Community Centres of Excellence (CCE) Funding Opportunity

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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General

Is this a two-stage funding opportunity?

Yes. This is a two-stage funding opportunity consisting of:

An outline application stage.

A full proposal stage for applicants invited following assessment of the outline stage.

Only applicants invited following the outline assessment will be able to submit a full proposal.

Will there be future opportunities to apply for a CCE?

Potentially. UKRI may introduce future opportunities to support additional Community Centres of Excellence (CCEs), subject to strategic priorities and the availability of funding.

Is there an Expression of Interest (EOI) stage?

No. There is no EOI stage for this funding opportunity.

How long is the award?

Awards can be up to three years in duration.

Projects must start by 1 June 2027.

When will applicants receive the outcome of the outline stage?

UKRI currently expects to inform applicants of the outcome of the outline stage by the end of January 2027.

Funding and Costs

How much funding is available?

The total funding available through this opportunity is £20 million.

The full economic cost (FEC) of an individual application can be up to £2 million.

UKRI will fund 100% of the FEC.

Is the funding rate really 100% FEC?

Yes.

UKRI will fund 100% of the full economic cost (FEC) for successful projects under this opportunity.

Applicants should follow the guidance provided in the funding opportunity and complete costing information in the Funding Service accordingly.

Can equipment costs be requested?

Equipment may be requested where it is necessary and justified for delivery of the proposed CCE.

However, applicants should note that UKRI does not expect procurement of computing hardware or major infrastructure to form part of a typical CCE proposal.

What types of activities will be funded?

Examples include:

- salaries and staff costs
- community management
- training and outreach
- workshops and events
- knowledge exchange activities
- research software engineering
- governance and administration
- travel and subsistence
- data preservation and sharing
- estates and indirect costs

What activities will not be funded?

Examples include:

- procurement of computing hardware or major infrastructure
- operation of new computing facilities
- standalone research projects
- activities that duplicate existing NCR capabilities or services

- maintenance of research software where it does not contribute to the objectives of a CCE

Where should costs be entered in the Funding Service?

Applicants should enter all costs under the Exceptions fund heading in the Funding Service.

Eligibility

Who can apply?

This opportunity is open to organisations with standard and non-standard eligibility.

Applicants must be based at an organisation eligible for UKRI funding.

Further details are available in the "Who can apply" section of the funding opportunity.

Can non-standard organisations participate?

Yes.

Organisations that do not already hold UKRI standard eligibility may participate provided that the non-standard eligibility process is completed before an award is made.

Applicants do not need eligibility checks to be completed before submitting an outline application.

Please note the eligibility process application can take up to 12 weeks, and further guidance can be found on the following UKRI pages: Organisational eligibility – UKRI and Apply to be an eligible organisation – UKRI

Can a Research Technical Professional (RTP) be a Project Lead?

Yes.

Research Technical Professionals can be Project Lead or Project Co-Lead on applications provided they meet UKRI's individual eligibility requirements.

Can an organisation submit more than one application?

Yes.

There is no restriction on the number of applications submitted by an organisation.

Can a Project Lead be named on multiple applications?

No.

An individual may only act as Project Lead on one application to this opportunity.

However, they may participate in other applications as a Project Co-Lead, project partner, or other roles in the Core Team.

It is worth noting that if more than one proposal is successful, the individual's combined commitment across the projects must remain within their available capacity (i.e. not exceed 1 FTE), and the roles and responsibilities on each proposal should not duplicate.

Can an applicant be Project Lead on one proposal and Project Co-Lead on another?

Yes.

An individual may act as Project Lead on one application and participate as a Project Co-Lead on other applications.

It is worth noting that if more than one proposal is successful, the individual's combined commitment across the projects must remain within their available capacity (i.e. not exceed 1 FTE), and the roles and responsibilities on each proposal should not duplicate.

Scope of a CCE

What is a Community Centre of Excellence (CCE)?

A CCE provides a community-owned service layer that helps researchers and innovators make effective use of the UKRI National Compute Resources (NCRs).

CCEs are expected to provide:

- stewardship of NCR user communities

- services to support NCR users
- resource provision, facilitating access and allocation of compute capacity to maximise the benefit and utilisation of the NCR portfolio

Must a CCE deliver all three core functions?

Yes.

All CCEs are expected to deliver all three core functions.

The balance between the functions may vary depending on community needs.

Can a CCE focus on a specific research field or challenge?

Yes.

CCEs may be structured in different ways, for example, around a specific research field, multiple research fields, shared computational approaches, technologies, workflows, resources, or research challenges.

While CCEs focused on a specific research field are within scope, they must demonstrate how they will share expertise, training, and support to benefit users beyond their immediate community to maximise their value. CCEs should identify opportunities to enable knowledge exchange and share best practice across communities, so users facing similar computational challenges or needs can benefit, even where their research applications differ.

What research software engineering activities are in scope and out of scope?

In-scope RSE activities are those that contribute to the CCE's core function of enabling and supporting users to make effective use of the NCRs. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Software optimisation to improve performance, scalability, or memory efficiency on the NCRs.
- Code deployment, porting, and adaptation to NCR systems.
- Workflow development.
- Data curation and management activities required to support NCR use.
- DevOps and infrastructure support related to deploying and running software on the NCRs.

For the purposes of this guidance, software optimisation refers to modifying software so that it runs more efficiently on the NCRs, for example by improving performance, reducing memory consumption, or enabling better utilisation of the available computing resources.

Out-of-scope activities include the routine maintenance and long-term sustainment of research software where the primary purpose is to keep the software operational throughout its lifecycle, rather than to improve its performance, usability, or suitability for the NCRs. Examples include general bug fixing, software maintenance releases, and ongoing support activities that are not specifically required to enable or enhance use of the NCRs.

Can a CCE develop tools, guidance or services that NCR providers later adopt?

Yes.

CCEs may develop tools, workflows, guidance and services that support NCR users.

Applicants should clearly demonstrate how such activities complement existing NCR services and avoid duplication of provision already offered by NCR providers.

Can a CCE focus primarily on providing value-added services, workflows and tooling?

Yes, provided that the proposal also demonstrates how it will deliver all three core functions expected of a CCE.

National Compute Resources (NCRs)

Is there a maximum amount of NCR compute that can be requested at outline stage?

No specific maximum allocation has been defined.

Applicants should request an amount that is evidence-based, justified and proportionate to their projected user community.

Please see the additional document in the funding opportunity text for information on the services within the UKRI NCR portfolio.

What happens if a proposal requests too much compute resource?

The assessment process will consider whether the requested compute allocation is appropriate and justified.

Applicants should focus on providing a robust rationale for their estimate.

How should communities estimate future compute demand?

Applicants should estimate demand using the best available evidence, including projected users, workloads and anticipated growth.

UKRI is not prescribing a specific methodology.

Can a CCE request compute allocations across multiple NCRs in their application?

Yes.

Applicants may provide indicative amounts of compute allocations across multiple National Compute Resources in their CCE application.

Applicants should explain why the requested resources are appropriate for their community's needs.

What if there is no suitable NCR resource for a particular community?

This opportunity is intended to support use of the NCR portfolio.

Applicants should explain how their proposed activities align with and utilise the NCR ecosystem.

Would groups within a community with NCR time via CCEs be deprioritised for NNSS allocations?

No.

The NNSS allocation policy is under development. UKRI does not intend for access obtained through a CCE to disadvantage users applying to NNSS in the future.

To what extent can industry access NCR resources through a CCE, particularly if their outputs are made openly available? How would UKRI distinguish eligible research and innovation from commercial activity?

Industrial users conducting collaborative pre-competitive research within UKRI's remit welcomed to apply for access on the NCR resources. UKRI will provide CCEs with further guidance that details the eligibility criteria.

NCR Providers and Collaboration

Can CCE budgets fund staff time from NCR provider organisations?

Yes, potentially.

NCR staff may be included in proposals where they contribute to delivery of the proposed CCE.

Any funded activity must be additional to existing or planned NCR responsibilities and must not duplicate services already funded through NCR provision.

How should applicants identify existing NCR activities and capabilities?

Applicants are encouraged to engage with NCR providers during proposal development to ensure that the proposed CCE complements existing NCR activities, capabilities and user support provision.

Can applicants expect engagement from NCR providers during proposal development?

UKRI has informed NCR providers that applicants to the CCE funding opportunity are likely to contact them for information. Applicants are encouraged to engage with NCR providers while developing proposals.

However, NCR providers are not required to become project partners or provide letters of support.

Compute Allocation and Governance

Will UKRI provide shared systems or functionality for allocation and compliance processes?

Successful CCEs will receive additional guidance from UKRI regarding allocation processes, governance and compliance expectations.

At outline stage, applicants should demonstrate a credible approach to allocation and compliance while recognising that additional implementation guidance will follow for successful projects.

Is a full peer-review process required when allocating compute?

CCEs should propose processes that align with UKRI principles and standards for peer review assessment and decision-making.

Will UKRI provide guidance on implementing allocations?

Further guidance will be provided to successful applicants following award.

Project Partners

Do Letters of Support need to specify a £ value?

Yes, the Project Partner Letter of Support must include the value that they bring to the project and the type of contribution (direct or indirect) and its monetary value. Accurate descriptions of the contribution must be provided, which cannot be £0 or £1 (or similar nominal value).

Further guidance can be found here: Roles in funding applications: eligibility, responsibilities and costings guidance – UKRI

Assessment and Full Proposal Stage

Can unsuccessful outline applications be resubmitted?

No.

UKRI will not accept uninvited resubmissions of projects previously submitted to UKRI.

What happens if UKRI asks multiple outline projects to work together in developing a full proposal?

The funding opportunity allows UKRI to invite applicants with complementary proposals to collaborate during development of a full proposal.

Any implications for scope, budget and delivery expectations will be discussed with the relevant applicants at that stage.

The published maximum award value remains £2 million unless UKRI advises otherwise.

Will proposals be assessed by subject specialists at outline stage?

No.

Outline applications will be assessed by a UKRI internal panel.

Applicants should therefore write for a generalist audience rather than a technical or specialist audience.

Last updated: 12 November 2026
This FAQ may be updated throughout the opportunity. Applicants should always refer to the Funding Finder opportunity as the definitive source of guidance.