data preservation, data sharing and dissemination costs
- costs for innovative training and capacity building required to address the research challenge, when not available elsewhere
- studentships support (an exception funded at 100%), including [iCASE studentships](#), may typically be requested for up to two studentships each year across the duration of the award. Numbers should not exceed the supervisory capacity of the MRC CoRE. See [UKRI stipend and fees](#).
- technology and data platforms to provide accessible facilities and capability essential to the mission and to promote open science, when not available elsewhere
- experimental medicine studies
- initiatives to underpin or strengthen positive research culture
- public partnerships and related activities, including public engagement and involvement, and [payments to public contributors](#)
- initiatives to improve environmental sustainability
- estates and indirect costs
- directly incurred costs for international co-leads (an exception funded at 100%) may be requested, although we expect most costs to be incurred by

UK organisations

The leadership team will have flexibility over use of most of the funding within the total awarded, especially considering the award duration. There will be constraints on the use of capital equipment funding.

We do not expect exact costs to be known at the time of outline application and specified. Flexible funds can be requested and used to develop activities and support new opportunities but must be appropriately justified with clear plans for financial management.

What we will not fund

We will not fund:

- open access costs: these must be covered by the UKRI open access grant
- training and capacity building that can be accessed through existing funding routes, such as existing doctoral training programmes, MRC or UKRI fellowships
- mid-range equipment other than agreed and assessed as necessary as part of the start-up requirements. All other mid-range equipment must be requested through the annual MRC equipment funding opportunity or other funding routes
- routine equipment (that constitutes normal elements of a well-founded laboratory) over and above the start-up fund of up to £500,000. MRC has other arrangements to modestly support ongoing routine equipment needs of its major investments
- additional or duplicative equipment that is already part of the existing research environment of the applicants
- generic computing platforms for data analysis or data storage, which should be part of wider research organisation data management activities
- buildings and other types of infrastructures
- clinical trials or longitudinal population studies, which have specific governance requirements and for which alternative funding routes are available. MRC CoREs may utilise existing cohorts or clinical trials funded through other routes

Team project partner

You may include team project partners that will support your MRC CoRE through cash or in-kind contributions, such as:

- staff time
- access to equipment
- sites or facilities
- the provision of data
- software or materials

- recruitment of people as research participants
- providing samples, such as human tissue, for the project

Who cannot be included as a team project partner

Any individual included in your application [core team](#) cannot also be a project partner.

Any organisation that employs a member of the application core team cannot be a project partner organisation, this includes other departments within the same organisation.

If you are collaborating with someone in your organisation or an organisation of a core team member, consider including them in the core team as project co-lead, or specialist. They cannot be a project partner.

Supporting skills and talent

We encourage you to follow the principles of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and the [Technician Commitment](#).

Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)

UKRI is committed in ensuring that effective international collaboration in research and innovation takes place with integrity and within strong ethical frameworks. Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I) is a UKRI work programme designed to help protect all those working in our thriving and collaborative international sector by enabling partnerships to be as open as possible, and as secure as necessary. Our [TR&I Principles](#) set out UKRI's expectations of organisations funded by UKRI in relation to due diligence for international collaboration.

As such, applicants for UKRI funding may be asked to demonstrate how their proposed projects will comply with our approach and expectation towards TR&I, identifying potential risks and the relevant controls you will put in place to help proportionately reduce these risks.

See [further guidance and information about TR&I](#), including where applicants can find additional support.

Intention to submit

An organisation may lead one outline application in round three. If you are submitting to this funding opportunity, as your organisation's single lead application, you are encouraged to inform us of your intention to submit by email to core@mrc.ukri.org by 4:00pm UK time on 9 December 2024.

Please provide in a maximum of 400 words:

- names and affiliations of the members of the leadership team

- a list of project partners
- a brief description of the research challenge you will address

Important note, this step is voluntary and does not form part of the assessment process. If you do not inform us of your intention to submit you can still apply to the funding opportunity. MRC will not undertake eligibility checks at this point and will not provide feedback. You should not await a response, but simply continue with the development of the outline application to be submitted by the closing date. MRC will use the information provided to help prepare for the assessment process.

Applications from existing MRC units, although not included in the one lead application per research organisation limit, are also encouraged to inform us of their intention to submit.

How to apply

We are running this funding opportunity on the new UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service. You cannot apply on the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system.

The project lead is responsible for completing the application process on the Funding Service, but we expect all team members and project partners to contribute to the application.

Only the lead research organisation can submit an application to UKRI.

To apply

Select 'Start application' near the beginning of this Funding finder page.

1. Confirm you are the project lead
2. Sign in or create a Funding Service account. To create an account, select your organisation, verify your email address, and set a password. If your organisation is not listed, email support@funding-service.ukri.org Please allow at least 10 working days for your organisation to be added to the Funding Service. We strongly suggest that if you are asking UKRI to add your organisation to the Funding Service to enable you to apply to this Opportunity, you also create an organisation Administration Account. This will be needed to allow the acceptance and management of any grant that might be offered to you.
3. Answer questions directly in the text boxes. You can save your answers and come back to complete them or work offline and return to copy and paste your answers. If we need you to upload a document, follow the upload instructions in the Funding Service. All questions and assessment criteria are listed in the How to apply section on this Funding finder page.

4. Allow enough time to check your application in 'read-only' view before sending to your research office.
5. Send the completed application to your research office for checking. They will return it to you if it needs editing.
6. Your research office will submit the completed and checked application to UKRI.

Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. You should:

- use images sparingly and only to convey important information that cannot easily be put into words
- insert each new image onto a new line
- provide a descriptive legend for each image immediately underneath it (this counts towards your word limit)
- ensure files are smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Watch our [research office webinars about the Funding Service](#).

For more guidance on the Funding Service, see:

- [how applicants use the Funding Service](#)
- [how research offices use the Funding Service](#)
- [how reviewers use the Funding Service](#)

References

Applications should be self-contained, and hyperlinks should only be used to provide links directly to reference information. To ensure the information's integrity is maintained, where possible, persistent identifiers such as digital object identifiers should be used. Assessors are not required to access links to carry out assessment or recommend a funding decision. Applicants should use their discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

References should be included in the appropriate question section of the application and be easily identifiable by the assessors for example (Smith, Research Paper, 2019).

You must not include links to web resources to extend your application.

Deadline

We must receive your application by 13 February 2025 at 4.00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply after this time.

Make sure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines.

Following the submission of your application to the funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed, and applications will not be returned for amendment. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected.

Personal data

Processing personal data

MRC, as part of UKRI, will need to collect some personal information to manage your Funding Service account and the registration of your funding applications.

We will handle personal data in line with UK data protection legislation and manage it securely. For more information, including how to exercise your rights, read [our privacy notice](#).

Publication of outcomes

We will publish the outcomes of this funding opportunity at [board and panel outcomes](#).

If your application is successful, we will publish some personal information on the [UKRI Gateway to Research](#).

Summary

Word count: 250

In plain English, provide a summary we can use to identify the most suitable experts to assess your application.

We usually make this summary publicly available on external-facing websites, therefore do not include any confidential or sensitive information. Make it suitable for a variety of readers, for example:

- opinion-formers
- policymakers
- the public
- the wider research community

Guidance for writing a summary

As this will be the first information in your application use it as your 'elevator pitch'.

Clearly describe your proposed challenge in terms of:

- the gap, opportunity, or unmet need which the challenge addresses
- top level aims and objectives
- innovative approaches to delivering the challenge
- the transformational impact it will have if successful

Core team

List the key members of your team and assign them roles from the following:

- project lead (PL)
- project co-lead (UK) (PcL)
- project co-lead (international) (PcL (I))
- researcher co-lead (RcL)

Only list one individual as project lead. This should be the individual who will act as the grant holder with responsibilities to MRC at the start of the MRC CoRE award. If you include more than one project lead your application will fail at the checking stage.

If the application is for an MRC CoRE to be delivered in partnership by two or more eligible organisations, then the project lead must be from the organisation which will lead the partnership.

List other leadership team members as project co-lead or international project co-lead.

All host organisations must be represented by an eligible co-lead.

At the outline stage we expect the applicants to be the proposed MRC CoRE leadership team only.

The leadership team members' application roles should not imply relative status or influence the leadership model which is for the applicants to propose.

We encourage inclusion of senior professional enabling staff such as a Chief Operating Officer. We would expect this role to be part of the leadership team and should be included as a project co-lead in this application.

These roles do not limit who might be recruited to successful MRC CoRE teams. We will request more details of the research teams in the full application. These roles are not available in this outline application:

- specialists
- grant manager
- professional enabling staff
- research and innovation associate
- technician

- visiting researcher

Find out more about [UKRI's core team roles in funding applications](#).

Application questions

Vision

Word limit: 550

What is the research challenge, why is it important and why do you need MRC CoRE funding?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain:

- the distinctive research challenge you will address over 14 years, this should include a clear challenge statement that articulates your challenge in no more than 50 to 100 words
- what will be different as a result of your work; how will tackling the challenge make a difference and lead to transformative impact in biomedical or health research
- how your proposed MRC CoRE it is positioned in relation to other research efforts in the field, nationally and internationally
- how the challenge is aligned with the MRC mission
- the bold, distinctive, disruptive, and innovative approaches you will use to achieve your ambitions
- why these ambitions are best achieved through MRC CoRE funding rather than other available funding mechanisms

References may be included within this section.

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Approach

Word limit: 1,500

How will you approach your research challenge?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how you have designed your approach so that it:

- is effective and appropriate to achieve your objectives
- is feasible, and comprehensively identifies any risks to delivery and how they will be managed

- uses a clearly written and transparent methodology (if applicable)
- summarises the previous work and describes how this will be built upon and progressed (if applicable)

Your approach should provide an outline of your proposed MRC CoRE research and how this will address the challenge:

- your research ambitions for the full 14 years
- what you will achieve within seven and 14 years if you are successful
- the key research themes or work packages required to develop this MRC CoRE in the first seven years, and how they will be integrated to deliver against the challenge
- the original, innovative, bold or disruptive approaches you will use
- how you will use cross-sectoral and multi or interdisciplinary working to advance your ambitions
- how your approaches are different to what has gone before

You should consider how the MRC CoRE may need to be flexible and evolve depending on the likely changes in the research landscape in fourteen years, and identify significant risks to delivery and how they will be managed

References may be included within this section.

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Translation and knowledge transfer and exchange

Word limit: 250

What is your approach to translational research and knowledge transfer and exchange?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain your approach, including:

- how your translational research approach will be developed in the MRC CoRE or with partners
- how you will maximise the potential benefit of research undertaken in the MRC CoRE to the research community, wider society and economy
- how you plan to maximise engagement with relevant stakeholders (academia, industry, charities, policymakers) to ensure the appropriate sharing of knowledge and expertise

Environmental sustainability

Word limit: 100

How will you approach environmental sustainability?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how you will:

- promote environmental sustainability in MRC CoRE research practices
- adopt relevant standards
- align your environmental sustainability strategy with host research organisation sustainability plans and policies

Leadership, operations and decision-making

Word limit: 250

How will you approach running the MRC CoRE?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how the proposed MRC CoRE:

- will be effectively and inclusively managed including describing a leadership team with clear roles and responsibilities, potential leadership rotation and clear succession plans
- will approach decision-making and agility in response to new scientific developments, and the processes and criteria to take decisions on future research directions
- has clear governance plans to successfully function as a research entity, and coordinate activities across multiple sites (if applicable)
- how the MRC CoRE will access the appropriate services, facilities, infrastructure, or equipment to deliver the proposed research should be described in the 'Your host research organisation support' section

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Research culture

Word limit: 500

How will you achieve and continually strengthen a positive research culture?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Outline how you will:

- develop creative approaches to leadership
- support career development paths, leadership training, mentoring, supervision and pastoral care
- embrace and realise the benefits of team science

- implement fair and transparent methods to assess performance, recognise contributions, and support career progression
- promote good research practice and open research
- integrate meaningful and challenge-led public involvement and engagement (PIE) into your research strategy and delivery
- embed equality, diversity and inclusion in all activities

In describing your plans for research culture across the MRC CoRE you may need to refer to details in the leadership, operations and decision making and training and career sections, you should not duplicate information provided in these sections.

Within the research culture section, we also expect you to:

Describe specific activities you will undertake to build on and enhance your host organisations' research culture plan or strategy, to support the following principles which underpin a positive research culture:

- research is conducted with integrity, centred on reproducibility, responsible innovation, collaboration, interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary
- research is communicated to maximise impact, built on transparency and openness, and partnership with the public
- career paths and training environment, are provided to recognise a diversity of talents, skills and outputs, and embrace team science as the way of working

It is not sufficient to simply describe your host organisations' plans in this section. We are looking for clear and specific plans for how you will underpin a positive research culture within your MRC CoRE.

Training, careers and capacity building

Word limit: 500

What is your approach to training, careers and capacity building in the MRC CoRE and how does this help address the challenge?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how your approach to training, careers and capacity building across career stages, pathways, and types will:

- provide the innovative training and capacity building environment needed to deliver on the challenge
- promote and share good practice in training and careers, including but not limited to ensuring an inclusive and progressive research training environment and preparing researchers for the challenges and opportunities available to them after their time at the MRC CoRE
- add value by convening and aligning existing training activity across the UK

- provide robust management and governance structures for training activities, including a named training lead

Within the training, careers and capacity building section we also expect you to:

- justify the training and capacity building proposed, in context of activities already on offer either within participating research organisations or nationally. If requesting doctoral studentships, you will need to demonstrate the national need for doctoral level training in this challenge area here and also complete the section 'Management of doctoral training'

Management of doctoral training

Word limit: 100

Will MRC CoRE students be managed as part of an existing MRC doctoral training programme (DTP) or equivalent?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Will MRC CoRE students be managed as part of an existing MRC DTP:

- if yes, state this and name the DTP and DTP lead
- if no, outline how you propose to manage doctoral training
- if you are not requesting support for doctoral students answer 'N/A'

Leadership team capability to deliver

Word limit: 2,200

Why are you the right leadership team to successfully deliver the proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Evidence of how your team, have:

- the relevant experience (appropriate to career stage) to deliver the proposed work
- the right balance of skills and expertise to cover the proposed work
- the appropriate leadership and management skills to deliver the work and your approach to develop others
- contributed to developing a positive research environment and wider community

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

The word count for this section is 2,200 words, 1,700 words to be used for R4RI modules (including references) and, if necessary, a further 500 words for

Additions.

Use the Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) format to showcase the range of relevant skills you and, if relevant, your team (project and project co-leads, researchers, technicians, specialists, partners and so on) have and how this will help deliver the proposed work. You can include individuals' specific achievements but only choose past contributions that best evidence their ability to deliver this work.

Complete this section using the R4RI module headings listed. Use each heading once and include a response for the whole team, see the [UKRI guidance on R4RI](#). You should provide an integrated view of the skills and collective value of the team as a whole as they relate to the proposed challenge. You should consider how to balance your answer, and emphasise where appropriate the following key skills each team member brings in relation to your proposed MRC CoRE, rather than listing the skills of each individual:

- contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies, or knowledge
- the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships
- contributions to the wider research and innovation community
- contributions to broader research or innovation users and audiences and towards wider societal benefit

Additions

Provide any further details relevant to your application. This section is optional and can be up to 500 words. You should not use it to describe additional skills, experiences, or outputs, but you can use it to describe any factors that provide context for the rest of your R4RI (for example, details of [career breaks](#) if you wish to disclose them).

Complete this as a narrative. Do not format it like a CV.

References may be included within this section.

ORCID iD

Within the R4RI format, team members should include their ORCID iD as part of the 'short role descriptor'.

UKRI has introduced new role types for funding opportunities being run on the new Funding Service.

For full details, see [Eligibility as an individual](#).

Research organisation support

Word limit: 2,000

How will your research organisation(s) support the MRC CoRE?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

We are looking for strong host support and capability to deliver, evidenced through a statement from an individual with oversight of the organisations research strategy, vice-chancellor research or equivalent. If the application is for an MRC CoRE to be delivered in partnership, then all participating organisations must contribute to a collective statement.

An outline of the support offered from the research organisation to this MRC CoRE and description of how the research organisation will help this MRC CoRE meet our expectations.

The statement should include:

- name and position of all contributors to the statement
- how this MRC CoRE aligns with host organisation strategies (research, research culture, training, sustainability)
- the support and facilities you will offer this MRC CoRE
- how you will operate this MRC CoRE and help it address its challenge
- how this MRC CoRE will be governed within your organisation or the partnership

Within the research organisation support section we also expect you to:

- explain how you will manage the partnership between research organisations (If applicable), to support delivery of MRC CoRE activities across organisations
- explain how your support you will contribute to a collaborative and stimulating multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary research environment

If the MRC CoRE is to be hosted by a single research organisation you may only need 1,000 words.

Project partners

Add details about any project partners' contributions. If there are no project partners, you can indicate this on the Funding Service.

A project partner is a collaborating third party organisation who will have an integral role in the proposed research. This may include direct (cash) or indirect (in-kind) contributions such as expertise, staff time or use of facilities.

Important note: If your application includes industry project partners, you will need to complete the Industry Collaboration Framework (ICF) section during the full application stage, this is not required at the outline stage. Find out [more about ICF](#).

The individual named as the project partner contact, cannot be included in your application as a member of the core team, in any [core team role](#).

The project partner organisation cannot be an applicant organisation, where any member of the core team is based. For example, you cannot include a different department based within the applicant organisation as a project partner.

If an individual or organisation outside the core team is responsible for recruitment of people as research participants or providing human tissue for this project, list them as a project partner.

Add the following project partner details:

- the organisation name (searchable via a drop-down list or enter the organisation's details manually, as applicable)
- the project partner contact name and email address
- the type of contribution (direct or in-direct) and its monetary value

It is not anticipated that project partners would receive finances as part of the award. However, if there are specific circumstances where project partners do require funding for minor costs such as travel and subsistence, these project partner costs should be claimed and justified within the resources and costs section of your application.

If a detail is entered incorrectly and you have saved the entry, remove the specific project partner record and re-add it with the correct information.

For audit purposes, UKRI requires formal collaboration agreements to be put in place if an award is made.

Your partnerships and collaborations

Word limit: 150

How will your partnerships and collaborations enhance the MRC CoRE and help to address the challenge?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

In your response explain:

- how specialist input from project partners and collaborators aligns with the MRC CoRE team to address the challenge
- how this increases capability to deliver this MRC CoRE
- how partners and collaborators will contribute to a stimulating multi or interdisciplinary research environment

Within the partnerships and collaborations section we also expect you to:

- refer to the leadership team described and the project partners listed in the 'Project partners' section. You should not repeat information provided in those sections

Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)

Word limit: 500

What are the ethical or RRI implications and issues relating to the proposed work? If you do not think that the proposed work raises any ethical or RRI issues, explain why.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Demonstrate that you have identified and evaluated:

- the relevant ethical or responsible research and innovation considerations
- how you will manage these considerations

Consider the [MRC guidance on ethics and approvals](#).

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Outline costs

What are the expected costs of the proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

You should:

- provide the approximate total values in GBP (£) for the expected directly incurred, directly allocated, indirect costs and exceptions
- view the guidance on the costs you can apply for

Justification for mid-range or large equipment costs should be included in the 'equipment section'

Equipment

Word count: 250

Do you want to request any mid-range or large equipment?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

If you want to request mid-range or large equipment critical to establish platforms or facilities at the MRC CoRE:

- list the equipment items

- include an estimated cost for each
- provide the percentage full economic cost to be requested
- justify why the equipment is required and how it will be used

Mid-range equipment is a single item costing over £138,000 (£115,000 excluding VAT).

If you do not want to request any mid-range or large equipment you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

We will assess your application using the following process.

Your application will be assessed in a two-stage process. Your outline application will first be considered by an independent panel of experts.

If successful, you will be invited to submit a full application. Full applications undergo external peer review before a further and more detailed review by an independent panel of experts which includes applicant interviews.

Outline panel

Outline applications will be assessed by a panel consisting of individuals with expertise collectively spanning MRC remit, who will assess the quality of your application and rank it alongside other applications and agree which will be invited to submit a full application.

Outlines should be presented to be accessible to a panel with expertise spanning the remit of MRC.

The assessment is designed to identify the outstanding outline applications that demonstrate clear potential to be the international centre of excellence in the challenge, or those of exceptional national strategic importance. Only a small number of applicants will be invited to prepare a full application.

Resubmission

Unsuccessful applications cannot be resubmitted unless invited by the panel. Resubmissions are included in the one application as lead organisation limit.

Timescale

We aim to complete the outline assessment process within three months of receiving your application.

Feedback

Feedback will be provided for all outline applications.

If your outline application is unsuccessful, we will indicate which assessment criteria were not met.

If you are invited to submit a full application, feedback may include aspects to address in the full application.

Principles of assessment

We support the [San Francisco declaration on research assessment \(DORA\)](#) and recognise the relationship between research assessment and research integrity.

Find out about the [UKRI principles of assessment and decision making](#).

We reserve the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

Assessment criteria

Only a small number of applicants will be invited to prepare a full application. Outline applications must demonstrate the excitement of the research challenge and potential to fully meet all criteria to be invited to proceed. Outline applications which do not meet one or more criteria will not be successful.

The criteria we will assess your application against are:

- vision: the MRC CoRE challenge and its potential for transformative impact
- approach to the challenge, including approach, translation and knowledge transfer, and environmental sustainability
- MRC CoRE environment, including leadership, operations and decision-making, research culture, and training careers and capacity building
- capability to deliver the MRC CoRE, including leadership team capability to deliver, research organisation support, project partners, and partnerships and collaborations

Find details of assessment questions and criteria under the 'Application questions' heading in the 'How to apply' section.

Contact details

Get help with your application

If you have a question and the answers aren't provided on this page

Important note: The Helpdesk is committed to helping users of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service as effectively and as quickly as possible. In order to manage cases at peak volume times, the Helpdesk will triage and prioritise those queries with an imminent opportunity deadline or a technical issue. Enquiries raised where information is available on the Funding Finder opportunity page and should be understood early in the application process (for example, regarding eligibility or content/remit of an opportunity) will not constitute a priority case and will be addressed as soon as possible.

Contact details

For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

For questions related to this specific funding opportunity please contact core@mrc.ukri.org

For general questions related to MRC funding including our funding opportunities and policy contact rfpd@mrc.ukri.org

Any queries regarding the system or the submission of applications through the Funding Service should be directed to the helpdesk.

Email: support@funding-service.ukri.org
Phone: 01793 547490

Our phone lines are open:

- Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm
- Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm

To help us process queries quicker, we request that users highlight the council and opportunity name in the subject title of their email query, include the application reference number, and refrain from contacting more than one mailbox at a time.

See further information on [submitting an application](#).

Sensitive information

If you or a core team member need to tell us something you wish to remain confidential, email core@mrc.ukri.org

Include in the subject line: [the funding opportunity title; sensitive information; your Funding Service application number].

Typical examples of confidential information include:

- individual is unavailable until a certain date (for example due to parental leave)
- declaration of interest
- additional information about eligibility to apply that would not be appropriately shared in the 'Applicant and team capability' section
- conflict of interest for UKRI to consider in reviewer or panel participant selection
- the application is an invited resubmission

For information about how UKRI handles personal data, read [UKRI's privacy notice](#).

Additional info

Background

MRC CoRE funding is awarded based on the [MRC CoRE additional terms and conditions of funding](#). These include the responsibilities of the director and leadership team.

Applications should be positioned in the context of ongoing investments across MRC, co-funding partners and the broader landscape and aligned with [MRC strategic delivery plan 2022 to 2025 objectives](#).

Research and innovation impact

Impact can be defined as the long-term intended or unintended effect research and innovation has on society, economy and the environment; to individuals, organisations, and the wider global population.

Additional disability and accessibility adjustments

UKRI can offer [disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders](#) during the application and assessment process if required.

Webinar for potential applicants

We held a webinar on 20 November 2024.

For a copy of the webinar presentation slides, email: core@mrc.ukri.org

Research disruption due to COVID-19

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities. We are committed to ensuring that

individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career, such as:

- breaks and delays
- disruptive working patterns and conditions
- the loss of ongoing work
- role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic

Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the capability to deliver and career development of those individuals included in the application. They 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, you can highlight this within your application if you wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.

Updates

17 December 2024

'Webinar for potential applicants' content updated in the 'Additional info' section. Outline application panel meeting date updated from 'March 2025' to '3 to 4 April 2025' in the timeline.

Timeline

○ 9 October 2024 9:00am

Opening date

○ 20 November 2024 10:30am

Webinar

○ 9 December 2024 4:00pm

Optional intention to submit closing date

○ 13 February 2025 4:00pm

Outline application closing date

○ 3 to 4 April 2025

Outline application panel meeting

- **April 2025**
Informed of outline decision
- **May 2025**
Invited full application opening date
- **September 2025**
Invited full application closing date
- **January 2026**
Interview panel (funding decision meeting)
- **March 2026**
Informed of funding decision
- **2025 (timing to be confirmed)**
Future round open for outline application

Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)

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<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/mrc-centre-of-research-excellence-round-three>