



Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

# Welcome





Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

# EPSRC: funding routes & careers

Renée van de Locht

1 September 2021

AI3SD careers event: *skills4scientists*

# Outline

- 1 UKRI and EPSRC
- 2 Funding Routes
- 3 Fellowships
- 4 Careers at EPSRC
- 5 Q and A

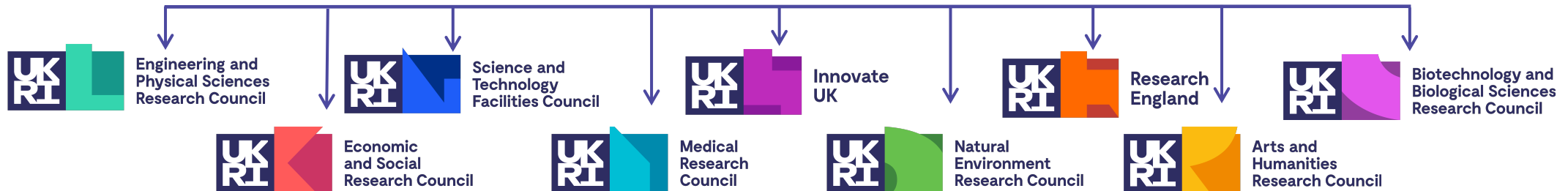


# UK Research and Innovation

We work with the government to invest over £7 billion a year in research and innovation by partnering with academia and industry to make the impossible, possible. Through the UK's nine leading academic and industrial funding councils, we create **knowledge with impact**.



**UK Research  
and Innovation**

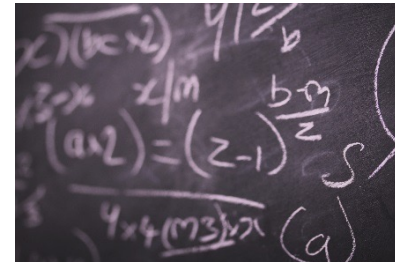


# A snapshot of EPSRC's areas

materials



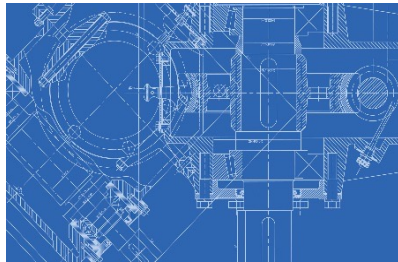
mathematics



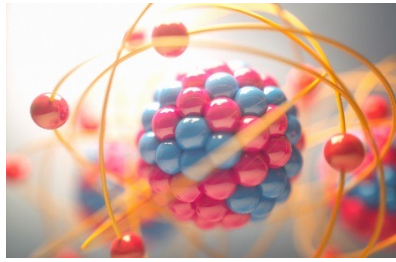
chemistry



engineering



physics



healthcare technologies



digital economy



cybersecurity



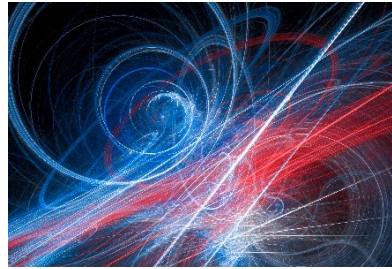
AI & robotics



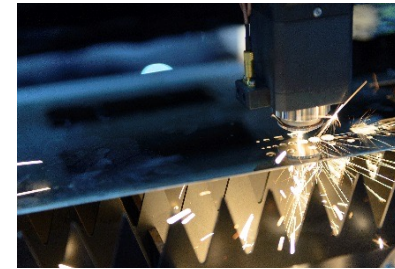
ICT



quantum technologies



manufacturing



energy & decarbonisation



## EPSRC Remit

- Our remit covers engineering and the physical sciences: we fund research into chemistry, engineering, information and communications technologies, materials, mathematical sciences and physics.
- The majority of research we support must be in engineering and the physical sciences.



Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

# Funding Routes

# Funding Opportunities by career stage

Career Stage	On-going Funding Opportunities
Postdoctoral Researchers	Post-doctoral Fellowship Researcher Co-I Named PDRA on an EPSRC grant
New Academics	New Investigator Award Open Fellowship Standard Grant
Early/Mid Career	Open Fellowship Standard Grant
Established Career	Open Fellowship Standard Grant Programme Grant

Other grants are available; Overseas travel grants, Network Grants and Workshop grants.  
(Apply via Standard Grant mode)



<b>Fellowships</b>	<b>Research Grants</b>
Personal award	For a Principal Investigator with option for one or more Co-Investigators
Can be applied for without holding an academic position	Investigators must be academic employees (lecturer or equivalent) of an eligible organisation
Institutions are required to offer a high level of support to fellows	Institutions may or may not offer additional support
Allows for personal development to expand current role and responsibilities and enhance leadership	Normally focussed on research deliverables
Flexibility to undertake training	
Fellows are expected to act as ambassadors and advocates of their research area	
Flexibility to allocate time to drive research culture change in non-technical areas	
Significant time commitment (50%+)	Grant contributes to the investigators' salaries but it's not usually 100%
Can reduce other responsibilities for fellow within their host institution (e.g. teaching and administration)	Investigators named on research grants usually have other administrative loads within their institutions
Provides flexibility for fellow to transfer award to another institution	Grant is bound to the recipient institution



Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

# Fellowships



# EPSRC Fellowship framework

The Open Fellowship framework provides:

- Increased opportunity at early career stage onwards
- Highlights opportunities for, **discovery science, innovation, instrument/technique development and software engineering**
- Freedom to pursue non-technical elements to **influence community change**
- A more inclusive assessment of different career paths using a **narrative CV**.
  - <https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/funding/calls/2020/open-fellowship-narrative-cv-and-track-record/>

# EPSRC FELLOWSHIP FRAMEWORK

Outstanding research, developing careers; changing research culture

## POSTDOCTORAL

3-years; specified EPSRC themes

*Mathematical sciences*

*Energy*

*Synthetic biology*

## OPEN FELLOWSHIPS

Up to 5 years; any research area.  
Any career stage (after Post Doc).  
Open all year

### OPTIONAL PLUS COMPONENT

Applicants can choose to dedicate 20-50% of their time to create positive change in the research community beyond their proposed scientific project and research group. I.e. Public Engagement, EDI, Policy, RRI etc

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/funding/calls/2020/epsrc-postdoctoral-and-open-fellowships-guidance/>

# Eligibility

- Applicants are expected to hold a **PhD or have equivalent research experience**.
- No rules about years of postdoctoral experience.
- Applicants **don't need** to hold a **permanent** academic position
- Need a **Host Organisation**: UK HEI or any organisation eligible for EPSRC funding
  - Check eligibility <http://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility>
- We welcome applications from candidates who want to move back into research after any type of break from active research.



# Which Fellowship?

- Applicants could consider a **Post-doctoral fellowship** if they:
  - Have recently started formulating their own research ideas
  - Can demonstrate that they have acquired the skills and expertise to successfully deliver their research proposal
  - Have not previously held a significant grant
  - Have identified training and development needs to enable them to prepare for an enhanced career in research and innovation.

# Which Fellowship?

Applicants that are close to obtaining their first academic appointment, leading in an area of technical development, or a highly experienced researcher or any stage in between could consider applying for an **Open fellowship** if they:

- Can demonstrate that they have acquired the skills and expertise to successfully deliver their research proposal
- Will be committed to implementing good practice in creating a modern and inclusive research environment.
- Will be an advocate for EPSRC and will influence policy makers and other stakeholders on the importance of their research area.
- Have identified areas for continued research and professional development which will enable them to expand or enhance their role and career.

# Which Fellowship?

If applicants are considering an Open Fellowship but also want to use the opportunity to:

- spend 20-50% of their time on the fellowship to create positive change in the research community
- champion an area or topic aligned to EPSRC aspirations to deliver improvements in research culture

They may want to consider including an **optional plus component** to their fellowship application



# Open fellowships

Applicants will need to justify how the **fellowship adds value to their career beyond other funding routes available** and this will be assessed relative to career stage at the interview panel.

The application guide contains some diverse examples of career enhancement via the Open Fellowships mechanism with outline examples including:

- An early career researcher wishing to start their own research group
- A researcher with a sustained period of part time working patterns wishing to increase outputs to be competitive at applying for traditional funding
- A research technical professional who wants to collaborate with researchers from different scientific disciplines to apply their techniques
- Experienced researcher wishing to transfer knowledge to a different discipline
- Researcher moving from industry to academia

Resource Package	Postdoctoral	Open
Duration	Up to 3 years	Up to 5 years
Salary	50 - 100% fte	50- 100% fte
Travel & Subsistence	Yes	Yes
Additional research staff	No	Yes
Visiting Researchers	Yes	Yes
Equipment	Items costing less than £10,000 (incl. VAT)	Yes – in line with current EPSRC guidelines for equipment
Consumables	Yes	Yes
Access to facilities	Yes	Yes
Identified training and development needs	Yes	Yes
Time and resources to address community issues	No	Yes (only with Plus component)

We will award 80% of the full economic costs of the project, funding for equipment varies based on value, details can be found here:

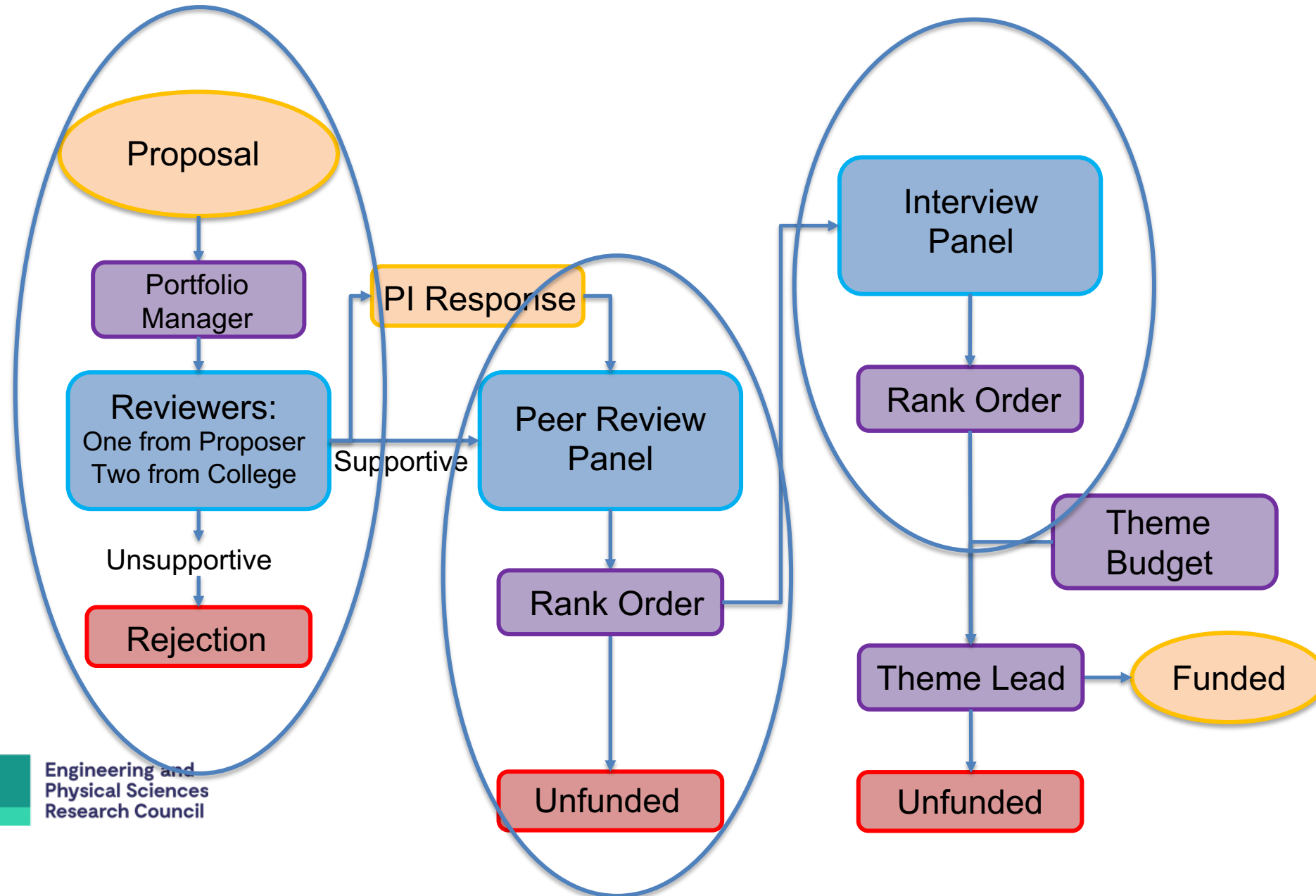
<https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/equipment/process/>

# EPSRC's Expectations of the Host Organisation

- Universities should take ownership for pre-selecting candidates using the assessment criteria and guidance.
- Afford fellows equivalent status to academic staff.
- Adequate office and lab space
- Suitable mentoring opportunities
- Support the applicants programme of research and engagement
- Suitable career development opportunities, not limited to formal training, to expand skills and enhance development.



# EPSRC Fellowship: Assessment Process



# Assessment criteria

■ Proposals will be sent out to expert peer review and will be assessed against all of the assessment criteria

■ At the prioritisation panel proposals will be assessed against:

Post-doctoral fellowships	Open Fellowships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research quality (primary criterion)</li><li>• Applicant and partnerships (secondary major criterion)</li><li>• National importance (secondary criterion)</li><li>• Resources and management (secondary criterion)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research quality (primary criterion)</li><li>• Applicant and partnerships (secondary major criterion)</li><li>• National importance (secondary criterion)</li><li>• Resources and management (secondary criterion)</li></ul>

# Assessment criteria

At the interview panel proposals will be assessed against:

## Post-doctoral fellowships

- Fellowship Vision
- Continued Professional Development
- Project Delivery

## Open Fellowships

- Fellowship vision and delivery
- Community Leadership
- Team Leadership
- Continued Professional Development
- Community Champion (only with Plus component)

# Proposal Tips

- Be **clear and structure your science case**: don't be vague about what you will be doing, address specific milestones & outputs.
- Where you plan to be flexible discuss some options and ways to **mitigate risk**.
- Include all the required documentation.
- HO letter: The best place for your research and your **chosen institution should fully back you** with appropriate support.
- Get your proposal reviewed by colleagues and **not just from your field**: have them use EPSRC reviewer forms (website) & do a mock interview.
  - Consider your audience:
    - EPSRC – general knowledge, need to understand to assign appropriate reviewers
    - Peer reviewers – expert knowledge in the field of the proposal
    - Panel – expert knowledge in general area where proposal sit



# Applicant response to reviewers

- Use this opportunity to respond to reviewer comments
  - 5 working days
  - No longer than 2 pages in length
- Read the reviewers' comments carefully
  - Be specific and respond to all of the issues raised
  - Consider the comments and provide **evidence** that the reviewer may well have misunderstood your intentions (or plainly got it wrong)
  - Do not use positive comments from one reviewer to rebut concerns of another
  - Do not attack your reviewers
    - Using all the available space to vilify 'unsuitable' or 'biased' reviewers is a wasted opportunity
- A good (and courteous) response is often significant during the panel process



# Fellowship Interview

- Be able to answer the **4 Whys**:
  - **Why a fellowship?**
  - **Why you?**
  - **Why now?**
  - **Why here?**
- Focus on how you will develop as an emerging leader in your field. What is your vision?
- Be ready for surprise questions: what will you do if you don't get funded?
- Research can be unpredictable: how have you mitigated risks and what is your risk strategy?
- How do you envisage your journey in research/as a leader at the end of fellowship and beyond?
- How have you shown your potential?

CAREER  
DEVELOPMENT





Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

# Careers at EPSRC

# EPSRC

- [Careers Portal Careers – Jobs](#)
- **Portfolio Support Managers and Delivery Support Managers**
  - Admin focussed
  - Closing date 27<sup>th</sup> September
- **Portfolio Managers**
  - Research portfolio funding
  - next recruitment round TBC – mid September



Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

# Thank you



Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council



@EPSRC



EPSRCvideo



Engineering and  
Physical Sciences  
Research Council

# Questions?

# EPSRC Remit Query Service

- For interdisciplinary research at the interface between Research Councils, it is often difficult to know which council a proposal should be submitted to. Before you commit yourself to producing a full proposal that may cross Research Council remits, we encourage you to contact us to discuss which council is most appropriate. To best advise you where to submit your proposal, please complete the Smart Survey on the EPSRC website:

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/basics/remit/remitqueries/>

- Please submit to the Research Council where you feel your research primarily fits.

**Please only submit to ONE Research Council.**

- We will aim to respond to each remit query within 2 weeks. An actual decision can take longer depending on the nature of the query.
- Full details of the Cross-Council Funding Agreement can be found [here](#).

# Useful links

**Warning: website is transitioning to new UKRI website with EPSRC specific pages**

Fellowships:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/fellows/>

Fellowship theme contacts:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/fellows/contacts/>

Post-Doctoral and Open Fellowship guidance document:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/funding/calls/2020/epsrc-postdoctoral-and-open-fellowships-guidance/>

General Fellowship queries:

[researchcareers@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:researchcareers@epsrc.ukri.org)

UKRI webpage:

<https://www.ukri.org/>