



UK Research
and Innovation

UK Research and Innovation Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Candidate Prospectus
April 2026

About UKRI

Launched in 2018, UKRI is an independent, non-departmental public body that invests £10 billion per year in research and innovation. We bring together nine executive council partners (the seven research councils plus Innovate UK and Research England) with a shared vision to ensure the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation.

UKRI also provides coordinated strategic advice to the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology on the balance of funding between research disciplines.

Our mission is to 'advance knowledge, improve lives and drive growth'. There is great intent in these seven words and the three parts of this mission are all equally important.

Any knowledge-driven economy must support curiosity-driven research to provide the novel ideas that underpin the application of research. This ultimately leads to innovative companies that deliver the products and services that change our lives. UKRI is at its best when we deliver mutual symbiosis between these three parts.

We employ around 9,000 members of staff who support some of the world's most exciting and challenging research projects.

We develop and operate some of the most remarkable scientific facilities in the world and work collaboratively with industry, academia and government in exciting partnerships.

We are pushing the frontiers of human knowledge through blue sky research and delivering benefits for UK society and the economy through world-class research and business-led innovation.

UKRI invests in research and innovation across all disciplines, from curiosity-driven research to business-led innovation.

Our activities include:

- funding excellent research and innovation across universities, research institutes, businesses and public sector bodies
- supporting skills and talent, from doctoral training to leadership in academia, industry and the public sector
- building and sustaining national research infrastructure including major facilities, data capabilities and digital platforms
- driving place-based growth, supporting clusters and strengthening local innovation ecosystems across the UK
- convening and connecting partners across government, academia, industry and international systems to tackle complex challenges such as climate change, health, security and productivity

About the role



The CFO is a senior strategic leader and principal adviser to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and board. As a principal decision-maker, the CFO provides organisation-wide leadership across the following UKRI functions:

- finance
- legal
- digital and data
- risk and assurance

Alongside the CEO, the CFO is an executive member of the UKRI board.

The CFO is responsible for ensuring the organisation manages public money with strong governance, effective stewardship and the highest standards of financial management, assurance and control.

They should provide strategic leadership on all aspects of public sector finance. They must ensure that financial decisions are robust, evidence-based and aligned with government priorities and the organisation's statutory responsibilities.

The CFO leads the organisation's engagement with spending reviews and wider fiscal planning, ensuring that:

- resources are clearly linked to outcomes
- financial forecasts are credible and sustainable
- the organisation can demonstrate strong financial management to ministers, the sponsoring department, HM Treasury and other stakeholders

Working in close partnership with the CEO, the CFO plays a central role in shaping and delivering UKRI's long-term strategic vision.

The role requires a deep understanding of the political, economic and societal context in which UKRI operates, translating external drivers and risks into clear strategic priorities and operational plans.

The CFO also manages a number of senior leaders across UKRI, building organisational capability and resilience. Externally, they will build confidence and engage at the highest levels of government, industry, academia and with international partners.

About the role



The CFO will be a member of the Executive Committee and the UKRI Board. They will:

- lead a directorate of approximately 800 people through ~7 direct reports
- manage a direct annual budget of ~£40 million
- carry overarching responsibility for managing finance and commercials across the UKRI portfolio worth ~£10 billion.

The CFO will establish and maintain a legally robust, risk-based governance and control framework that supports confident decision-making and delivery.

They will lead engagement with the Government Internal Audit Agency and the Audit Committee. They must provide clear assurance to the accounting officer and board on the effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control.

They will also serve as a non-executive director on UKRI spin-out company boards where required, offering governance, challenge and commercial insight to support growth and protect public value.

They will also oversee other professional services within UKRI, to be discussed with the successful candidate.

Key responsibilities



- providing strategic leadership across UKRI, working closely with the CEO and executive colleagues to shape organisational direction. Ensuring UKRI's interests are effectively represented to internal and external stakeholders including senior government officials, industry leaders and international partners
- guiding the development and execution of UKRI's long-term strategy. The CFO must exercise sound judgement in balancing Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) objectives, financial constraints and emerging national opportunities. This helps to position UKRI as a world-leading research and innovation organisation
- overseeing day-to-day executive operations as a core member of the Executive Committee, with direct accountability for finance, digital, data, risk and legal, across UKRI's entire portfolio
- representing the CEO and UKRI at high-level engagements, deploying strong influencing skills to build trust with industry. The CFO will steward key relationships at central and local government levels, as well as with major customers, strategic partners and corporate service providers
- providing executive leadership over strategic partnerships, enabling UKRI and UK companies to access critical technologies and capabilities that support national priorities and global competitiveness
- serving as a non-executive director on UKRI spin-out boards as required, bringing strong governance, commercial insight and independent judgement to high-growth ventures
- providing robust budget stewardship to ensure UKRI makes full and effective use of its grant-in-aid in delivering its organisational objectives

Your skills and experience

UKRI wishes to attract the highest calibre of candidates with the appropriate standing for this role. The successful candidate will be able to command confidence and represent the organisation with its many stakeholders at the highest level, being able to demonstrate the following:

Essential criteria:

- proven experience leading and developing diverse, high-performing teams, with the ability to set direction, delegate effectively and deliver results through others
- extensive experience holding enterprise-wide responsibility for financial probity, governance and the effective delivery of financial outcomes within a large, complex organisation
- strong understanding of the drivers of UK economic growth, including wider policy, sectoral and market trends that shape national research and innovation priorities
- exceptional relationship-building and stakeholder management skills, with the ability to establish credibility quickly and build productive partnerships with industry, central and local government, universities, and other external institutions
- highly effective communicator and influencer, able to operate confidently at Board and senior government levels, challenge constructively and shape decision-making in complex, multi-stakeholder environments
- strong personal resilience and sound judgement, with the ability to make decisions under pressure, manage differing viewpoints and maintain focus on organisational priorities
- demonstrated commitment to personal growth, organisational learning and continuous improvement, contributing to a culture of high performance and innovation

Key details

Contract term:

This is a permanent, open-ended position.

Direct reports:

The postholder will have line management responsibility for ~seven direct reports including roles such as Chief Information Officer, Finance Director and General Counsel and Head of Legal.

Approval process:

This appointment will require ratification by the Minister for Science, Innovation, Research and Nuclear, Lord Vallance.

Availability:

Successful candidates will be encouraged to take up their appointment as soon as possible, following the successful completion of pre-appointment checks and security clearance at baseline personnel security standard (BPSS) level.

Security level:

The successful candidate must hold, or be willing to undergo, developed vetting (DV) security clearance. Please note that UKRI reserves the right to initiate or repeat security screening as required during the course of employment.

Timescales and Selection

The selection process will include an interview and a presentation, along with additional fireside discussions. Candidates may also be asked to complete psychometric testing as part of the assessment.

Interviews will take place in London.

Dates	Actions
28 April 2026	Campaign goes live
21 June 2026	Advert closes
w/c 8 June 2026	Minister consulted on longlist
w/c 15 June 2026	Shortlist meeting takes place
w/c 06 July 2026	Interviews take place

Proposed assessment panel

Panel co-chair: Professor Sir Ian Chapman (CEO, UKRI)

Panel co-chair: Eleanor Taylor (Director Science Research and Innovation, DSIT)

UKRI representative: Ruwan Weerasekera (Board Member, UKRI)

How to apply

Your application must be submitted via the UKRI Careers portal by 23:55 on Sunday 21 June 2026 for your application to be considered complete. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

CV and statement of suitability

You will need to supply:

- A CV
- a statement of suitability

You should aim for your CV and statement of suitability to be no longer than two to three pages each.

Your statement of suitability should provide the following:

- specific information about why you believe you would be suitable for appointment into the CFO role and a flavour of what you would want to do in this role, if successful.
- details of your knowledge, skills, experience, personal attributes and vision for the organisation, taking full advantage of the space available
- practical examples where possible, ensuring you refer to the essential criteria for this role.

Again, please aim for no more than 2 to 3 A4 pages.

Should you have any problem with submitting your application via the UKRI Careers Portal, please send an email to publicappointments@ukri.org with 'UKRI CFO' in the subject heading. A member of our team will then be in touch.

General information

Equality, diversity and inclusion

UKRI believes that everyone has a right to be treated with dignity and respect. All must be provided with equal opportunities to flourish and succeed within an ethical and trusted working environment that is attractive and accessible to everyone interested in developing their career with us.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of our board and executive positions and bringing in talent, regardless of its origins. We encourage applications from all candidates regardless of:

- ethnicity
- religion or belief
- gender
- sexual orientation
- age
- disability
- gender identity

We also value diversity of thought and experience and are committed to creating systems that value difference so that everyone can feel welcomed, included and nurtured throughout their time with us.

As a Disability Confident leader, UKRI will offer interviews to disabled candidates who best meet the published minimum requirements for a job or role. Whether you choose to apply under the Disability Confident scheme or not, you can still ask us to make particular adjustments for you when attending an interview.

We know actions speak louder than words. For further information, please visit the UKRI web page: [How we support EDI in the workforce](#)

Code of conduct

Public appointments are expected to uphold high standards of conduct, propriety and confidentiality. Anyone appointed will be required to abide by the [UKRI code of conduct](#). We value diversity and equality and expect a clear commitment to these principles from all individuals appointed.

It is essential that those in public appointments are, and are seen to be, honest and impartial in the exercise of their duties. They will be expected to demonstrate exceptionally high standards of personal honesty and integrity, including in their approach to the acceptance of any gifts or hospitality.

Annex A: conflicts of interest

Ministerial appointments require the highest standards of propriety, involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity, in relation to stewardship of public funds and the oversight and management of all related activities.

General information

This means that any private, voluntary, charitable or political interest that might be material and relevant to the work of the body concerned should be declared.

It is important that those appointed as members of public bodies maintain the confidence of parliament and the public.

If there are any issues in your personal or professional history that could, if you were appointed, be misconstrued, cause embarrassment or cause public confidence in the appointment to be jeopardised, it is important that you bring them to the attention of the assessment panel and provide details of the issue(s) in your application.

In considering whether you wish to declare any issues, you should also reflect on any public statements you have made, including through social media.

The panel may explore issues with you before they make a recommendation on the appointment. As part of our due diligence checks we will consider anything in the public domain related to your conduct or professional capacity.

This will include us undertaking searches of previous public statements and social media, blogs or any other publicly available information. This information may be made available to the panel, and they may wish to explore issues with you, should you be invited to interview.

If you have any queries or would like to discuss further, please contact the UKRI Public Appointments team at publicappointments@ukri.org

Annex B: the seven principles underpinning public life

In 1995 the Committee on Standards in Public Life defined seven principles for public life. All candidates are expected to demonstrate a commitment to, and an understanding of, the value and importance of the principles of public service, which are:

1. selflessness
2. integrity
3. objectivity
4. accountability
5. openness
6. honesty
7. leadership

Further information on the principles of public life can be found [on the government website](#).

Annex C: complaints procedure

If you feel you have reason to complain, you should direct your concerns in the first instance to the Public Appointments team (publicappointments@ukri.org) who will make every effort to deal with these and respond to you within 48 hours.

If your complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily, you can find information about the steps you can take under UKRI complaints procedure.