



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

Common application errors to avoid

Introduction

This purpose on this document is give guidance to applicants and ROs on how to avoid common errors that may result in proposals being rejected. If general AHRC rules or individual scheme rules are not adhered to, the proposal will be rejected at office checks (sift stage 1). All scheme and call rules and their requirements can be found either in the AHRC Research Funding Guide for Responsive Mode or in the individual call document for Directed Mode Calls. Common errors to avoid are listed below, and this list can serve as a checklist prior to the submission of the proposal.

Please note, however, the list below may not be exhaustive and is only a guide to show where common errors are made with applications. Where the guidance offered here differs to that in the Funding Guide or relevant call document, those guidance documents will take precedence.

Applications which are rejected at office checks and prior to peer review are generally eligible for re-submission (excluding those rejected on eligibility and/or remit grounds).

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General

Page limits: The application's documents must not exceed the stated lengths. On conversion to PDF and upload to Je-S please check that the page lengths have remained the same, if documents exceed stated page limits the proposal may be rejected.

Font size and margins: As per cross-council guidelines, the font must be in Arial or a similar sans serif font, the font size must be 11 and the margins must be normal sized or the proposal may be rejected.

Required documents: An application may be rejected if a required document, stated by the call document or Research Funding Guide as being required, has not been added or has some sort of error on it.

No attachments should be submitted to AHRC if they are not in the call's required attachments or optional attachments list. Attachments such as this may result in the proposal being rejected.

Documents readable: Please check all documents are readable, none are in a foreign language and none have been corrupted on conversion to PDF and upload to Je-S. Please also make sure any track changes have been removed and all sections of attachments are completed where appropriate. If attachments or any part of the application are unreadable in any way the proposal will be rejected.

Start date: The project start date must adhere to the call requirements as listed by the Research Funding Guide or the Call document. It is vital that AHRC has sufficient time to process and peer-review applications before the proposed start date.

Costs:

- Ensure all required fields are completed (especially Estates and Indirect Costs).
- Ensure that 'in-kind' costs are not being provided by the RO to bring the proposal under the scheme limits or make the grant 'cheaper'. The research proposal must demonstrate the true fEC value.
- Ensure the hours of staff members per week charged to the grant is the same as the hours per week that will actually be worked.
- Provide breakdown of costs (including hourly/daily rate for sub-contractors).
- Ensure that any cost (particularly Exceptions costs) relating to non-UK researchers are clearly identified and within the limits. (Calls may limit the percentage of overall funds that can be allocated to non-UK researcher costs, so these must be clearly identified in the application).

Classification of proposals:

- Make sure the proposal is classified correctly and that the primary subject classification is an AHRC discipline (see list provide in the Research Funding Guide, pp. 74–80). Where there may be a query, Research Organisations can check with AHRC beforehand using the [Remit Query Form](#) on the AHRC website.
- When inputting the proposal in Je-S, the primary parent and primary lower classifications must both AHRC disciplines.
- If an application is multi-disciplinary, and/or inter-disciplinary other non-AHRC classifications may be included provided the primary classification is on the list in the AHRC's RFG. There is no limit to have many of these you include, however, it is vital that any proposal submitted to AHRC should include at least 51% arts and humanities remit (see remit section of AHRC

website for further details).

- Please note that these disciplinary classifications will play a role in the selection of peer-reviewers for your application, so it is important that they accurately reflect the research questions and methodologies that you intend to use in your project.

Individual documents

Case for Support:

- Ensure the document does not exceed stated page limits for the scheme.
- The headings provided in the Research Funding Guide are used.
- For the Leadership Fellows scheme, ensure the Leadership Development Plan section has been added to the Case for Support.

Project Partner Letter of Support:

- If a Project Partner has been added to the application a Project Partner Letter of Support must be submitted. This attachment should only be used where a project partner has been added to the application and is making some sort of contribution, either in kind or monetary.
- All Project Partner Letters of Support need to be signed and dated within 6-months of the receipt of the application.
- Other letters of support from collaborating Organisations are not eligible and proposals where these are included will be rejected

CVs and Publication Lists:

- Must only be added for Investigators and/or named postdoctoral researchers on the grant. Extra CVs are not permitted and will result in an application being rejected.

Justification of Resources:

- Ensure that this fully explains the costs requested, especially if these are contentious (such as if items are being requested that would normally be found in a department). If costs are not fully explained items are liable to be removed if the application is successful (e.g. laptops).
- Include an individual justification for each researcher named on the grant.
- Extra guidance on writing the Justification of Resource document can be found in the [Je-S handbook](#).

International Co-Investigator Head of Department Statement:

- This **must** be included if an international Co-I is included on the project.

Visual Evidence:

- The optional Visual evidence attachment should contain non-textual evidence in support of the proposal to illustrate the proposed aims and objectives and/or research methods. The content should only include pictorial or photographic evidence or any other Illustrative material which should not exceed more than two side of A4. Gantt Charts and Work Plans are not permitted under this attachment; if required, they should be submitted under the allocated Work Plan attachment field in Je-s. It is not permitted to include this material to supplement or replace your CV or publications list or to illustrate previous work in any way

nor should it be used to circumvent the page limit for the case for support.

Common errors with proposals to individual calls

Leadership Fellows:

- Ensure the Head of Department Statement letter is submitted and this underlines the commitment from the RO to the project.
- Ensure the Leadership Development Plan is added as part of the Case for Support.
- If the proposal is an Early Career application make sure that a Mentor Statement is included with the application and a statement outlining your eligibility for the early career route is contained within the case for support.

Follow-on-Funding:

- Ensure the fit of the proposal to the scheme is correct and that the proposal is aimed at receiving funding for impact and engagement.
- The scheme is not designed for applications looking for funding to do further research.

Research Networking:

- If the proposal has an international Co-Investigator this should be clearly evidenced and costs should go into the 'Exceptions' heading.
- Only costs associated with an international Co-investigator can be costed as 100% fEC. International elements not related to an international Co-I (e.g. international participants) must be costed as 80% fEC.
- In individual projects, the international element can be more than £15k, but the UK element can be no more than £30k. So for instance, a project could have an international element of £20k and a UK element of £25k if this was appropriate, but if the international element was less than £15k (e.g. £12k for example) you could not have the UK element at £33k – the total costs allowed in this instance would be £42k (£12k international and maximum £30k UK element).

Attachments

The following table explains which attachments are required for which scheme. If any required attachment which is not listed as optional in the table is not included in the application, the proposal will be rejected at sift stage. Any additional attachments to those listed below must not be included.

Attachment	Research Grants (Standard and Early Career)	Research Networking	Follow-on Funding	Leadership Fellows	Leadership Fellows (Early Career)
Case for Support	X	X	X	X	X
Curriculum Vitae	X	X	X	X	X
Publication Lists	X	X	X	X	X
Visual Evidence (optional for all schemes)	X	X	X	X	X
Data Management Plan	X		X	X	X
Justification of Resources	X	X	X	X	X
Pathways to Impact	X	X		X	X
Workplan (optional for all schemes, mandatory for Leadership Fellows)	X	X	X	X	X
Head of Department Statement				X	X
Mentor Statement					X
International Co- Investigator Head of Dept Statement *	X	X	X		
Project Partner Letter of Support **	X	X	X	X	X

*International Co-Investigator Head of Department Statements should only be submitted if an International Co-Investigator has been named on the proposal.

**Project Partners Letters of Support should only be submitted if you have named Project Partners.

Contact us

Any pre-submission queries should be sent to: enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org