



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Highlight Notice in the AHRC Leadership Fellowships scheme ECR route: RCUK/UKRI Innovation Fellowships

Summary

Applications for UKRI Innovation Fellowships are invited through a highlight notice for the early career route within AHRC's Leadership Fellows Scheme. Applications under the highlight notice should fall within one of the following three strands:

- a) **Creative and Digital Economy Innovation Leadership Fellows** for early career researchers wishing to undertake an innovative research programme and leadership activities in partnership with creative or digital economy organisations
- b) **Inter-disciplinary Interface Innovation Leadership Fellows** for early career researchers to undertake innovative, inter-disciplinary research and research leadership development activities combining arts and humanities with other fields of study
- c) **Rutherford Fund Fellows** to attract global talent by welcoming applications from early career researchers who are non-UK nationals

Applications can be submitted under this highlight at any time but **no later than 4pm 31 May 2018**.

Context: RCUK/UKRI Innovation Fellowships

RCUK has received funding through the National Productivity Investment Fund to develop a fellowship programme targeted at early career researchers (ECRs). These fellowships will be a step change in the support provided by the Research Councils to the research leaders of the future, enabling some of the UK's most talented researchers to undertake major new innovation orientated, intellectual endeavours.

Developing and supporting a strong and agile research base is integral to supporting the UK Government's vision of industrial growth driven by research and innovation needs. Reflecting this, skills form a key component of the UK Government's Industrial Strategy. The Green Paper, January 2017, [Building Our Industrial Strategy](#), states that the Government will:

- Substantially increase investment in research and development (R&D) and ensure that UK research continues to be world class

- Build the pipeline of talent for an innovative economy
- Ensure that the UK attracts top international talent

The RCUK/UKRI Innovation fellowships will support the delivery of the Industrial Strategy by allowing early career researchers to explore interdisciplinary solutions, which address focused sectoral needs, to the economic benefit of the UK.

This highlight notice is one of a number of initial activities being undertaken by the AHRC to support the wider RCUK/UKRI early career fellowships programme. Other activities include a recent 'Creative Economy Engagement Fellowships (CEEf)' call to AHRC-funded Training consortia (DTPs/ CDTs / CDPs) and collaboration with the EPSRC-UKRI Innovation Fellowships call (September 2017)

Eligibility

Applicants **must** be early career researchers (ECR), as defined in the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#), section 3.8. As well as the information below and in the Funding Guide, there is an [FAQ document](#) which we will continue to update as questions arise.

Applications must fall under one of the three headings [below](#) and **must demonstrate alignment with the [Industrial Strategy](#)**. The case for support attachment should outline clearly how the application addresses one or more of the focus areas outlined below and meets the specific criteria outlined in this highlight notice. Applications which do not meet the aims of the highlight will be rejected.

Applications can be submitted under this highlight at any time but **no later than 4pm 31 May 2018**.

Awards must commence no later than 1 February 2019. Any application with a start date later than 1 February 2019 will be rejected.

Focus of Areas for the Highlight Notice

Applications under the highlight notice should fall within one of the following three strands (applications may address more than one of these areas but applicants should apply under the strand which most strongly reflects the research focus and their own circumstances):

- a) Creative and Digital Economy Innovation Leadership Fellows

These fellowships will support early career researchers wishing to undertake an innovative research programme and leadership activities in partnership with creative or digital economy organisations. This might include a proportion of time

spent working in the partner organisation. The output of the project is anticipated to have an impact on the creative or digital economy and we expect the proposal to demonstrate how the fellow will benefit from closer working with organisations outside academia. Postdoctoral researchers supported through the recent Creative Economy Engagement Fellowships (CEEF) call to DTPs/ CDTs / CDPs are welcome to apply under this heading for follow-up or new research programmes provided that this would add significant and distinctive value to the work conducted through the CEEF; however, there is no requirement for applicants for these fellowships to have received prior funding through the CEEF route.

b) Inter-disciplinary Interface Innovation Leadership Fellows

These fellowships will support early career researchers to undertake innovative, inter-disciplinary research and research leadership development activities combining arts and humanities with other fields of study to address problems aligned with the emerging Industrial Strategy. (areas of potential alignment include topics identified or being consulted upon as a part of waves 1 & 2 of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF)¹, fields covered by 'sector deals', or cross-cutting issues such as 'place' and 'skills'; some examples are provided below). Applications must be inter-disciplinary, interfacing with research fields beyond the arts and humanities, but must have a strong arts and humanities component; at least 50% of the proposed research must fall broadly within the remit of the AHRC. Fellowships should also engage with relevant non-academic stakeholders in relevant innovation ecosystems, for example policy-makers, professional groups and/or practitioners, product/service providers, purchasers, regulators and end-users, businesses, technology developers, cultural and creative sectors etc.

Applications under this heading might include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- Creative² and Digital industries. For example, linking artistic, creative, heritage and design skills with digital, computing and coding skills.

¹ Further details on the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) can be found at: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/iscf/>; details of areas currently subject to deep dive consultation for future waves can be found at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/170817/>

² It is important that you read the definition of 'Creative Industries' in the Highlight Notice FAQs document if you wish to apply in this area.

- Development of immersive technologies, live events and future audience experience. For example, the intersections between AR and VR and the ways they are transforming the delivery of creative content (including their significant potential spillover effects into other sectors e.g. health care).
- Fellowships exploring inter-disciplinary challenges and opportunities in relation to the development, application and adoption of emerging technologies and related systems transitions/transformations, for example in areas such as robotics and artificial intelligence, the human-technology interface, the transformation of infrastructure, construction or energy systems (including low energy buildings), or moves towards a 'circular' or 'low carbon' economy and/correlated cross-cutting issues such as ethics and responsible innovation
- Fellowships in environmental humanities. For example, linking arts and humanities with environmental and biological sciences (and beyond), looking at areas such as the bioeconomy, sustainable agriculture and the food and drink sectors.
- Fellowships in the medical or health humanities or related areas exploring the intersections between arts and humanities and medical, biological or health sciences for example in areas such as healthy ageing, mental health and improved diagnostics
- Fellowships in the digital humanities exploring the connections with data science and analytics, computing science or related areas for example in the development and application of "Big Data" approaches
- Inter-disciplinary design fellowships exploring the potential for design approaches to integrate and connect across disciplinary boundaries, for example in fields such as user-led design, co-design/co-production, innovation ecosystems, transformative service delivery and adoption of new technologies.
- Fellowships exploring how place-focused research combining the arts and humanities with other research fields can support local economic development through building on the particular strengths of different places or addressing factors that hold places back and/or enhance local innovation ecosystems
- Inter-disciplinary research fellowships relevant to underpinning or cross-cutting issues raised in the [Industrial Strategy Green Paper](#) (January 2017)³ such as exploitation and commercialization, intellectual property rights, skills, productivity, or international trade and inward investment

c) Rutherford Fund Fellows

These Fellowships aim to attract global talent to the UK and we welcome applications from early career researchers who are non-UK nationals. These

applications will be funded as part of the Rutherford Fund which is one element of the RCUK/UKRI scheme. The research proposed will need to fall within the scope of one of the other strands of the highlight notice (a & b above, ie in terms of working within the creative digital sector and/or at the interdisciplinary interface between the arts and humanities and other research fields in areas aligned to the Industrial Strategy). The applicant could be based outside the UK currently but the fellowship proposal must be submitted through, and held at, an eligible UK Research Organisation which would employ and support the Fellow for the period of the fellowship award. Successful applicants from the Non-European Economic Area who require a visa to work in the UK will be eligible to be considered under the Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) visa route. Further information is available on the [RCUK website](#).

Additional points and changed eligibility under the Highlight Notice

To meet the aims of the UKRI Innovation Fellowship Scheme, there are some modifications to the standard AHRC Leadership Fellows (ECR route) scheme which applicants need to consider and these are outlined below. All other requirements are as normal for early career AHRC Leadership Fellows, as specified in the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#).

- The applicant must be post-doctoral or of equivalent status but there is no requirement for two years post-doctoral experience in an academic/research environment (or equivalent professional experience).
- The requirement to have been employed by the research organisation for at least one year prior to submission of the proposal has been waived for these fellowships.
- The requirement to have a contract which extends **beyond** the duration of the fellowship has been waived for these fellowships.
- The standard grant eligibility requirement for the research organisation to agree to provide a contract for the duration of the fellowship **will** apply.
- The Fellow must be resident in the UK – and eligible to work in the UK - for the duration of the fellowship, if awarded, but does not need to be resident in the UK at the time of application.

- The standard eligibility criteria allows fellows to commit 100% of their contracted time to the fellowship for up to 12 months. These fellowships allow the fellow to commit 100% of their time for the full duration of the fellowship (subject to the total funding limit of £250,000 fEC for applications).
- Those awarded a fellowship through the highlight notice would be eligible to apply for a further fellowship period, beyond the end of their initial fellowship, of up to 24 months. This would allow some fellows to receive up to 48 months of Fellowship funding; this is to align with the provision of other UKRI Innovation Fellowships which provide opportunities for longer awards. This would allow for the evolution of partnership/collaborative research. It is not anticipated that all Fellows will apply for a second 24-month funding period. For Fellows who do apply for a second period, the application will be subject to the normal peer review process, in competition with other applications submitted to that round and there is no guarantee of success. Applications under this highlight notice should not assume or be contingent upon a second funding period being awarded. Applications for a second phase would need to include a progress report on the first Fellowship programme and detail how the second phase would add distinctive value to that programme.

Application Process and Format

Applications to the highlight notice can be submitted from **Wednesday 25th October 2017 and no later than 4pm on Thursday 31st May 2018**. Applications will need to go through the appropriate institution submission process. Applications should be submitted using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (<https://jes.rcuk.ac.uk/>). To be considered under the highlight notice applicants must submit a proposals through the relevant call/type /mode as detailed below

To prepare a proposal form in Je-S:

- log-in to your account and choose '**Documents**' from the menu;
- then select '**New Document**';
- '**AHRC**' as the Council,
- '**Fellowship Proposal**' as the Document Type;
- '**Leadership Fellows**' as the Scheme;
- as the Call/Type/Mode select the appropriate option as follows -
 - **UKRI/RCUK Innovation Fellowship - Creative and Digital Economy 31 May 2018**
 - **UKRI/RCUK Innovation Fellowship - Inter-Disciplinary Interface 31 May 2018**
 - **UKRI/RCUK Innovation Fellowship - Rutherford Fund 31 May 2018**
- Then select '**Create Document**'.

Please note the latest project start date that can be entered is 01/02/2019

Applications to this highlight notice will be subject to the normal AHRC peer review process. A panel meeting will be held in October 2018 to moderate the applications which pass the initial peer review stage. Please see the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) for information on the peer review process.

Applications submitted for consideration under this highlight notice **must** include a paragraph at the start of their Case for Support explaining how their proposal meets the aims and focus of the highlight notice, and in particular how the activities align with the Industrial Strategy. The Case for Support must also include a leadership development plan and a statement of early career eligibility. Other attachments required for this application will be as set out (for Leadership Fellows) in the AHRC Research Funding Guide.

Scheme Requirements and Post Award Reporting

Unless otherwise stated, the scheme requirements and post award reporting as stated in the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) will apply.

Fellows funded under this highlight notice will be expected to form a part of the relevant AHRC portfolio of projects and will be expected to participate in events and activities across AHRC and the research councils, as required.

In addition to submission of outputs, outcomes and impacts that arise from AHRC's funding through the Researchfish system, additional reporting of activities during the lifetime and conclusion of the award may be required.

Timetable

Activity	Date
Call launch	19th October 2017
Application form available in Je-S	25th October 2017
Deadline for submission	4pm 31st May 2018
Panel Meeting	October 2018
Panel decision	Monday 5th November 2018
Latest Start date	1st February 2019

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