



UK Research
and Innovation

Research England Executive Chair

Candidate Prospectus
July 2026

About Research England



Research England is responsible for investing in research and knowledge exchange in higher education institutions across England. It shapes the conditions for a vibrant, globally competitive research and innovation system that supports national prosperity, societal advancement and the public good.

Overall, Research England invests over £2 billion a year across a range of different programmes. In addition, they operate funding programmes across the UK and collaborate closely with partners in the devolved administrations.

Areas of responsibility include:

- implementing the UK's Research Excellence Framework
- leading work on the sustainability of the research sector in England
- supporting the translation of research and development (R&D) from universities into economic and wider societal impact

About the role



The Executive Chair of Research England will be a dynamic and inspirational leader who will spearhead research excellence and knowledge exchange across England's higher education institutions as well as taking the lead on various UK-wide initiatives.

As the Executive Chair of Research England, they will lead a dedicated team of over 100 people across multiple locations. In addition, they will work closely with the Research England Council and take overall responsibility for setting the strategic vision for Research England as well as contributing to the direction of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

As a visible and credible leader, the Executive Chair will have a significant role in championing UKRI's relationships across the higher education sector, the other UK higher education funding bodies and the Office for Students.

As a member of UKRI's Executive Committee, the Executive Chair of Research England will be accountable to, and work closely with, the UKRI CEO and the wider Executive Committee, contributing to the collective leadership of the wider organisation.

Research England's Executive Chair will also be responsible for leading and delivering one or more cross cutting areas for UK Research and Innovation.

Key responsibilities



UKRI's nine Executive Chairs have two overarching responsibilities. Firstly, they are responsible for the outcomes delivered within their domain.

To achieve this, Executive Chairs have delegated responsibility and accountability for a budget set through recommendations to the Secretary of State from the UKRI Board, which is, in turn, advised by the UKRI Executive Committee.

They have freedom to operate to deliver this budget through their team, including through collaborative programmes with other parts of UKRI, aligned with the UKRI Strategy.

Executive Chairs will harness strategic insight they gain from their advisory council and by sustaining senior relationships across the research and innovation system.

At the same time, as members of the UKRI Executive Committee, Executive Chairs have a responsibility for the health and vibrancy of the entire UK research and innovation system, recommending strategy to the UKRI Board.

This includes collective responsibility and accountability for UKRI strategy and budgets, and for the leadership and delivery of collective UKRI activities.

The Research England Executive Chair will be accountable for multiple cross-UKRI functions, currently including:

- Commercialisation
- financial sustainability and system health
- open research

The following responsibilities will be key to ensuring delivery of Research England and UKRI's objectives:

Leadership

- lead and manage Research England and its staff in the successful delivery of its objectives, providing the inspirational, inclusive leadership and vision to maintain and develop the quality outputs and impacts from its investment portfolio
- be a core member of the UKRI Executive team to deliver best value from the overall research and innovation funding and policy system and actively contribute to the development and implementation of the strategy for UKRI

Key responsibilities

- work collaboratively across UKRI's councils to foster interdisciplinary work and a whole system approach, providing support and challenge when required
- work with the Executive Committee, the Senior Independent Member (SIM) of Research England and other council members to lead and develop the organisation's strategic approach to research and innovation in England

Stakeholder engagement

- work with the SIM and other council members on the strategic approach to knowledge exchange and commercialisation in universities within England to enhance their contribution to economic growth and social capital
- fulfil Research England's remit to create and sustain the conditions for a healthy and dynamic research and knowledge exchange system in the higher education sector
- oversee quality related funding and maintain the excellence of research infrastructure in English higher education providers (HEP). Stimulate research collaborations across the UK between HEPs, businesses and charities that help support economic growth and build local collaborations
- represent and develop positive relationships between Research England and the devolved administrations and their Higher Education funding bodies
- work closely with the Office for Students to support higher education more generally, delivering the Higher Education Innovation Funding programme and other areas of joint responsibility

Finance, planning and analysis

- maximise efficiency and ensure value for money from public investment
- ensure robust budget planning and financial control
- ensure robust analysis underpins decisions, evidences outcomes and maximises synergy between Research England's objectives and the overall UKRI strategy

Assessment criteria

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 Research England with its many stakeholders at the highest level, being able to demonstrate the following (Assessed at shortlisting, interview or both):

Skills, experience and standing

- a highly respected senior leader with relevant experience of, and success in, delivering research and innovation results, including understanding the challenges of institutional block grant funding (S)
- politically astute with excellent interpersonal skills, able to influence, build and maintain strong working relationships with a wide range of partners demonstrating a collaborative and consultative approach (I)
- clear and persuasive communicator capable of influencing at board, government and senior external stakeholder level (especially HEPs) providing authoritative advice and exercising sound judgement in decision-making (I)
- commitment to the overarching goals of UKRI and the health of a wider and more integrated research and innovation landscape (I)
- an ability to develop and deliver a strategic vision for higher education research and knowledge exchange funding in England, built on a thorough understanding of these areas (S&I)
- a demonstrable ability of having translated research into application and economic benefit (S)

Leadership and management

- proven experience contributing to the development and delivery of organisational strategy, with the ability to drive change, embed a culture of continuous improvement and deliver tangible organisational impact (S&I)
- able to establish credibility quickly, navigate differences of opinion constructively, and demonstrate personal resilience, determination and integrity in high-pressure contexts (I)
- demonstrable leadership and management skills within a complex organisation, able to evidence having successfully led through times of change and organisational development (S&I)
- experience managing diverse, high-performing teams, fostering collaboration, accountability, talent development and organisational resilience across large, complex structures (S&I)
- track record of leading organisational change, delivering outcomes under pressure and maintaining momentum in highly dynamic environments (S&I)
- comfortable making high-stakes decisions, delegating effectively and ensuring accountability for resources, operational outcomes and compliance with governance standards (I)

Terms of Appointment

This role is offered on a permanent, open-ended basis. Whilst offered on a permanent basis, we would consider secondments. Should you wish to apply on a seconded basis please make this clear in your application.

Remuneration

£160K - £170K (based on experience) plus an opportunity for performance related pay

Time commitment

Full-time

Location

Bristol, London or Swindon. Please note, this role includes regular travel to sites across the UK and international travel on occasion.

Nature of appointment

This is a ministerial appointment made by the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology. The post-holder would be an office-holder and an employee of UKRI.

Availability

Successful candidate/s will be encouraged to take up their appointment as soon as possible, following the successful completion of pre-appointment checks and security clearance

Indicative timeline

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.

As these roles are subject to pre-appointment scrutiny, the successful candidate may be subject to a pre-appointment hearing by the Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee.

Interviews will be in-person and will take place in London.

Process dates

Closing date: Sunday 30 August 2026

Shortlisting: w/c 14 September 2026

Interviews: w/c 28 September or w/c 05 October 2026

Please note that the timeline for this campaign is indicative and therefore subject to change. Please note that the role-holder will be required to have the appropriate level of security screening/vetting required for this role. UKRI reserves the right to run or re-run security clearance as required during the course of employment.

How to apply

Please submit your application via the
Careers Portal by 23:55 on Sunday 30 August 2026.

You will need to supply:

- A CV
- A supporting statement

You should aim for your CV and supporting statement 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 Research England Executive Chair role and your vision for the role if successful
- think about your knowledge, skills, experience and personal attributes, and take full advantage of the space available.
- use practical examples where possible and ensure you refer to the essential criteria for this role

Should you have any problem with submitting your application via the UKRI Careers Portal, please do send an email to seniorrecruitment@ukri.org with 'Research England Executive Chair' 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, and to be provided with equal opportunities to flourish and succeed within an ethical and trusted working environment that is attractive and accessible to everyone who is 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 or 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 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

Ministerial 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 ministerial 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.

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,

General information

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 Senior Appointments team at seniorrecruitment@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:

- selflessness
- integrity
- objectivity
- accountability
- openness
- honesty
- leadership

Further information is available on the [principles of public life guidance web page](#).

Annex C: complaints procedure

If you feel you have reason to complain, you should direct your concerns in the first instance to the Senior Appointments team (seniorrecruitment@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](#).