



Arts & Humanities  
Research Council

# Highlight Notice in the AHRC Leadership Fellowships scheme ECR route: RCUK/UKRI Innovation Fellowships - Frequently asked questions

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## Introduction

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will be a 'live' document on the AHRC website, with further questions added as the application timetable progresses.

Please contact the [AHRC](#) if you have any specific questions that have not been covered here, or in the [Call Guidance](#).

Unless otherwise stated, the eligibility, criteria and rules for applications to the AHRC call under the UKRI Innovation Fellowships Highlight Notice will be the same as for AHRC Leadership Fellows - early career route, as described in the [AHRC Funding Guide](#).

AHRC are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations across and between the defined equalities groups. We welcome applications from all backgrounds and groups and encourage flexible working patterns to facilitate this.

## Programme

### **Q. What is the National Productivity Investment Fund?**

In the 2016 Autumn Statement the Government announced additional funding for targeted and sustained investment to improve productivity in the UK.

Research and Development was one of the four key areas for investment within the fund with £4.7bn allocated to this area over the period 2017/18 – 2020/21.

Building the pipeline of talent and attracting global talent to sustain the excellence of the UK research base and support an innovative economy is one strand of activities within the Research and Development area of NPIF.

## **Q. Where can I find out more about the Industrial Strategy and the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund?**

In January 2017, the Government published a Green Paper, [Building Our Industrial Strategy](#). In addition, to a section on investing in science, research and innovation, this covers a range of other issues (e.g. skills, infrastructure, successful places, trade etc.) which could also be relevant areas for research under this call.

The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund was created to provide funding and support to UK businesses and researchers. It is funded as a part of the **National Productivity Investment Fund** and forms a part of the Industrial Strategy. Further details of the ISCF can be found on the [RCUK website](#) including the first areas of focus which were [announced in April 2017](#). Details of engagement around potential further areas of focus for the second wave were [announced in August](#). Topics covered by the ISCF could be relevant research areas for this call.

## **Costings and Duration**

Q. When will I be able to start my fellowship?

All fellowships under this highlight notice must start before 1st February 2019. Any time prior to this date will be accepted. The panel is scheduled for October 2018 so earliest start dates should also reflect this.

Q. Is there a set duration for the fellowships?

For applicants on a full time contract the minimum duration will be **6 months** and the maximum duration will be **24 months**. Limits for applicants who will be employed on part time contracts will be pro rata (e.g. a 0.5 FTE contract would have a minimum of 12 months and a maximum of 48 months).

## **Q. Are there any limitations on the amount of money I can ask for?**

Applications will be accepted which have a Full Economic Cost (fEC) of £50,000 to £250,000.

## **Q. How much of my time will I be expected to commit?**

Applications will be accepted for which the minimum average commitment over the life of the Fellowship is at least 50 per cent of your normal contracted hours

(based on a standard working week of 37.5 hours per week or pro-rata for individuals who work part-time). Unlike a standard fellowship, applicants may apply for up to 100 per cent of their time for the entire duration of the fellowship.

**Q. Can I request an AHRC funded project Student as part of my application?**

Project studentships cannot be requested as part of this highlight notice.

**Q. Do I still need to appoint a mentor to apply under this highlight notice?**

In common with other applications to the AHRC Early Career Leadership Fellows Scheme, applicants will be expected to have an appointed mentor at the host institution and include a Mentor Statement attachment as part of the application. Additionally, Fellows could have 'mentors' or 'sponsors' within non-academic partner organisations.

**Applicant eligibility**

**Q. What is meant by the term 'early career researcher'?**

As defined in the AHRC Research Funding Guide, an early career researcher is defined as an applicant who, at the point of application is:

- within eight years of the award of their PhD or equivalent professional training
- or**
- within six years of their first academic appointment<sup>1</sup>

Evidence that you meet these criteria must be provided in the Case for Support. Career breaks, e.g. for family reasons or health, are excluded for the purpose of calculating these durations.

**Q. I do not currently hold a PhD but I am expecting to have submitted by the time I would take up the fellowship. Am I eligible to apply?**

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<sup>1</sup> First academic appointment- this is a paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, which lists research and/or teaching as the primary function.

Applicants should be early career researchers, as defined above. This requires that, at the point of application, the applicant must be of post-doctoral standing; in receipt of a PhD or equivalent professional training, or have been employed in an academic appointment with research and/or teaching as its primary function.

**Q. I will have recently finished an AHRC fellowship, will I still be eligible to apply?**

Previously holding an AHRC (or other) fellowship, studentship or other award will not affect eligibility for this highlight notice provided that the applicant meet the ECR eligibility criteria as outlined above. 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 that would start after the end of the CEEF Fellowship 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.

**Q. I am a non-UK national who has been working in the UK; can I apply for the Rutherford Fund Fellowships?**

Yes- the Rutherford Fund Fellowships aim to maintain and expand the UK's base of world leading international researchers. Applications are specifically welcomed from non-UK nationals. The research proposed would need to meet the requirements of one of the other strands of the highlight notice. 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 then employ the Fellow for the period of the fellowship award.

**Industrial Strategy Collaborations and partnerships**

**Q. What is meant by Project Partner?**

An organisation can only be identified as a 'Project Partner' if it is providing a specific contribution (cash or in-kind) without charge to the research project. Resources to be provided by project partners, whether cash or in-kind contributions, should be clearly identified in the 'Project Partner' section of the proposal. Failure to do this will lead to the application being rejected. These contributions are not considered to be part of the fEC of the project.

If you include an organisation as a 'Project Partner', you must also include a Letter of Support from that organisation. Failure to do this will lead to the application being rejected.

For more information on Project Partners please see section 3.9 of the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#).

**Q. Can partnerships include activities, organisations and researchers with a focus outside of Arts and Humanities disciplines?**

Partnerships will be rooted in the arts and humanities, although they will need to provide appropriate disciplinary research combinations that draw on the arts, humanities, social sciences and STEM disciplines in order to respond to the needs of the specific challenge(s) that the partnership intends to address. The Inter-disciplinary Interface Innovation Fellowships strand (b) specifically seeks to support inter-disciplinary proposals at the interface between the arts and humanities and other research fields (e.g. STEM disciplines).

**Q. What is meant by 'Creative Industries' / 'Creative Economy'?**

The Department for Digital, Culture Media & Sport (DCMS) defines the 'Creative Industries' as *'those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.'* However, for the purposes of this call we are also extending this to the wider creative economy to include any organisation or business which uses creative elements without necessarily being a 'creative industry' (for example, a designer working within a banking organisation).

Note: There are thirteen sub-sectors under the DCMS definition of 'creative industries' and these are: advertising and marketing; architecture; crafts; design; fashion; film, TV, video, radio and photography; software and computer games; museums, galleries and libraries; music, performing and visual arts; and publishing.'

**Q. What are 'Creative and digital economy organisations' as described under strand 'a'? Does this mean industrial partners?**

Any organisation or business which uses creative elements without necessarily being a 'creative industry' (for example, a designer working within a banking organisation) would be considered as contributing to the Creative Economy. These could also be organisations working within the creative industries as defined above in the DCMS definition. Other organisations involved with the commercial endeavours of the Creative Economy could also be included under this heading for example cultural, creative or heritage organisations which are; generating venues from exhibitions, performances, visitor experience or merchandising; commissioning services from creative economy organisations; acting as intermediary or networking hubs within local creative economy innovation ecosystems; and/or providing test-beds for experimenting or developing products or services with wider potential future applications.

For digital economy organisations we would expect these to be organisations who are engaged in digital innovation and realising the potential for digital technologies to impact on community life, cultural experiences, future society, and the economy.

It is expected that applicants under strand a) should address the fit of the partner organisation(s) to the highlight notice (ie to the creative or digital economy) in their case for support.

Please see the [Partnership working in the Arts and Humanities: a guide to good practice](#) for further information.

**Q. What form should my collaboration/partnership take? And when should this occur in the fellowship?**

Engagement with a partner or collaborating organisation can take a form that is appropriate to the proposal (i.e. placement, time/mentoring from partner organisation etc.) we wish to encourage productive relationships between academia and non-academic organisations, including where appropriate research co-production through all phases of the fellowship. If this is in the form of developing routes to IP capture and/or commercialisation (spin-out, start-up) then we also welcome this. The engagement must happen during the fellowship but it can occur at the best time for your proposal.

**Q. Is there a minimum level of engagement?**

There must be a genuine collaboration of some sorts; the minimum we would expect to see would be a named contact willing (e.g. to offer advice, mentoring etc.) from a partner organisation and an agreed outline plan for collaborative working during the fellowship.

**Q. Can public bodies or third sector organisations be included as partners/collaborators? What about overseas organisations?**

These fellowships should contribute directly to the UK Industrial strategy and the principles of this should be borne in mind when choosing collaborators. We would encourage public bodies and third sector organisations as partners/collaborators since many arts, heritage and creative organisations, such as museums and archives, are play important roles in local or sectoral innovation ecosystems.

We expect applicants to have autonomy in their choice of partner, while bearing in mind that they may be asked to justify how the projects are contributing to the Industrial Strategy, both prior to acceptance and at the reporting phase. We are happy to consider the case for inclusion of international collaborators and we can discuss individual examples if in doubt. AHRC may be contacted through the HCH@ahrc.ac.uk email inbox.

**Q. How will my project be required to align to the Industrial Strategy, does this mean it will have to fall under one of the 'challenge' areas of research?**

The focus of strand a) on the Creative and Digital Economy and the requirements for partnership working should provide a framework for addressing alignment to the Industrial Strategy in which the creative industries and transformative digital technologies have already been identified as important.

Strand b) offers an opportunity for research relevant to a wider range of sectors, challenges, opportunities or issues raised in the [Building our Industrial Strategy green paper](#) or covered by the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. The call gives a range of examples of inter-disciplinary research areas that could be of relevance. The requirement to work with non-academic partners under this strand should also form a part of the approach to alignment with the Industrial Strategy.

**Q. What does interdisciplinary mean in the context of strand b?**

It is expected that an aspect of the research or methodology for each application received under this strand will fall outside AHRC's remit (i.e. within the remit of one of the other six research councils). To be eligible for AHRC funding, research must be judged to fall at least 50% within AHRC remit. Reviewers will be selected to provide coverage of the breadth of disciplines. More information on AHRC's remit can be found [here](#).

**Assessment and reporting**

**Q. How will the proposals be assessed?**

Applications to this highlight notice will be subject to the normal AHRC peer review process. Please refer to the [AHRC Research funding guide](#) for more details on the standard peer review process. A panel meeting will be held in October 2018 to moderate the applications which pass the initial peer review stage.

**Q. The highlight notice mentions additional reporting and the expectation that successful applicants will participate in AHRC and research council events. What will this mean in practice?**

It is expected that additional reporting above and beyond the normal submissions to Researchfish will be required for these fellowships. It is likely that this reporting will be offline. The details are yet to be determined but, we will provide updates on this as soon as we are able.

As part of the AHRC Leadership Fellows scheme, successful applicants will be expected to actively engage with their research networks and community, show leadership within their discipline, and be advocates for the arts and humanities. In addition, AHRC, along with the other Research Councils, may run events and fund networks which aim to bring together and catalyse the research community: wherever possible, it is anticipated that fellows will participate in any activities to which they are invited.