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# Welcome

AHRC large grants:

Outline stage

10 June 2026, 930 – 10.30 (BST)

# Agenda

## 1 Welcome and housekeeping

Lucy Hackett, Team Head

## 2 Novel, ambitious, transformative: what large grants is setting out to achieve

Dr Jaideep Gupte, Director of Research, Strategy and Innovation

## 3 How the application and assessment processes will work

Emma Bessent, Senior Investment Manager

Mark Wilson, Senior Operations Manager

## 4 Q&A

Open to all. Please submit questions using the Q&A function

## 5 Wrap up

Lucy Hackett, Team Head



# Novel, ambitious, transformative: what Large Grants is setting out to achieve

Dr Jaideep Gupte, Director of Research, Strategy and innovation



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# Background

In 2024, AHRC piloted a new applicant-led large grants scheme with the aim of transforming arts and humanities research agendas, research leadership and research teams at scale through a new approach to team convening. The pilot sought research proposals which embraced a new model of research leadership and teamworking, drawing upon expertise from across the research ecosystem.

To help unlock this new approach to funding team convening, AHRC partnered with [the Thrive project](#), led by the University of Liverpool and funded by the Research England Development Fund.

Through this pilot, [three projects were awarded funding](#) to teams whose research aligned with the aims of the opportunity.



# What does this funding opportunity offer our community?

We have drawn on feedback from award holders, applicants and assessors involved in the pilot opportunity and novel innovations in research funding assessment processes. This funding opportunity has been designed to:

- Support research projects across AHRC disciplines, welcoming single, multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary applications
- deliver funding at a greater scale than elsewhere in our applicant-led mode opportunities, facilitating projects that are breaking new ground in order to have a transformative impact on research, society, culture and the economy
- build on the successful piloting of team convening in the pilot funding opportunity, further recognising expertise and fostering development across the research ecosystem
- take a new approach to assessment which democratises funding decisions and grows expertise across the applicant community, with applicants acting as assessors through distributed peer review

# How the application and assessment process will work

Emma Bessent, Senior Investment Manager

Mark Wilson, Senior Grants Operations Manager



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# Essential Information

## **Funding available**

Between £2m and £3m per application. AHRC will fund 80% FEC

## **Duration**

3 to 5 years

## **Project structure**

Proposed research must be team convened, with leadership and management of the project distributed across project co-leads. Applications clearly organised around a traditional project lead will not be considered.

## **Disciplinary Scope**

Applications can be single, multi-, inter-, or transdisciplinary, including integration of expertise outside of AHRC's remit. However, the majority of the project's disciplinary focus must fall within our remit.

## **Deadline**

Outline applications must be received by 4pm UK time on 16 September 2026. It is your responsibility to factor in your institution's internal deadlines as applicable.



# What kind of applications are we looking for?

- Large Grant award holders will use team convening approaches to deliver world-leading excellent research that significantly advances knowledge and builds capability in their chosen area.
- We expect applications to be driven by the research priorities collectively set by each applicant team.
- This funding opportunity is part of AHRC's applicant led mode

AHRC large Grants will support arts and humanities research projects that are:

## Novel

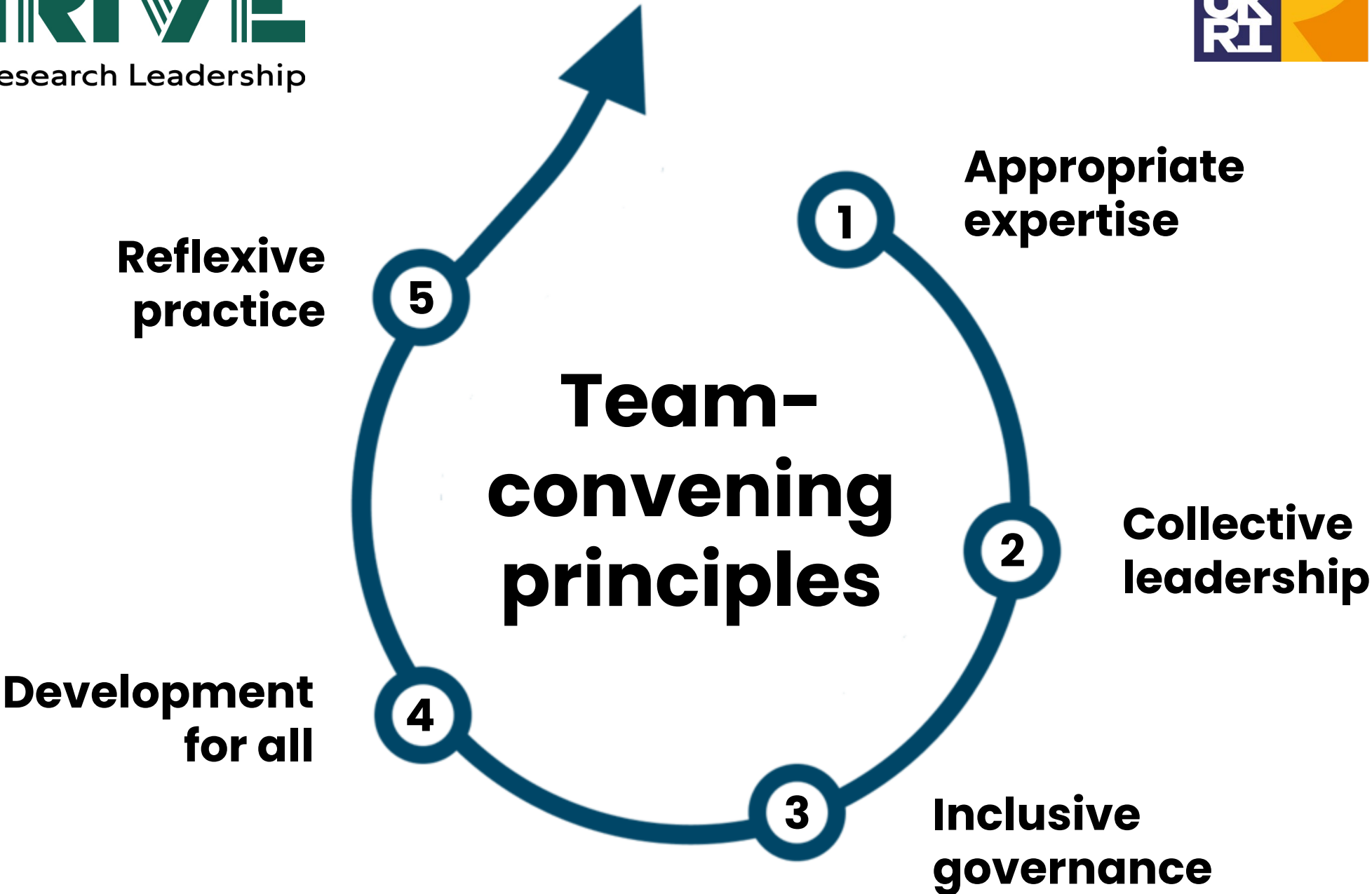
What will your proposed research do that **has not been done before?**

## Ambitious

How are the aims of your proposed research **proportionate to the scale of funding available?**

## Transformative

If funded, **what would change** as a result of your proposed research?



# What should our team look like?

There will be no one-size-fits-all team format. You should convene your team according to the needs and nature of your research idea.

It's important to note that:

## **Project lead**

You will have to nominate a project lead, whose research institution will be referred to as the lead research organisation.

## **Team Responsibilities**

Responsibilities should be distributed across the team according to individual skills, experience and capacity, with project co-leads collectively providing leadership and overall management of the project.

## **Project Co-Leads**

For this funding opportunity, AHRC is extending project co-lead eligibility to individuals from business, third sector or government organisations.

## **Team Roles**

There are a variety of roles available within applications to this opportunity including specialist, professional enabling staff and technician. [Roles in funding applications](#) provides more information regarding eligibility for these roles.

## **Team Continuity**

We expect continuity in the team between outline and full stage, but your outline stage team does not have to be complete or finalised. Full stage applications can reconfigure outline roles and include new team members.



# Impact

- The transformational nature of your planned research is essential and forms a core part of the assessment criteria for AHRC Large Grants. You will be asked to articulate how your research will establish an effective pathway from output to impact.

When developing your outline application, you should consider:

- meaningful engagement with potential user communities throughout your research process
- proportionality of your planned impact given the level of funding available
- how you will deliver tangible and impactful change within your project's lifecycle
- the sustainability of your project's anticipated benefits, including their preservation through legacy planning

You will be able to expand on your outline stage thinking if invited to submit a full stage application.



# What makes the outline stage different to full stage?

## Outline

- Fewer questions with less detail required
- Shorter maximum word counts
- No work plan
- No costings

## Full stage (invite only)

- More questions with more detail required
- Longer maximum word counts
- Logic model
- Work plan
- Costings
- Development of your idea and team



# Distributed Peer Review

AHRC is working with the UK Metascience Unit to implement Distributed Peer Review (DPR) as the primary assessment mechanism for AHRC Large Grants.

DPR turns applicants into reviewers to share the work of peer review and make funding decisions faster, broader, and potentially fairer.

Benefits of DPR include:

- Democratises funding decisions
- Makes assessment process faster overall
- Higher volume of feedback
- Pool of assessors self-scales with the volume of applications
- Skills development and experience building for participants

By submitting an application to this opportunity, you are committing to participating in DPR both as applicants and as reviewers.



# Distributed peer review for team convened research

## Reviewer nomination

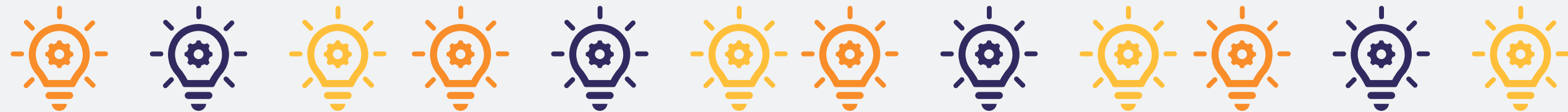
Each applicant team is expected to nominate between two and four of their team members as reviewers. These individuals must have the capacity, knowledge and confidence to provide comprehensive, quality reviews.

## Review volume

Each applicant team can expect to receive up to eight reviews

## Using classifications

We have asked applicant teams to use our list of [Classifications for AHRC Large Grants](#) to describe the expertise of your nominated reviewers and the nature of your project. Using these set classifications allows us to match reviewers to applications.



# Distributed peer review: what is expected of individual reviewers

## Review workload

Each reviewer will be invited to assess no more than six applications. You will have three weeks to complete your assigned reviews.

## Timing

Review invitations are expected in October 2026, so please ensure nominated reviewers have capacity during this period.

## If a reviewer cannot participate

If one of your nominated reviewers is unable to fulfil their commitment due to exceptional circumstances, please inform [enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org) as soon as possible

## Purpose of DPR

Distributed peer review is the feedback mechanism for this funding opportunity. It is important that you provide comprehensive, constructive feedback to your peers.

## Further guidance

We have created a [separate guidance document](#) to support applicants and reviewers in understanding the DPR process for this funding opportunity in more detail and we will hold a training session for reviewers, with the recording available for those unable to attend.



# Distributing peer review: how are we safeguarding the assessment process

- Anonymity of reviewers
- Reviewers not invited to review applications involving their institution
- Applications assigned across two separate pools
- No reciprocal pairs
- Moderation of reviews
- Consequences for not fulfilling reviewer commitments. This includes consequences for not providing robust reviews which clearly justify your scoring.



# Prioritising applications for full stage

After the moderation process, applications will be assigned to a tier based on their average score:

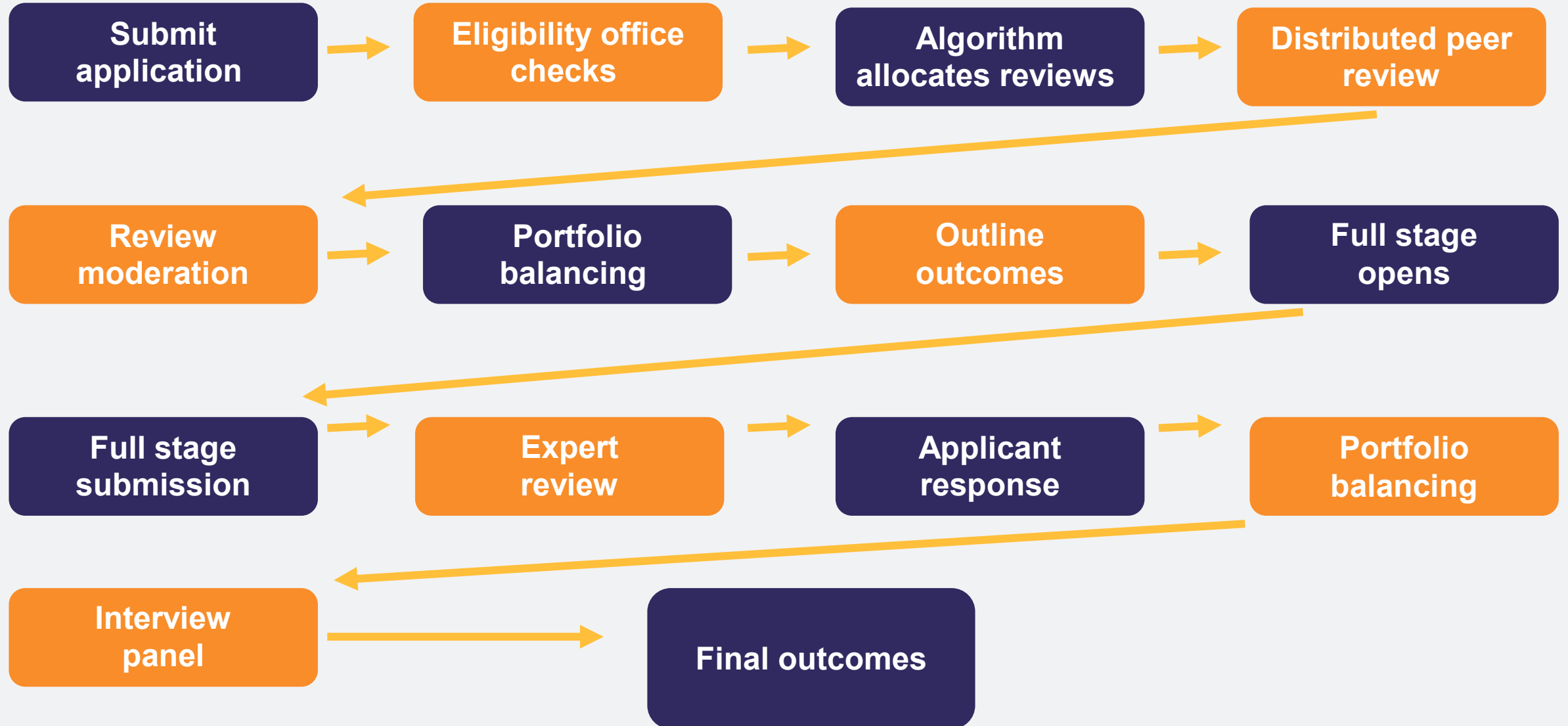
- **Tier 1**, the highest quality, prioritised for full stage invitation
- **Tier 2**, highly competitive, to be considered for full stage invitation
- **Tier 3**, not competitive enough to be invited to full stage

A portfolio balancing approach will then be taken to ensure that applications shortlisted for full stage are:

- appropriate to the scope of this funding opportunity
- not duplicative of our other major investments
- could not have been supported through other AHRC routes to research funding
- distributed across a range of research areas and disciplines
- representative of our funding landscape, including UK geographies and spread of research organisation.

Outline stage decisions will be communicated in December 2026, with the full stage opportunity opening in January 2027

# Application to outcome journey



# Q&A

Please submit your questions using the Q&A function



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# Wrap up



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Further questions?  
Please email:  
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# Thank you



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