

ESRC Research Funding Guide

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Introduction

This guide covers all aspects of research grant funding. It gives details of the arrangements and procedures for research grants, together with a summary of proposal procedures.

The terms and conditions of research grants included in this guide are for information and completeness. Grant offer letters will include a set of current standard conditions, and any conditions specific to the grant offered, it is these that will govern the management of individual grants. It contains:

- The service standards which we are committed to
- Information on eligibility for funding and on how to apply for funding and the process by which your proposal will be assessed
- A guide to what happens next following a successful application for funding.

In addition to explaining the proposal procedures for ESRC funding, this guide also outlines all the relevant information associated with funding a grant. This includes an explanation of:

- Our expectations for the communication and exploitation of research
- How research is evaluated
- The costs covered by grants
- The terms and conditions of a grant.

We reserve the right to amend these regulations at any time and without prior notice. The regulations in effect at any time will be those contained in the most recent version of this guide, available at: www.esrc.ac.uk/RFG

We hope this guide proves both informative and accessible. A wider range of information related to funding rules and opportunities is available on our website at www.esrc.ac.uk.

Please note that this guide does not cover postgraduate training. The **Postgraduate Funding Guide** is available at www.esrc.ac.uk/PFG

Our standards of service

We are committed to high standards of service in all our activities, explained in our Service First Statement: www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/customer-service.aspx.

Our Service First standards are intended to underpin the provision of this service and ensure responsiveness, quality and effectiveness throughout our operations. We are committed to providing a high-quality service to our user community.

We operate a process for considering and responding to complaints which can be found at www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/information/Complaints.aspx.

Contacts

The RCUK Shared Services Centre (SSC) is your primary point of contact for all queries regarding the processing of proposals, peer review of individual proposals and administration of current grants. Please direct all such queries to grantsesrc@ssc.rcuk.ac.uk or telephone 01793 867125. Your query will be dealt with by the appropriate colleagues in SSC and/or ESRC.

If you have questions about our funding strategy and policy, and the overall peer review process, please contact ESRC colleagues. ESRC staff can be contacted using email addresses in the form of firstname.lastname@esrc.ac.uk. For further contact information please refer to our website: www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/contact

Section I

What funding opportunities does ESRC offer?

Our research grants provide financial support for **specific research projects within the social sciences**.

We provide a range of funding opportunities, including schemes, competitions and initiatives. Our funding opportunities enable individuals and groups to pursue world-class research in academic institutions and independent research centres.

Further information regarding funding opportunities can be found at: www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities.

Our funding decisions are based on a number of criteria: quality, timeliness, potential impact, value for money and, in relevant cases, fit to the specification for a particular competition.

We are keen to encourage fresh ideas from new researchers, and appropriate proposals are welcomed from those with limited research experience. We particularly encourage ambitious and novel research proposals addressing new concepts and techniques, and those with the potential for significant scientific or user impact.

Our remit

We welcome interdisciplinary proposals as we recognise that many of the most pressing research challenges are interdisciplinary in nature, both within the social sciences and between the social sciences and other areas of research. Applicants should refer to the RCUK guidance at www.rcuk.ac.uk for proposals which may span other Research Council remits. Project proposals that extend beyond the mission of a single Research Council should be submitted to the Council with the majority interest, but peer reviewers will be obtained from each of the relevant communities. The Research Councils will also co-fund those projects where a significant element of the costs reside within more than one Council's domain.

A full list of acceptable ESRC research areas is available at www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/applicants/proposal-classifications-ESRC-disciplines.aspx.

If you are unsure whether your research is suitable for ESRC funding, please see www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/applicants/suitable-research.aspx for further information.

Further information on cross-council funding agreements is available at www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/applicants/cross-council.aspx.

If further assistance is required please contact esrcremmit@esrc.ac.uk. You may submit a short outline for remit guidance. Your enquiry will be passed to a relevant member of staff, who will contact you directly.

The same proposal should not be submitted for consideration by more than one Research Council at any one time. The submission of proposals to different ESRC funding schemes which will result in parallel processing of the same or substantially similar proposals is also not allowed.

Applicants for all schemes should consider the potential scientific, societal and economic impacts of their research, including who will benefit from these, how they will benefit and what steps should be taken to ensure that they do so.

Applications for high performance computing time

Applicants wishing to use high performance computing (HPC) services should first contact one of the national centres and obtain a technical assessment of their proposal. This is to ensure that the level of resources requested has been appropriately scoped and that any additional technical considerations have been captured prior to submission. An HPC application form available from the national centres should be submitted together with the ESRC proposal. It will be peer-reviewed as part of the proposal process. If a grant is agreed by an ESRC Committee or Panel we will inform the computer centre that we intend to make a grant. The grant holder and the computer centre will then confirm access terms.

Applicants are advised to discuss their needs with their local RO computer centre and with the chosen national computer centre before submitting their proposal to us.

Further information on the national HPC facilities which are available, and on application procedures, can be found at: www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/facilities/hpc/Pages/default.aspx

Eligibility for funding

Please note eligibility details are given on the specific scheme or call pages on our website under 'Funding opportunities': www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities.

Eligibility of applicants

Applicants are eligible for funding whether or not they are established members of a recognised Research Organisation (RO) (www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/Eligibilityforrcs.aspx). Applicants for research grants who are not established members of a recognised RO must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research. (These requirements also apply to all individuals named as co-applicants.) They and other staff engaged in the research are normally expected to reside within reasonable travelling distance of the RO when not engaged in fieldwork. For such applicants, the RO must provide a covering statement confirming that, in the event of a grant, it will provide accommodation and facilities for the applicant such as would be provided for established members of staff.

The applicant should normally be the person undertaking responsibility for directing the research and for observing the terms and conditions, as well as being actively involved in carrying it through. The percentage of the working time that the applicant expects to spend on the research, and the extent of other commitments, must be stated on the research proposal form.

Research proposals may be submitted jointly by more than one applicant. In such cases, one person must be regarded as the principal applicant taking the lead responsibility for the conduct of the research and the observance of the terms and conditions. Correspondence regarding the research proposal and grant will be addressed to the principal applicant only. All co-applicants must make a significant contribution to the conduct of the research.

The principal applicant's RO should normally be the same as the administering RO. Co-applicants may be sited at different recognised research organisations provided that the principal applicant's research organisation takes responsibility for administering the grant and the disbursing funds as appropriate.

Research proposals will not normally be accepted from persons who have failed to produce evidence of satisfactory conduct on any research previously supported by the ESRC. As well, a report on current ESRC research must accompany any proposal, unless an End of Award report has already been submitted to the ESRC.

All applicants and named research staff must be able to meet the time commitment to the project as stated in the proposal. Where research staff are to be employed on a grant it is assumed as part of the proposal that they or any replacement will not exceed 100 per cent of their time.

Proposals which may result in over-commitment of time, for any applicant across all of their projects, will not be approved. Applicants have a duty to report immediately in writing to ESRC if at any time this regulation is likely to be breached.

Any applicants employed as staff for more than 20 per cent of their time in an ESRC Research Centre, Group or Network must obtain a supporting statement from the Director to accompany their proposal. This is in addition to the normal endorsements from the head of department and the RO. The Director needs to confirm that the project is not part of the Centre's contracted programme of work and provide a clear explanation of how the project will enhance or complement the Centre's programme. The Director will also confirm that the applicant has time to supervise the project without prejudice to the Centre's contracted programme of work. The Director's statement is not required if the starting date of the project is planned to fall outside the period of Centre funding nor when staff are employed by ESRC Research Centres for less than 20 per cent of their time. The percentage commitment of staff time must be stated on the proposal form.

Co-investigators - international and business, third sector or government body

ESRC attaches major importance to the position of UK social science in the international and global arena. It positively encourages active collaboration between UK researchers and those in other countries, where this will help to ensure that UK research is at the international leading edge. To this end, it has forged collaborative funding agreements with leading overseas partners.

Further details about these agreements are available at:
www.esrc.ac.uk/collaboration/international

ESRC has also forged collaborative funding agreements with leading international partners. Co-investigators based in overseas Research Organisations, excluding fellowships, can be included in research grant scheme proposals unless otherwise stated by the scheme guidance. Please note co-investigators cannot be included in Fellowship schemes.

Further information on the inclusion of international Co-investigators is available at
www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/applicants/international-co-investigators.aspx.

Business, third sector or government body co-investigators based in the UK can be included in the majority of ESRC research schemes. Some specific schemes may from time to time specify that these co-investigators may not be included. Further information on the inclusion of co-investigators is available at: www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/applicants/uk-co-investigators.aspx

Grant-linked studentships

From 1 November 2013 the ESRC will fund grant-linked studentships only on strategic calls such as Centres and Large Grants and Professorial Fellowships, the specific call guidance for a call will confirm whether grant-linked studentships can be supported. From this date we will no longer fund grant-linked students on proposals submitted to our responsive mode Research Grants open call. Grant-linked student requests on proposals submitted to the research grants open call before 1 November 2013, and those already in the various stages of peer review at that time, will be honoured if they are successful.

Applicants must check the call specification (on the specific funding opportunity they are interested in) to see whether grant-linked studentships are permitted before completing their proposal.

Grant-linked studentships may be requested on any research proposal when specified in the call documentation as long as:

- the grant applied for is for three years or more
- the Principal or Co-Investigators are approved to act as a primary supervisors for PhD students and are based within an accredited Doctoral Training Centre (see exceptions below)
- the student(s) are located in an ESRC-accredited Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) www.esrc.ac.uk/DTC and are studying on an accredited pathway (see exceptions below).

Up to three studentships can be applied for on any single proposal. The studentships must be embedded within a Doctoral Training Centre (DTC), be subject to the same terms and conditions as a standard DTC studentship, and the funds managed within the DTC's training grant. Before submitting a proposal that includes a grant-linked studentship the applicant must obtain the support of the DTC Director.

The studentship must not be a displacement of the normal research support required on the grant. Linked studentships are designed to add value to the proposed research outlined in the proposal, whilst providing a clear opportunity for a distinct and independent course of enquiry for the student. Through being embedded within a high-quality research team, they should offer the student an opportunity to develop their substantive research skills, alongside broader professional development. The main research grant project should still be viable without the studentship and should have distinct objectives that are not reliant upon the studentship.

Whilst grant-linked studentships can outlast the grant they are linked to, the majority of the studentship (ie more than half) must take place during the life of the grant. If successful, the funds for the studentship will be ring-fenced within the grant and paid alongside standard ESRC studentships.

Further information on the terms and conditions of ESRC studentship can be found within the Postgraduate Funding Guide our website: www.esrc.ac.uk/PFG. Guidance on how to complete a proposal with a grant-linked studentship is available in the Je-S Helptext.

Eligibility of Research Organisations

All UK Higher Education Institutions are eligible to receive funds for research, postgraduate training and associated activities. The higher education funding councils for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland determine whether an organisation meets the criteria to be a Higher Education Institute.

Research institutes for which the Research Councils have established a long-term involvement as major funder (listed here: www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/noparentrcs.aspx) are also eligible to receive research funding, from any Council.

Independent research organisations (IROs) approved by ESRC are eligible to apply for ESRC funding. The current list of eligible IROs can be downloaded here: www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/Eligibilityforrcs.aspx

Research Organisations are particularly requested to ensure that:

- The training needs of all staff are identified and recorded, and that an annual staff training plan exists to address these needs
- Advice is available on future career opportunities, both inside and outside academia, with guidance on the appropriate options
- Bridging opportunities and continuity opportunities are discussed with staff, and that they are involved in the future planning research where this is applicable
- Promotion opportunities are available where the capacity for such work is demonstrated
- Permanent or rolling contract appointments are available to such staff, especially where they have proven track records in research in excess of six years.

The Research Organisation bears sole responsibility for the duty of care, health, safety and wellbeing of any person or persons employed by them overseas on the grant in any capacity, including but not limited to drivers, researchers, translators, caterers, fixers and consultants. This must be fully compliant with the Research Organisation's and the ESRC's ethics framework.

An **Independent Research Organisation** is defined by the ESRC as follows:

- It must not be in receipt of Higher Education Funding Council funds, as is a RO or RO college, nor must it be maintained from public funds, as are executive agencies. The institute must fall into one of the following categories:
 - Be a limited company registered under the Companies Act where the articles of association state that it is a not-for-profit organisation, which are charities, or constituent parts of charities, registered with the Charities Commission, or associations which are eligible for exemption from corporation tax under Schedule 508 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988
 - Be established under a trust as a charitable body registered in England and Wales with the Charities Commission
 - Be recognised in Scotland and Northern Ireland as a charity by the Inland Revenue.
- It must not, in its primary role, be a funding body in its own right, nor an RO wholly owned or primarily funded by another funding body
- It must be able to demonstrate in-house independent research and training capability. This would normally involve at least three permanent or long-term staff, with at least four years social science post-doctoral research experience and recognised research publications at least at national and preferably international level, who are capable of leading innovative research projects, directing other post-

doctoral researchers, and providing necessary professional training and supervision at this level

- It must be financially viable in its own right, with three years' audited accounts showing adequate income to maintain, independently of the ESRC, the level of posts indicated above.

Information for IROs on how to apply for eligibility

IROs may be able to apply to us for eligibility if they possess an existing in-house capacity to carry out research that materially extends and enhances the national research base and are able to demonstrate an independent capability to undertake and lead research programmes. They must also satisfy other criteria related to their financial and legal status - these are set out in full in the Research Councils' joint statement on eligibility, which can be downloaded from: www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/Eligibilityforrcs.aspx

Requests for eligibility for independent institute status need to be submitted via Je-S Helpdesk at least three months prior to any intended application for funds. Full supporting documentation needs to be enclosed. Eligibility under these procedures will be subject to periodic review.

Any organisation wishing to apply for IRO status should contact the Je-S helpdesk in the first instance. The Je-S helpdesk will advise you of the process and send the appropriate documentation to be completed. When emailing the helpdesk for this purpose please include "Application for IRO status" in the subject heading and provide the full name and postal address of your organisation.

The helpdesk can be contacted at:

- Email: jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk
- Phone: +44 (0) 1793 444164

Staffed Monday to Friday 9.00-17.00 UK time (excluding bank holidays and other holidays)
Out of hours: leave a voicemail message

An RO may be in receipt of more than one grant from the ESRC at any one time.

Research Organisations in receipt of ESRC grants must make provision for research careers which is at least equivalent to the full terms and conditions set out at www.vitae.ac.uk/policy-practice/505181/Concordat-to-Support-the-Career-Development-of-Researchers.html

Other organisations

Our funding opportunities are sometimes open to other organisations. Where this is the case, the call specification will outline the eligibility criteria. Please refer to specific guidance under 'Funding opportunities' on our website. These organisations can include:

- Certain government research establishments
- Executive agencies in the public sector

- Other not-for-profit bodies established to conduct research for the public good, where the results are clearly available in the public domain.

Can proposals be resubmitted?

ESRC does not allow the resubmission of any previously unsuccessful proposals, unless they have been specifically invited to do so. For further information please refer to www.esrc.ac.uk/resubmissions. All proposals will be checked, and uninvited resubmissions will not be processed but treated as an unsuccessful proposal. They will be included as failed proposals in the data that the ESRC is collecting on institutional grant performance as part of its initial demand management strategy (www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/what-we-do/mission-strategy-priorities/demand-management/index.aspx).

All proposals must be substantially different to the previous submission (ie new proposals) See www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/applicants/new-proposal.aspx for further information.

The content and quality of the proposal you submit to the ESRC will determine whether or not you are successful. Applicants are advised to read the **guidance notes** on 'How to write a good research grant proposal': www.esrc.ac.uk/how-to

More information is available on our website at www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/applicants/index.aspx

Expectations of scientific practice

When applying for funding from ESRC, applicants are expected to comply with our policies on issues such as best practice for researchers, data management and research ethics.

Best practice for researchers

ESRC has a duty to ensure that the research which it supports is carried out to the highest standards of scientific practice. All research organisations in receipt of ESRC funds are required to have procedures in place to ensure sound scientific conduct in research, as set out in the RCUK Policy and Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct: www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/researchers/Pages/grc.aspx

We also endorse the published guidance by the UK Research Integrity Office (August 2008) on Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research: www.ukrio.org/what-we-do/procedure-for-the-investigation-of-misconduct-in-research/.

In particular Research Organisations are required to ensure that:

- Practices such as fabrication and falsification of results, plagiarism, misrepresentation, mismanagement, or breach of duty of care, are wholly unacceptable
- Procedures are in place within the RO for the reporting, and fair investigation, of any reasonably founded suspicions of scientific misconduct

- Training is provided for all researchers, but particularly those early in their careers, on the requirements of good scientific and professional conduct
- Primary data from research projects is properly secured and stored, including (but not exclusively) the deposit of data as required.

ESRC Committees will have responsibility to ensure the operation of good practice in the areas of their support. If there are any concerns about practices which an individual believes should be raised with ESRC, they should be addressed to the relevant member of ESRC staff who will liaise with the relevant Committee or Panel Secretary. This should normally occur only after they have been raised with the administering research organisations.

As employers of researchers and major funders of research and training in the UK, the Research Councils have a particular responsibility for ensuring good scientific practice, as well as ensuring that where cases of scientific misconduct arise their resolution is properly handled. Although the principles of sound scientific conduct which follow are not all-embracing, we commend them as a framework within which we will implement policies and practices appropriate to our own circumstances.

In many cases such policies already exist. For example, a number of Research Councils have already set out the detailed procedures which apply to their own, in-house research employees, and others have indicated the practices they expect research organisations and others in receipt of their funding to have in place. Where public statements do not already exist, each Research Council will be issuing guidance on the way it expects the principles expressed in the document, and any other aspect of scientific good practice, to be implemented.

In the principles which follow, the term “Research Organisation” is used to refer to organisations (particularly universities, research establishments, etc) eligible to receive Research Council funding.

Elements to ensure sound scientific conduct

Principles of good scientific practice

Good scientific practice includes the following aspects:

- Fundamentals of scientific work such as:
 - Maintaining professional standards
 - Documenting results; questioning one’s own findings
 - Attributing honestly the contribution of others
- Leadership and co-operation in research groups
- Taking special account of the needs of early career researchers
- Securing and storing primary data.

Implementation of the principles within Research Organisations

Research Organisations should formulate and disseminate codes of good scientific practice for their own use. As far as possible such codes should be acceptable to, and binding for, all the staff in those organisations, and should be a key element in training schemes and curricula. They should also be succinct and easy to comprehend.

Leadership and organisation

It is the responsibility of leaders of research organisations, their senior colleagues, and department heads or group leaders at the level of research groups, to ensure that a climate is created allowing research to be conducted within the principles of good scientific practice. Responsibilities should be clearly allocated.

Education of early career researchers

The education and development of early career researchers is a matter of particular concern. Research Organisations should ensure that responsibilities for, and standards of, mentoring early career researchers exist within their codes of good practice.

Independent adjudication within Research Organisations

Research Organisations' procedures should include the provision to appoint an independent body (for example, an ad hoc body of scientific expertise) to act in cases of suspected scientific misconduct. There should be a demonstrable separation from the normal line management chain where the alleged incident has arisen.

The central role of data

Primary data as the basis for publications should be securely stored for an appropriate time in a durable form under the control of the Research Organisation of their origin.

Allegations of scientific misconduct

Research Organisations should establish clear procedures for dealing with allegations of scientific misconduct, and should ensure that they are widely disseminated and understood within the Research Organisation. The procedures should allow for the even-handed treatment of both the complainant (the person making an allegation of scientific misconduct) and the respondent (the person against whom an allegation is made). The public presumption of innocence should be maintained until the investigation process is complete.

Integrity in submitting proposals for Research Council support

Investigators, Research Organisations and Research Councils should take all reasonable measures to ensure the accuracy of information in applications for funding. Appropriately severe penalties should be applied in cases where inaccurate or even fraudulent information is submitted.

Use of funds granted by the Research Councils

The Research Councils require Research Organisations and grant holders in receipt of funding to adhere to the codes of practice which have been promulgated.

Conduct of referees and panel members

Research Councils will ensure that referees, panel members and committee members acting on their behalf in the assessment of applications for funding understand clearly the responsibilities placed on them to treat proposals confidentially and to disclose conflicts of interest, either personal or institutional.

Mechanisms

Research Councils will appoint committees or independent persons to oversee, monitor and audit the efficacy of their policies to ensure good scientific practice.

Research Data Policy

Making research data available to users is a core part of the Research Councils' remit and is undertaken in a variety of ways. We are committed to transparency and to a coherent approach across the research base.

The ESRC Research Data Policy reinforces and emphasises the ESRC's stated position relating to the acquisition and (re)use of data, as well as the importance of good data management. The requirements of the Research Data Policy are now a condition of ESRC research funding. Some key points of the policy for research funding for applicants are outlined below; however, applicants are advised to consult the full document which is available on our website: www.esrc.ac.uk/datapolicy

Data deposit requirements

The ESRC supports the UK Data Service (UKDS) which is responsible for the cataloguing and archiving of data. The UKDS provides enhanced access and support for an extensive range of key economic and social data, both quantitative and qualitative. It is a distributed yet integrated service which, in addition to its key functions, incorporates specialist user support units for government, longitudinal, international and qualitative data. UKDS Access and Preservation, hosted by the UK Data Archive, is responsible for acquisition, ingest processing, preservation and provision of access to research data generated as a result of ESRC funding as well as other data which feeds into ESRC's research agenda. Further information on the UKDS is available at <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk>

The ESRC requires all research data arising from ESRC-funded research to be made available to the scientific community in a timely and responsible manner unless there are exceptional reasons why this cannot happen. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the grant holder to formally offer any data created or repurposed during the lifetime of the grant to the UKDS within three months of the end of the grant. The grant holder is responsible for providing these data to the UKDS for assessment, and if accepted, to ensure that they meet the requirements of the UKDS for preservation and future re-use. Further guidance on data deposit with the UKDS is available at <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/guides.aspx>

The ESRC will withhold the final payment of a grant if data have not been offered for archiving to the required standard at the UKDS within three months of the end of the grant, except where a modification or waiver of deposit requirements has been agreed in advance. If data were accepted, the grant holder is expected to make them available to the UKDS for preparation for re-use and archiving without delay.

In order to assist grant holders to deposit their data, the ESRC is prepared to allow a time period within the grant and adequate funding for the preparation of data for archiving. This should be specified in the proposal and data management and sharing plans attached to it as well as discussed with the UKDS when preparing the proposal. Applicants who are likely to produce data of any kind as a result of their grant are recommended to read the UKDS data management guides at <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/use-data/guides.aspx> and if necessary to contact the UKDS prior to making their proposal and preparing data management and sharing plans. From here, applicants can obtain details of deposit requirements so that

adequate provision for preparation of data for deposit can be made in the proposal. The UKDS will be pleased to offer advice to applicants at this stage.

At the time of deposit, the grant holder will be asked to sign a licence contract specifying conditions of access, including the degree of confidentiality to be observed in making the data available to others. Depositors should follow the instructions on the UKDS website <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk/deposit-data/how-to/esrc/esrc-award-holders.aspx> Enquiries may be addressed to collections@ukdataservice.ac.uk

Should any problem relating to the deposit of the data be foreseen, grant holders are expected to contact the UKDS at the earliest opportunity. Problems may include issues of confidentiality, data ownership, copyright or subject anonymity. All these issues must be considered and, if possible, addressed before starting any data collection. The ESRC regards a waiver of deposit as an exception and reserves the right to refuse waivers where there is insufficient evidence to prevent archiving and data sharing. A request for a modification or waiver of the deposit requirements may be granted by the ESRC, as advised by the Director of the UKDS, only when there is a strong case for doing so.

Use of data in ESRC-funded research

Any applicant whose research proposal involves funds for primary data collection must establish in the proposal that the required data are not already publicly available. This is to ensure that the ESRC does not duplicate its funding effort, for example by funding the acquisition of data that are already available from the UKDS or some other data repository. The UKDS will be pleased to advise applicants on the availability of data within the academic community.

UKDS has an extensive set of web pages describing its services, and from which access to the catalogues of data holdings can be gained. These web pages can be accessed at <http://ukdataservice.ac.uk>

In order to promote awareness of data and encourage their use, the ESRC requires grant holders to correctly acknowledge and/or cite full source for all data used in their research.

Research ethics

As the principal funding agency for UK social science research we require that the research we support is designed and conducted in such a way that it meets certain ethical principles, and is subject to proper professional and institutional oversight in terms of research governance.

As an important source of public funds for social science research and as a body charged with encouraging, supporting, undertaking and advising on such research, the ESRC recognises that it has a special obligation towards the general public and academic community to ensure that the research which it funds is carried out to a high ethical standard.

We have agreed a **Framework for Research Ethics** to which all submitted proposals have to comply. Further details available about the Framework for Research Ethics and

guidance on compliance (together with links to other web based resources on research ethics) may be found at: www.esrc.ac.uk/researchethics

Key principles of ethical research

There are six key principles of ethical research that ESRC expects to be addressed whenever applicable:

- Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency
- Research staff and subjects must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved. Some variation is allowed in very specific and exceptional research contexts
- The confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and the anonymity of respondents must be respected
- Research participants must participate voluntarily, free from any coercion
- Harm to research participants must be avoided in all instances
- The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit.

Procedures

The Framework for Research Ethics is implemented through the following procedures:

- ESRC will only fund Research Organisations that have processes in place that comply with the Council's minimum expectations as set out in the Framework for Research Ethics.
- The ESRC does not require that ethical approval should be secured prior to submission of a research proposal. A proposal must state what the applicant considers to be the ethical approval that will be required for their proposed research, and if so how it will be obtained. The administering authority in submitting the proposal will be confirming that it concurs with this judgment and is prepared to administer any resulting grant on that basis. If a Research Organisation does not have arrangements to ensure that its research complies with the Framework, it will not be possible for it to undertake ESRC-funded research.
- During peer review, referees and assessors will be asked to comment specifically on whether they agree with the ethics self assessment in the proposal.
- If referees or assessors disagree with the proposed approach to ethics within the proposal, this will either be grounds for rejection of a proposal where it calls into question researcher competence or the feasibility or validity of their proposal, or for a conditional grant requiring further review or feedback to be taken into account.
- Before the start of a project, funds will not be released until the principal investigator provides confirmation that the required ethical approval has been received. If ethical review is required at a later stage in the project, this should be discussed and funding arrangements agreed in advance with the ESRC. A statement on ethical approval must be provided when the grant abstract is uploaded to the Research Outcomes System, prior to the grant start date (see section on ESRC Research Catalogue / RCUK Research Outcomes System). This notification should

precede or accompany the starting certificate (submitted by the Research Organisation).

- The ESRC reserves the right to impose special conditions on any grants involving particular issues of ethics.

General

In novel and particular circumstances, ESRC Committees or Panels and Council may refer applications for funding for advice on ethical issues to an advisory panel constituted by ESRC.

If there are concerns about practices on ESRC research grants or grants, they should be first raised with the administering RO. However, where the RO has not undertaken an investigation of a valid complaint, has delayed inordinately (usually more than 3-6 months) in completing such a review, or appears prima facie to have come to a perverse conclusion, the matter may be raised with ESRC. This should be addressed to the appropriate Director. If it is not clear who this is, then the concerns should be addressed in the first instance to the Director of Policy and Administration.

Advisory or external stakeholder groups

When creating an Advisory Group or External Stakeholder Group for an ESRC awarded grant, it is expected that best practice will occur. This includes ensuring that:

- Membership has a mix of users and academics
- When selecting group members, due consideration is given to achieving an appropriate balance in terms of gender and geographical location. Where group members hold party political appointments, consideration is given to achieving a balance with regard to this declared political allegiance
- Members are aware of who has funded the project
- Members are clear in their role on the group, including the potential to act as ambassadors on behalf of the group and what this implies
- Members state any conflict of interests and political affiliations before joining the group, and this should be taken into account in the development of the agenda for all meetings.

Expectations about funded research, including societal and economic impact

The ESRC funds excellent research. The primary criterion is scientific quality. The ESRC expects its portfolio to include a diverse range of research encompassing, amongst other things, work based on single disciplines, research which combines disciplinary approaches, research focused on advancing scientific theory, and research aimed principally at developing practical applications.

As part of this portfolio, we encourage research applications which demonstrate one or more of innovation, interdisciplinarity and impact.

Innovation

ESRC is keen to support research which is ambitious (but clearly specified) and has the potential for high scientific impact and/or high user impact. We also recognise that such research may carry a higher than normal risk of failing to deliver the full range of expected research outputs.

Such research is likely to:

- use innovative or even untested methods within the context of the particular project
- attempt to develop or to test and apply new theory
- be carried out by researchers without a proven track record in the area of the proposed research, although they may have a strong track record in other areas
- be complex in terms of its management and delivery because of its size or the dispersal of the research team/fieldwork
- investigate a potentially controversial or sensitive topic
- involve multiple or unusual disciplinary combinations both within and beyond the social sciences
- involve accessing or creating data, or accessing research participants or other related research material could be highly problematic
- challenge existing paradigms in respect of research ethics.

Interdisciplinarity

As part of its portfolio, the ESRC also expects to support new and exciting research which combines approaches from more than one discipline. We recognise that many of the most pressing research challenges are interdisciplinary in nature, both within the social sciences and between the social sciences and other areas of research. However, we also remain committed to the support of excellent research within a single discipline.

Impact

In line with the RCUK position on Excellence with Impact (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/archive/Pages/ExcellencewithImpact.aspx>), we expect that our researchers will have considered the potential scientific, societal and economic impacts of their research.

ESRC applicants should actively consider how these impacts can be maximised and developed through the Pathways to Impact (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/kei/impacts/>) document in their application. This will form part of the peer review and assessment process.

Opportunities for making an impact may arise, and should be taken, at any stage during or after the life-course of the research. It is important that researchers have in place a robust strategy for maximising the likelihood of impact opportunities arising and their own capacity for taking advantage of these.

Excellent research without obvious or immediate societal or economic impact will not be disadvantaged in the peer review and assessment process. Researchers who feel that this

relates to their research should, however, use the Pathways to Impact document to explain their reasoning. ESRC shares and endorses the RCUK statement on Research Councils' expectations of researchers (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/kei/expectation/Pages/home.aspx>).

The ESRC's **Impact Toolkit** gives you everything you need to achieve the maximum impact for your work. The toolkit includes information on developing an impact strategy, promoting knowledge exchange, public engagement and communicating effectively with your key stakeholders: www.esrc.ac.uk/impact-toolkit

Research Councils guidelines

ESRC as one of the Research Councils, gives funding recipients considerable flexibility and autonomy in the delivery of their research, postgraduate training and knowledge transfer activities. This flexibility and autonomy encompasses project definition, management, collaboration, participation, promotion and the dissemination of research outputs, enabling excellence with impact.

In return, the Research Councils expect those who receive funding to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the wider environment and context in which their research takes place
- Demonstrate an awareness of the social and ethical implications of their research, beyond usual research conduct considerations, and take account of public attitudes towards those issues
- Engage actively with the public at both the local and national levels about their research and its broader implications
- Identify potential benefits and beneficiaries from the outset, and through the full life cycle of the project(s)
- Maintain professional networks that extend beyond their own discipline and research community
- Publish results widely - considering the academic, user and public audiences for research outcomes
- Exploit results where appropriate, in order to secure social and economic return to the UK
- Manage collaborations professionally, in order to secure maximum impact without restricting the future progression of research
- Ensure that research staff and students develop research, vocational and entrepreneurial skills that are matched to the demands of their future career paths
- Take responsibility for the curation, management and exploitation of data for future use
- Work in partnership with the Research Councils for the benefit of the UK.

Further information on the RCUK Delivery Plan can be found at:
www.rcuk.ac.uk/about/aboutRCUK/Pages/DeliveryPlan.aspx.

Communication and exploitation of research findings

Communication policy

Effective communication is an integral part of maximising the impact of quality research. Our communication policy aims to enhance the communication of ESRC-funded research to potential users and beneficiaries of the research - especially potential users outside of the academic community. Adherence to the policy is a condition of the receipt of funds from an ESRC research grant.

The communication policy includes the following obligations:

- Providing the ESRC with a 200 word abstract of the research project prior to the start date
- Successful researchers involved in large grants and centres must complete an Impact Plan to be submitted to the ESRC for approval
- Giving initial publicity for the grant, together with the host research organisation(s) (although the ESRC reserves the right to make its own announcement after consultation)
- Acknowledging ESRC support as far as possible, including all external communication, such as press releases, PowerPoint presentations, papers, stationery etc. (Please see 'terms and conditions of Research Council grants' for further guidance on acknowledgement of funding.)
- Giving the ESRC advance notice and **sight of press releases at least two working days before** they are distributed and, where possible, advance notice of likely newspaper articles or media appearances. Failure to comply with this requirement will be viewed as a serious matter which could lead to action being taken in respect of the Research Organisation's ability to hold further research grants
- Communicating the research findings through publications, seminars, conferences, electronic outlets and the media, to both academic and non-academic audiences, potential users and beneficiaries (especially business, government, voluntary organisations, community groups and the public). Any communications activity must not be a lobby activity.
- Providing an End of Award Report to the ESRC, including a 250 word summary of the research findings, within three months of the grant ending
- Providing details of the scientific and practical impacts arising from the grant in an Impact Report submitted 12 months after the end date of the grant.
- Submitting to the ESRC Research Catalogue (via the Research Outcomes System) details of impacts and exploitation of research throughout the grant and for up to five years after the end of the grant period.

Prior permission must be sought before the ESRC's name can be used in connection with the title of any unit, centre, department, etc which the ESRC is supporting either wholly or in part. The words 'ESRC project' may not be used as a heading in correspondence, reports or questionnaires.

In addition, we expect all ESRC grant holders to comply with ESRC's identity guidelines (www.esrc.ac.uk/logos) when producing promotional and corporate material, including publications, reports, presentations, websites and stationery.

Publication and acknowledgement of support

The ESRC attaches great importance to the dissemination of research results. We expect results to be published. Financial support from ESRC must be acknowledged in all publications and other forms of media communication, including media appearances, using PowerPoint presentations, press releases and conferences, using the ESRC logo where appropriate. This is essential in helping to publicise the ESRC's work and also in providing an indicator of the success of its investment. Acknowledgements should identify the type of ESRC support and quote the grant reference number where possible.

Depositing full text

The full text of any articles resulting from the research funded by the grant that are published in journals or conference proceedings, whether during or after the period of the grant, must be deposited at the earliest opportunity in the ESRC Research Catalogue (via the Research Outcomes System at <https://logon.rcuk.ac.uk/>), subject to compliance with the ESRC open access policy and publishers' copyright and licensing policies. Wherever possible, the article should be the published version. For further details, refer to the ESRC open access policy: www.esrc.ac.uk/open-access .

The terms and conditions relating to uploading outputs to the ESRC Research Catalogue are outlined further below.

Branding

All outputs produced as a result of ESRC funding must be both acknowledged and branded as per ESRC's branding guidelines. Further information on how to use ESRC's logo and branding is at: www.esrc.ac.uk/logos .

Websites

We expect all ESRC-funded investments which create websites to comply with our guidelines for investment websites: www.esrc.ac.uk/investmentwebsites. Our web content style guide provides additional guidance to help all grant holders produce good quality web content: www.esrc.ac.uk/styleguide. All ESRC investment websites will be reviewed regularly by the ESRC.

Elections

The ESRC is bound by a code of conduct during the period preceding a UK General Election or the election of a devolved administration. This period, often referred to as 'purdah', ranges from four to six weeks. Any new announcements during this period pertaining to ESRC-funded research that may be construed as political in nature must be cleared with the ESRC's press office before issue. If there is any doubt advice should be sought from the ESRC.

Public engagement

Social science research plays an important role in our society. The ESRC believes that by raising public awareness of the social sciences and encouraging their involvement in both

social and science-related research this will translate into real benefits for society and individuals.

Public engagement involves activities that bring researchers and the public together. It is more than just meeting an audience and telling them about your research - effective public engagement is about two-way communication, with the researchers listening to and learning from participants

The ESRC supports public engagement in a number of ways including discrete funding to support different engagement activities, as well as by enabling grant holders to include costings in their grant to undertake any activity via the Pathways to Impact section.

Further information about opportunities the ESRC provides in public engagement is at: www.esrc.ac.uk/collaboration/public-engagement/

The ESRC, as part of the RCUK Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research, believes that engaging the public with research ensures that the work of researchers, departments and universities is relevant to society, helps empower people and communities, and can enable research impacts and exploitation of research results.

The Concordat's key principles are that:

- UK research organisations have a strategic commitment to public engagement
- Researchers are recognised and valued for their involvement with public engagement activities
- Researchers are enabled to participate in public engagement activities through appropriate training, support and opportunities
- The signatories and supporters of this Concordat will undertake regular reviews of their and the wider research sector's progress in fostering public engagement across the UK.

A copy of the concordat is at: www.rcuk.ac.uk/per/Pages/Concordat.aspx

Further information about how, why, and the benefits of undertaking public engagement are in our Impact Toolkit: www.esrc.ac.uk/impact-toolkit

Knowledge exchange and collaboration

The ESRC is committed to knowledge exchange and encouraging collaboration between researchers and the private, public and civil society sectors. Collaborative working benefits both the researchers and the individuals/organisations involved. Through collaboration, partners learn about each other's expertise, share knowledge and gain an appreciation of different professional cultures. Collaborative activity can therefore lead to a better understanding of the ways in which academic research can add value and offer insights to key issues of concern for policy and practice.

To be most effective, knowledge exchange should not be treated as an 'add-on' at the end of a research project, but considered before the start and built into a project.

The ESRC builds partnerships and works collaboratively in a range of diverse ways. Examples of our collaborative activity include:

- Developing strategic partnerships with organisations to ensure we maximise the impact of our activities
- Working with partner organisations to develop and fund major research and capacity building initiatives
- Supporting initiatives to foster direct collaboration between social scientists and other individuals and organisations.

For further information on the RCUK principles for knowledge exchange please visit: www.rcuk.ac.uk/kei/expectation/Pages/kePrinciples.aspx

Alternatively, further information can be found via the RCUK Knowledge Transfer Portal at <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/kei/ktportal/Pages/home.aspx>.

Exploitation of results

The ESRC strongly encourages the exploitation of the results of research. Where results of industrial or commercial value emerge from projects, grant holders are required to make suitable arrangements for exploitation and take up by industry. The ESRC makes no claim to the intellectual property rights arising from research that it supports.

Commercial exploitation

It is the ESRC's policy that potentially valuable results or products arising from ESRC-funded research should, where practicable, be exploited for the benefit of the UK economy, the quality of life of the nation, the Research Organisation, the grant holder and the UK social science community. This policy applies to all forms of results or products, regardless of the nature of the intellectual property rights involved.

Intellectual property, royalties and income

The ownership of the intellectual property arising from a research project should be clear from the outset. The ESRC will assume that this will rest with the RO receiving the ESRC grant, unless otherwise stated to the contrary and set out in the offer letter.

The ESRC reserves the right to reclaim up to one third of the total income, up to the value of its original grant. When income is generated ESRC should be alerted to open discussion to agree an income plan; this will be agreed annually. During the lifetime of the grant, ESRC should be alerted directly via the Case Officer. Following the grant period, the ESRC should be alerted via the Research Outcomes System. In any event, the RO's regulations on the internal sharing of royalty income, as set out in its Statutes, shall take precedence.

Exploitation procedures

In ensuring maximum exploitation the ESRC requires that the Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants covering Exploitation and Impact will be followed at all times: www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/grantstcs.aspx

In particular it is important that the grant-holding RO has a central point for advice on potential exploitation, and that there is early consultation during the grant period between the principal investigator and this central advisor on how to maximise the application and exploitation of any practical outcomes.

Research Organisations should also ensure that adequate procedures and resources are in place to maximise the exploitation of any research. These might include support for:

- Networks, conferences, roundtables and other engagement activities which ensure regular contact between researchers and those who will have an interest in its practical application
- Databases and information services including regularly updated web pages, which give easy access to those outside the RO to research work with a broader application
- Rewards in terms of salary and promotion opportunities for staff successfully promoting and engaging the users of research in their work
- The development and maintenance of databases, computer models and computer software resulting from research projects, which may have wider application
- Advice on patenting and licenses which may be important in some areas
- Publication in professional journals, magazines and the general media which may increase the outreach of the research.

Reporting on exploitation

Any reporting on exploitation of research should be undertaken as part of the annual report process, and also should be included in the ESRC Research Catalogue.

Computer software

Whilst computer software, firmware and related documentation are governed by the general conditions outlined above, the ESRC requires grant holders to take particular care to protect the value of any computer software, firmware and related documentation resulting from its grants by:

- Confining public statements about the software or firmware merely to what it does without revealing details of the software or firmware itself
- Ensuring that copies are not supplied to third parties except to individuals who have undertaken to keep them confidential and not to use them for commercial purposes.

Open Source Software (OSS)

Publicly funded R&D projects which aim to produce software outputs shall specify a proposed software exploitation route at the start of the project. At the completion of a project, the software shall be exploited either commercially or within an academic community or as OSS.

Full details of the government policy on OSS can be found at: www.opensource.org

Institutional responsibilities

The RO must ensure that all those associated with the research, whether staff, students, fellows or visitors, are aware of and accept these exploitation requirements.

ESRC Research Catalogue / RCUK Research Outcomes System

ESRC's Research Catalogue is an established online resource for the social sciences in the UK. It is a condition of ESRC funding that the grant holder complies with the following general requirements relating to the Research Catalogue.

Registration

- Grant holders will automatically be registered on the RCUK Research Outcomes System (ROS) (<https://logon.rcuk.ac.uk/Default.aspx>) with their Je-S login.
- To submit resources to the Research Catalogue all grant holders must log into the Research Outcomes System using their Je-S username and password.
- Grant holders can find further advice and information at www.esrc.ac.uk/grantholders or by contacting researchoutcomes@rcuk.ac.uk or 0800 292 2478

Submission of abstract and confirmation of ethics approval

- The ESRC Communications Policy requires grant holders to submit a 200 word abstract of their project. This must be uploaded directly to the Research Outcomes System as soon as possible after they receive their grant details from the SSC grants team, and **before the grant start date**. At the same time, the grant holder must also submit a statement on whether ethical approval is required and whether this has been acquired.
- The grant will not be activated nor initial payment of the grant made until the abstract and research ethics approval are received and accepted, as we will be unable to process the confirmation of start certificate without this.
- It is a condition of ESRC funding that the grant holder complies with the current version of the ESRC Communications Policy.

Submission of outputs, End of Award Report and Impact Report

- The grant holder must submit an End of Award Report to ESRC within three months of the grant end date, and Impact Report 12 months after the grant end date. Both reports will be uploaded to the relevant grant page by the ESRC Evaluation team once they are approved. Final payment of the grant will not be paid until an End of Award Report is received and accepted.
- The grant holder must submit all research outputs arising from the grant electronically to the Research Outcomes System for up to five years after the end of the grant period. It is the responsibility of the grant holder to ensure that all outputs submitted do not breach the ownership of intellectual property rights held by persons or bodies other than the ESRC.
- The principal investigator must ensure that all outcomes arising from the grant are recorded in a timely manner in the RCUK Research Outcomes System (ROS). The principal investigator may delegate others to prepare and submit records to ROS and the Research Organisation may undertake to collate and submit records on behalf of the principal investigator.
- Grant holders must also notify ESRC of any impacts arising from the grant (by submitting an Impact Record) for up to five years after the end of the grant period.

- Information may be submitted to ROS at any time after a grant has started, and should continue to be submitted up to five years after the grant end date. Failure to use ROS to record the outcomes of ESRC funded research may result in ineligibility to apply for future funding from ESRC.
- From time to time ESRC will send the grant holder automated email reminders from the ESRC website prompting the submission of outputs and impacts that may have been produced in association with the grant.
- The grant holder should ensure that the ESRC or its agents are not included on anti-spam blacklists, or are included on ‘whitelists’ to allow the successful delivery of these emails to a valid grant holder email address. Such emails may be received from websupport@esrc.ac.uk or researchoutcomes@rcuk.ac.uk.
- The grant holder will submit, free of charge, all content¹ (including any material requested by ESRC) in a format suitable for publication or reuse in the ESRC Research Catalogue as soon as is reasonably possible following the creation of such content. ESRC also reserves the right to archive any material submitted by the grant holder.
- The grant holder will co-operate with ESRC and (where applicable) with the Programme Director and/or other persons required by ESRC:
 - To ensure content is submitted to the RCUK Research Outcomes System in a timely manner
 - To allow archiving and linking to websites
 - To support publicity generally and in accordance with ESRC’s published Communications Policy.

Intellectual Property Rights

For the avoidance of doubt, the grant holder will ensure that ESRC has the right to make use of all necessary intellectual property rights (“IPR”) free of charge, to make available for world-wide access, display, downloading, storage, archiving, linking and use (“use”) on the ESRC Research Catalogue:

- Any content arising from the grant
- Any websites or online media the grant holder may establish or use from time to time to disseminate content (“sites”) via the internet.

Such use will be permitted on terms stipulated by the ESRC from time to time which the ESRC will ensure are protective of grant holder/Research Organisation IPR as the ESRC shall reasonably determine, consistent always with allowing access to the content and linking to any websites via the ESRC Research Catalogue.

ESRC evaluation

ESRC’s evaluation activity is planned and overseen by the Evaluation Committee. The evaluation team within the Partnerships and Communications Directorate is responsible for

¹ any material, including but not limited to abstracts, updates, reports and any other published hard-copy or electronic media or outputs

the management of this activity within the office. The Committee reviews a wide range of ESRC investments and activities with an emphasis on assessing the national and international impact of the Council's research.

We undertake evaluations of:

- Grants
- Large initiatives
- Research ventures
- Policy initiatives and funding mechanism
- Impact
- International benchmarking reviews.

Further information about the breadth of evaluations the ESRC undertakes is at: www.esrc.ac.uk/impacts-and-findings/impact-assessment

The ESRC evaluates all research grants funded through responsive mode. The purpose of these reviews is to:

- Provide an assessment of accountability (ie whether public funds were spent as agreed).
- Assess whether the grant has been conducted effectively, whether it has met its objectives and to make an early assessment of the quality and impact of the research.
- Provide grant holders with some feedback about the management, quality and rigour of the research, and to provide comments on user or potential uses of the research.

Further details on grant evaluations and reporting requirements for grant holders can be found at: www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/grant-holders/project-evaluation.aspx

The Evaluation Committee oversees the evaluation of ESRC's Centres, Groups, Large Grants, Networks and Programmes. Consultants are appointed to review the achievements and impacts of these investments through tender competitions. For Centres, Groups, Networks and Large Grants, consultants invite a number of referees to comment on final reports and supporting material. For Programmes, the consultant considers project-level evaluations, which have already been subject to peer review.

For all investments, consultants also consider the following evidence when making their assessment:

- Co-ordinator/Director/Large Grant holder's final report
- Questionnaire results (from both grant holders and research users)
- Interviews with key stakeholders (eg directors, principal investigators, chairs of advisory bodies, non-academic users).

As well as providing an evaluation of the accomplishments of the investment, consultants also include a set of recommendations regarding, for example, future research priorities and

funding mechanisms. More information on the management and evaluation of large research initiatives can be found at: www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/large-initiatives/index.aspx.

Section 2

How to apply

Proposals to ESRC must be submitted via the **Joint Electronic Submission System (Je-S)**. Je-S is the RCUK submission system, used by all Research Councils to provide a common research administration electronic system. To be able to submit a proposal the organisation must be registered (or self registered) for Je-S and the applicants must hold Je-S accounts. If you are unsure about this you should contact your Research Office for further guidance.

Further information can be found at www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/applicants/Je-S-electronic-applications.aspx

Applicants from recognised research organisations (www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/Eligibilityforrcs.aspx) with the necessary Je-S registration should use the Je-S system to prepare and forward proposals for submission to the ESRC. All principal and co- investigators must have a Je-S account. For information on creating an account please refer to the Je-S System Helptext at <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/pages/SettingupajeSaccount/AccessingJeS.htm>.

When applying for calls and schemes that have a closing date for proposals, please ensure that you allow sufficient time for completion of the Research Organisation submission process checks and authorisation. Your proposal will actually be sent to Je-S/ESRC from the submitter pool at your Research Organisation. In other words, **there is a further layer of administration between your submission of the proposal and the proposal being submitted to the ESRC, via Je-S.**

If you experience difficulties using Je-S or have questions regarding its use, please see the Je-S website <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/> or contact the helpdesk at jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk or telephone +44 (0) 1793 444164.

When do I apply?

Proposals for **Research Grants** funding may be submitted at any time. Proposals for other forms of support must comply with the dates and timescales set out in the relevant call for proposals or announcement of opportunity. Please see the funding opportunities page on our website: www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/ for further information on closing dates for specific schemes and calls.

Outline proposals

In some strategic programmes, outlines or expressions of interest are requested in advance of full proposals. Guidance on completing outlines is available on our website under funding opportunities.

Writing a good proposal

The **content and quality** of the proposal you submit to the ESRC will determine whether or not you are successful. Therefore it is vital that you have a full understanding of what is required, as well as knowing the various stages of the proposal process, so that you maximise your chances of receiving funding. We offer guidance notes on 'How to write a good research grant proposal' (www.esrc.ac.uk/how-to) which should be read in conjunction with these guidelines. They provide informal guidance on points for applicants to remember when drafting proposals.

Submission of proposal forms

Where a closing date is specified it will be strictly enforced. For proposals submitted through Je-S, the proposal receipt must be before 16.00 on the actual closing date.

It is our policy that once a proposal has been submitted, no amendment can be made to that proposal, nor will additional accompanying documentation or attachments be accepted (ie no erratum changes will be accepted). Proposals will need to stand as submitted.

In exceptional circumstances, SSC (on behalf of the ESRC) may return an existing proposal to the submitting Organisation for minor amendment or inclusion of attachments via the Je-S Document Synchronisation (Je-S Doc-Sync) process. This process can only be instigated by ESRC, and submitting organisations may not request a proposal to be returned in this way. Je-S Doc-Sync cannot be used to make substantive changes to an existing proposal.

If mistakes are noticed by applicants on submitted proposals within the closing date, it is recommended that applicants withdraw the original proposal and submit a fresh revised proposal, by contacting SSC Grants Administration; see www.rcuk.ac.uk/contacts/Pages/ssccont.aspx for further information.

The ESRC reserves the right to decline to consider any proposal.

Approaching ESRC reviewers, Committee or Panel members

Applicants who attempt to lobby or canvas ESRC Committee or Panel members or ESRC staff on behalf of any current proposal, or of proposals about to be made in current competitions, in such a way as to seek to improperly influence the prospects of the proposal, will be disqualified. Committee or Panel members are required to notify the Director of Research about any such lobbying or canvassing.

It is also not acceptable for researchers to approach reviewers or panel members who they think may have assessed their proposals. If this does happen, we advise reviewers and panel members not to enter into any discussion regarding the proposal, including whether they have assessed it or not, and to inform ESRC immediately so that we can take appropriate action.

What costs do grants cover?

General principles

Established academic staff are deemed to be those with permanent appointments or period appointments of not less than two years, in posts whose funding, for teaching or research, is derived from, or attributed to, RO general funds including funds received from the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCs) in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Department of Education Northern Ireland.

Proposals may include provision for promotion during the lifetime of the grant where there is a clear case for doing so, where it has been foreseen at the time of application, has been approved by the employing Research Organisation, as is justifiable to the ESRC.

Research Organisations must ensure that expenditure on sub-contracts at home and abroad are subject to robust controls to ensure value for money and propriety and that all costs should be fully vouched and maintained for possible ESRC inspection and checks.

Proposals will need to show 100 per cent of full Economic Cost of the proposed research. The Research Councils will meet 80 per cent of the full economic costs on proposals submitted.

Directly incurred costs

This heading will include specific sub headings, the familiar direct costs of the research project, comprising:

- Staff - for example research assistants
- Travel and Subsistence - prior to travel overseas, the grant holder must check with the Finance Office at the hosting Research Organisation to ensure that travel is permissible, and not against the advice of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (www.fco.gov.uk).
- Other directly incurred costs:
 - Purchase /hire of vehicles, recruitment and advertising costs
 - Predicted costs for any communication, knowledge exchange, public engagement or other impact activities planned throughout the project
 - Predicted costs for certain types of publication, eg monographs, books, critical editions, volumes, catalogues, or forms of non-peer-reviewed material.

Please note that article processing charges (APCs) and other publication charges relating to peer-reviewed research articles and conference proceedings can no longer be included in research grant applications. From 1 April 2013 the payment of APCs and other publication charges related to ESRC-funded research are supported through RCUK open access block grants which are provided to eligible research organisations. For further information see the ESRC open access information: www.esrc.ac.uk/open-access

- Equipment and survey costs - up to £10,000 should be included within Other Directly Incurred
- Equipment - costing between £10,000 and the OJEU threshold will require a Research Organisation contribution of 50 per cent
 - Equipment costing above the OJEU threshold will potentially be funded at 100 per cent.

Directly allocated costs

Costs in a proposal will need to show 100 per cent of the full economic costs; costs will be broken down by heading.

Investigators

This heading provides for the costs of all principal and co-investigators working directly on a project, if their time charged to the grant will be based on estimates rather than actual costs. Where costs are actual, auditable and verifiable, they should be included under the Directly Incurred heading. Investigator time, not cost, must be justified in the Case for Support.

It is a requirement of the fEC costing methodology that, for any one investigator, the maximum amount of time that Research Councils will fund across all the projects they support is 1650 hours a year (equivalent to 37.5 hours a week, 44 weeks a year).

Principal investigators and co-investigators whose time is not fully funded on other Research Council grants but who are not paid a salary by the Research Organisation (eg Emeritus or honorary staff), should show their hours attributed to the project, but with a zero salary cost request.

Salary increments over the period of the project should be taken into account, but possible future pay awards should not be anticipated. Where it is expected that individuals will be promoted during the lifetime of the grant, provision may be made in the grant proposal.

If a principal investigator or co-investigator is retired, the expectation is that their involvement in a project would be covered by a contract with the Research Organisation. If there are costs associated with such time then these should be regarded as a Directly Incurred cost.

Estates

These costs may include building and premises costs, basic services and utilities, and any clerical staff and equipment maintenance or operational costs that have not been included under other cost headings. They will be calculated by a research organisation and a single figure will be required at time of application.

Where an individual will be working away from the Research Organisation on long-term secondment for a period in excess of six months during the project, estates costs should not be charged for the period of secondment. No reduction should be made for shorter term absence.

Where the level of staff effort to be awarded is different to that requested, an organisation will be required to re-calculate within 10 working days the estates and indirect costs, using the same costing basis applied to the original proposal. If an organisation is unable to recalculate the costs on this timescale, they will be adjusted by ESRC in proportion to the change in staff costs.

Other directly allocated

These will include the costs of shared resources, such as staff (eg pooled technicians) and equipment. Proposals will need to provide a full justification for the requirement for the level of pooled staff effort and shared facilities requested and should indicate (but do not need to justify) the cost basis (eg £X per day). Central and distributed computing costs including charge out rate for shared equipment.

Indirect costs

The Indirect costs heading will be calculated by the RO according to the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) and should be declared as a single figure on the proposal form, with no need for information about its derivation or justification.

Grants

Fund headings

Grant announcements will classify the funding according to the same four summary fund headings (Directly Incurred, Directly Allocated, Indirect and Exceptions) and their subheadings, and will show for each one both the full economic cost and the Research Council share, and the percentage rate used.

Estates and indirect costs

The Estates costs of the research declared by the research organisation will be accepted by the Research Councils without scrutiny at peer review. However, where the announced level of staff effort is to be less than that requested, ROs will be given 10 working days to re-calculate the estates and indirect costs, using the same costing basis applied to the original proposal. If a RO is unable to recalculate the costs on this timescale, they will be reduced by the Research Councils in proportion to the reduction in staff costs.

Although Research Councils will not question the Estates and Indirect Cost rates declared by ROs, the full cost of the proposed research (including estates and indirect costs) will be taken into account in any assessment of its value for money.

Equipment, surveys and high cost item

Research proposals may include high cost items, which for ESRC are chiefly survey costs and IT equipment. Applicants should note that all such items costing over £10,000 will be considered under the equipment heading, funding below £10,000 for single capital items of equipment will be funded as Other Directly Incurred.

Further justification for all items of equipment costing between £10,000 and the OJEU threshold value (net of VAT £101,323, inclusive of VAT £121,588):

The research organisation will need to provide extra justification for these items, providing evidence of an evaluation of the use of existing relevant capital assets. They will be expected to make a contribution towards the cost of the equipment. Given that capital provision across councils has been reduced by about 50 per cent, contributions of this order will be expected.

Business case required for all items of equipment above the OJEU threshold value (net of VAT £101,323, inclusive of VAT £121,588):

All requests for single capital items of equipment should be accompanied by a two-page business case outlining the strategic need for the equipment. RCUK will decide the strategic location for these items and will potentially fund them at 100 per cent. Each Council will have flexibility in relation to the funding of equipment to negotiate with potential grant recipients to achieve best value from the limited funds at its disposal. Individual Councils are currently working to develop the process they will use for handling such requests, and more details will follow.

Cash limits

In line with TRAC, costings on proposal forms will be at prices at the time of submission. Research Councils will continue to award research grants on a cash limited basis; that is, awarded amounts will include the application of standard indices to account for inflation and the payments made against a grant will not exceed the original value announced, apart from additions for maternity or sick leave associated with staff under the Directly Incurred heading (the Research Councils will bear no financial responsibility for the cost of sick/maternity pay of grant holders).

Grant announcements will continue to include an allowance for inflation calculated using standard indices.

Start dates

Grants will normally be started by the appointment of a research assistant, but, where appropriate, provision will be made for grants to be started by the deployment of grant holder time or other costs.

Grant transfers

If a grant is transferred from one RO to another, it will not be re-costed to take into account different Indirect and Estates charges used in the new RO. The Directly Allocated and Indirect costs awarded to the new RO should be calculated on the basis of the amount of time that has passed since the grant started. Similarly, pre-fEC grants will not normally be re-costed and will remain as pre-FEC grants if transferred to a different RO.

Research grant reconciliation and evaluation

Expenditure statements (final and interim) will declare the Directly Incurred costs of the project and the Research Councils' share - calculated using the standard percentage contribution rate in place at the time of the grant announcement. In the reconciliation process, the Research Councils will pay the remaining Directly Incurred costs due.

The Directly Allocated and Indirect costs will be paid in full at the level stated in the original grant announcement, with the exception of grants that have been transferred between

organisations (where a pro-rata reduction is made at the time of transfer) and grants subject to premature termination or financial sanction.

Sick/maternity pay for staff under the Directly Incurred heading will be paid at the standard Research Councils percentage fEC rate and will be shown under a separate fund heading (“Absence”) on the expenditure statement.

Exceptions

In addition to the three TRAC headings, “Exceptions” will include specific categories of funding that Research Councils will fund in full (ie at 100 per cent) rather than the common percentage rate as follows:

- Equipment above the OJEU threshold value (net of VAT £101,323, inclusive of VAT £121,588)
 - For these items a two page business case outlining the strategic need for the equipment is required, as a separate attachment.
 - ESRC will potentially fund these items at 100 per cent.
- Social survey costs which are sub-contracted. Surveys which are completed using in house resources should be included under Directly Incurred Equipment.
- Project students are outside fEC and therefore 100 per cent of stipend, fees and RTSG will be funded, but must not be counted as research full-time equivalent for the purposes of calculating estates and indirect costs.
- International co-investigators costs
- UK business, third sector or government body co-investigators costs.

Surveys

Costs within proposals to meet externally commissioned surveys are fully allowable. However if proposals include costings for surveys planned to be done using internal resource, such costs will need to be fully justified and benchmarked.

Large surveys over £10,000: based on the expectation that they will be done by specialist survey companies, ESRC requires that such surveys will be subjected to external competition to ensure best VFM through competitive purchasing processes.

When surveys are commissioned via this sub-contractor route and the work is done by third parties, these costs are eligible for fEC exception funding at 100 per cent.

Where it has been agreed that large surveys should be performed by an in-house team, costs are funded at the standard 80 per cent fEC funding rate.

At proposal stage cost inclusions for major spend on equipment, surveys etc should be estimated as robustly as possible. For all items exceeding £25,000 the proposal should explain the basis for the estimates, using benchmarking figures wherever possible. Estimates for survey costs should **not** allow for inflation.

For all equipment costing more than £25,000 (including VAT), professionally qualified procurement staff at the RO must be consulted at the beginning of the procurement process and must approve the order before it is placed with the supplier. Additional

documentary evidence for the estimated cost (eg supplier's written quote, specialist advice) should be included in the 'Equipment' section as attachment type 'Equipment Quotation'. Equipment quotations are added within the equipment item screen, not within the attachments section. Having added the details for your item press "Save" which will then provide a link to add the attachments.

For all items of equipment requested with a value over the OJEU threshold value, three equipment quotations must be provided. Where you believe that there are less than three potential suppliers for an item you should explain this in the 'Justification of Resources' attachment and upload two blank documents as equipment quotes. For items of equipment which cost less than the OJEU threshold but more than £25,000, it is optional to provide quotations and up to three can be uploaded.

Support for items expected to be found in a department

Any proposals requesting items that would ordinarily be found in a department, for example non-specialist computers, should include justification both for why they are required for the project and why they cannot be provided from the research organisation's own resources (including funding from indirect costs from grants).

How proposals are assessed

ESRC relies on peer review to evaluate research proposals and to prioritise proposals when in competition. There are generally two stages in the process: reviewing and consideration by assessors. We select most reviewers from a college of peer reviewers. The college is made up of approximately 1800 experts.

Details and full membership of the Peer Review College are available at:
www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/governance/committees-networks/peer-review-college

How does assessment work?

All ESRC research funding decisions are made on the basis of:

- External peer review
- Consideration by assessors from specially constituted bodies (the Grants Assessment Panels; Assessor Colleges; Commissioning Panels).

How are proposals assessed?

For details of the numerical peer review scoring scale, the core criteria for assessment and the panel member numerical scoring scale, please see www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/peer-rapport/important-pr.aspx.

Who reviews funding proposals?

For details of the review process for current funding opportunities, please refer to the specific web page under 'Funding opportunities': www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities.

Applicant response to reviewers' comments

Applicants with proposals receiving sufficiently supportive reviewers' comments (average score of 4.0 or above) will have the opportunity to provide a response to reviewers' comments. Applicants will have ten days to provide a response of up to two sides of A4, which can be used to highlight any areas of agreement or disagreement with reviewers, factual errors or misunderstandings about the proposal and/or to clarify issues raised by reviewers. The response is not intended to provide an opportunity to change a proposal or the financial aspects of the proposal in light of reviewers' comments.

Please note that reviews received after the ten-day response period will not be forwarded to applicants for further response. However, any further usable reviews received before the panel meeting will still be used in the peer review process and will be sent to applicants following the final funding decision.

Please note that the ESRC will not accept an inability to respond to issues raised in late reviewers' comments as grounds for an appeal. To ensure that a request for a response to reviewers' comments is received, applicants should make certain that the ESRC or its agents are not included on anti-spam blacklists, or are included on 'whitelists' to allow the successful delivery of the email to a valid email address.

A successful proposal: What happens next?

How applicants are notified about the decision

If a proposal is successful, a grant offer letter will be sent to the RO's administrative authority via Je-S. The letter sets out the funding awarded and the proposed dates on which the project should start and end.

The administrative authority will accept the grant via Je-S and submit a start confirmation via Je-S following the actual start date. Receipt of a valid start confirmation and submission of the abstract by the grant holder activates profiled payments.

Investigators who do not wish to take up the offer of a grant should notify the ESRC, via their administrative authority, as soon as possible.

Applicants who hold an existing grant which terminates during the processing of a new proposal are advised that a formal offer of grant will not be made until the End of Award report has been received and accepted.

Prospective grant holders must not commit expenditure until the formal offer of grant is made and accepted and the period of grant has commenced.

Funding responsibilities

The ESRC accepts no responsibility, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or liabilities arising out of the research it funds, other than that specifically covered by the conditions of the grant and which has been incurred during the period covered by it. Any expenditure

relating to activities, goods or services incurred before a grant is formally announced, or retrospective payments for such expenditure before an approved starting date of a grant, are the responsibility of the RO and are ineligible for ESRC funding.

Any expenditure in excess of the approved grant cash limit, or expenditure incurred after the end date of the grant, are also the responsibility of the RO, and ineligible for ESRC funding. Expenditure properly incurred during the lifetime of a grant, but for which bills or invoices are unavoidably after the end date, can properly be charged to a grant. However expenditure relating to activities, goods or services commissioned during the period but for delivery after the end date are not eligible, and must be the responsibility of the RO.

The ESRC accepts no responsibility for any redundancy, severance or compensation payments for which the RO may become liable as an employer, unless expressly agreed in writing by either ESRC's Finance Officer or Director of Policy.

Cash limits

Costings on proposal forms will be included at the rate available at the time of submission. Research Councils will continue to award research grants on a cash limited basis; that is, awarded amounts will include the application of standard indices to account for inflation, and the payments made against a grant will not exceed the original value announced, apart from additions for maternity or sick leave associated with staff under the Directly Incurred heading. The Research Councils will bear no financial responsibility for the cost of sick/maternity/paternity pay of grant holders and co-investigators, unless they are also Research Fellows or Research Assistants funded by the grant.

Start date

The preferred start date requested in the proposal form should be at least 13 weeks after the date by which a decision is expected. Applicants should bear in mind the time needed to recruit staff, particularly where work permits are required. Following a decision to offer a grant, the ESRC will confirm the preferred start date or agree a revised date with the grant holder. The ESRC reserves the right to impose a start date when necessary.

All applicants should understand that under no circumstances may the start date for a grant be earlier than the date of the issue of the grant.

Once a grant has been issued, grant holders are required to make every effort to start on the agreed date. It is recognised, however, that this is not always possible due to unexpected difficulties in, for example, recruitment or data access. In circumstances where such a delay is unavoidable, the ESRC allows a degree of flexibility where grants may commence within three months of the agreed start date on the grant letter. Confirmation of the actual start date must be sent via Je-S as soon as the research commences. Any change to a start date will not affect the cash limit even if the start date moves to a new financial year.

Start confirmation and abstracts of research (GC4 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

ESRC must receive the start confirmation for a grant within 42 days of the date on which expenditure actually commences, and within three months of the start date indicated in the grant letter. Where notified, grant holders must also submit an abstract of research for the project to the Research Outcomes System (for publication on the ESRC Research Catalogue). This submission also includes confirmation of ethical approval if required. ESRC will not begin meeting any expenditure on grant until these items have been received.

ESRC will also not accept responsibility for any expenditure undertaken more than a month prior to the receipt of these documents. Grant holders and research organisations should be aware therefore that late delivery of these documents may incur a financial penalty.

If a research grant has not commenced within three months of the date stated in the issue of the grant (and the abstract and start certificate not received within four months), and a later date has not been approved, the offer of the grant will be withdrawn. The grant may not then proceed without further written confirmation from ESRC that it has been re-issued.

Delaying start date (GC 4 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

Indications of possible offers of grants, which have not commenced within 12 months of the notification to grant holders that a grant has been recommended, lapse automatically at that point if a formal grant letter has not been issued.

Payments

A payment profile is created for each grant based upon an expected pattern of expenditure over the lifetime of the grant. This is set out in a payment schedule, available in Je-S. Payment will normally be made quarterly in March, June, September and December each year to the organisation through the BACs system.

Annual statement (GC 15 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

The ESRC may request an Interim Expenditure Statement (IES), each year to detail expenditure and payments made during the current year. The Statement can be requested by ESRC at any time during the year.

Final claims (GC 16 to GC 19 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

A Final Expenditure Statement (FES) will be available to research organisations, via Je-S, within the last month of the grant period. These are expected to be completed, certified and returned by research organisations, via Je-S, within three months after the end of the grant.

The ESRC reserves the right not to accept supplementary final expenditure statements in the following circumstances:

- Where the FES amount added to previously paid amounts exceeds the overall cash limit for the grant announced in the offer letter at the start of the grant, ESRC

reserves the right to reduce the FES by the amount necessary to ensure that the cash limit for the grant is not exceeded

- Where either the FES or the End of Award report on a grant has not been submitted to ESRC within three months of the termination date, ESRC may recover 20 per cent of expenditure incurred on the grant
- Where the FES or End of Award report has not been submitted within six months of the termination date, ESRC may recover all payments made on the grant.

Vouching and transaction listings

The ESRC may request the following information in support of an FES to support claims, and to enable sample checks to be performed if required:

- Directly incurred costs: transaction listings are required if the amount claimed over the period of the grant is over £10,000. Copy vouchers are required for individual items over £20,000
- Equipment: transaction listings are required if the amount claimed over the period of the grant is over £10,000. Copy vouchers are required for individual items over £20,000.

The books, records and financial procedures of the RO shall be open to inspection by the ESRC or any other body or individual engaged by the ESRC for the purpose of such inspection.

The RO will, on request by the ESRC, provide accounts for the grant, independently examined by an auditor who is a member of a recognised professional body, certifying that the expenditure of the grant has been in accordance with all ESRC conditions.

Research grant reconciliation and evaluation (GC16 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

Expenditure statements (final and interim) will declare the Directly Incurred costs of the project and the Research Councils' share - calculated using the standard percentage contribution rate in place at the time of the grant announcement. In the reconciliation process, the Research Councils will pay the remaining Directly Incurred costs due.

The Directly Allocated and Indirect costs will be paid in full at the level stated in the original grant announcement, with the exception of grants that have been transferred between organisations (where a pro-rata reduction is made at the time of transfer) and grants subject to premature termination or financial sanction.

Sick/maternity pay for staff under the Directly Incurred heading will be paid at the standard Research Councils percentage fEC rate and will be shown under a separate fund heading ("Absence") on the expenditure statement.

How the grant funds are managed

Following notification of the grant details the RCUK Shared Service Centre (SSC) will calculate a forecast of expenditure and payment schedules on individual grants - based on the financial data in the proposal, any changes to this in the grant, the indexing of future costs, and any revision in forecast starting date. The RO's finance officer and the grant holder can review a schedule of forecast expenditure and proposed payments on Je-S.

Where expenditure during a year is likely to be 15 per cent more or less than the forecast (for example because of delayed starting dates, or loss of staff) a revised payments schedule may need to be agreed. The RO should contact the SSC to discuss. The RO must advise the SSC of these circumstances in writing at the earliest possibility. If the SSC is not advised in these cases then payments may be withdrawn or reduced.

Monthly status report

This information is sent to the Finance Officer/Research Support Office and contains a record of all live grants and, where appropriate, where action is required - such as:

- Awaiting start confirmation or abstract
- Awaiting receipt of final expenditure statement (FES) or End of Award report.

Changes to grants (GC5 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

Research grants provide support for the research proposals submitted by the grant holder and accepted (or modified) by the ESRC. The research grant is made on the understanding that the ESRC's contribution to the cost will not be increased. The funds available within any grant may only be applied to meet the objectives and outputs of the grant approved by ESRC, and may not be diverted to any other purpose.

Grant holders may encounter circumstances forcing them to modify their research plans which compromise the prime objectives of the research as approved in the grant. There may also be circumstances where modifications are proposed to take advantage of new opportunities or new technology. In such cases grant holders must obtain the prior approval of the ESRC before the implementation of any modifications.

Extensions (GC7 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

Under certain circumstances ESRC may allow extensions (but with no added costs) to the duration of the grant. These will only be considered in the following instances:

- Extended sickness absence (more than six weeks)
- Maternity leave
- Death
- Termination of employment of the grant holder or a co-investigator where there is more than three months remaining on the grant; or of someone employed on the grant more than 50 per cent time with more than three months of their employment remaining

- Where data gathering or fieldwork has been unavoidably delayed for reasons wholly beyond the control of the research team

Virements

Virement will only be permitted within Directly Incurred and Exceptions costs. Grant holders are expected to provide details of virements on ESRC claim forms. The ESRC reserves the right to seek full justification of any virements. Virements in or out of the equipment heading is not permissible as these funds are ring-fenced.

Teaching

Prior approval of the ESRC is required if the RO wishes to adjust the salaries of staff required to do teaching, demonstrating, or part-time employment on work not funded by the grant. The RO needs to be able to assure the ESRC that a research worker is employed full-time on the project or should make a pro-rata adjustment of the time charged to the grant. Nonetheless, it is recognised that occasional teaching, not to exceed six hours per week inclusive of preparation (normally not more than two hours' contact time), could enhance the value of a project. The ESRC will therefore not object when this can be done without detriment to the principle of full-time employment, or to the conduct of the research.

Registering for higher degrees

Prior approval from the ESRC is required if the grant holder or any researcher employed on the grant proposes to register for a higher degree by research. Approval for registration will normally be given provided that:

- The RO gives an assurance that the person concerned will continue to commit the agreed effort to the research project
- In the case of full-time registration where the research undertaken for the higher degree is an integral part of the project, approval will only be given if the department concerned offers a higher degree programme which is recognised by the ESRC. It is expected that the researcher registered for the higher degree will follow the recognised higher degree programme unless they have already completed an appropriate Masters course or postgraduate diploma.

Change of grant holder (GC14 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

If a grant holder resigns or retires during the period of the research grant, a replacement may be nominated by the relevant head of department and a request made to continue the research. If, however, the grant holder has moved to another organisation, the arrangements for transfers would normally apply.

Transfers of grants between organisations (GC13 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

When a grant holder takes up an appointment at another recognised RO before the grant finishes, the ESRC normally transfers the balance of the grant, subject to the agreement of the research organisations concerned. Exceptionally, the ESRC will approve the transfer of responsibility to another individual at the same RO. Grant holders proposing transfers are required to seek approval as early as possible (at least three months prior to proposed transfer date), supplying written agreements from the research organisations involved. Responsibility for the conduct of the grant remains with the original RO until such time as the transfer has been agreed by all parties concerned and until the date of transfer.

ESRC will assume that the amount to be transferred will be the sum of the money in the established profile for the grant, to be incurred after the date of transfer. ESRC will issue a new grant to the receiving RO within 20 working days, with this default figure as a sum to be transferred from the agreed date.

In agreeing the transfer, the first RO thereby agrees not to claim from ESRC any amount which is in excess of the original cash limit less the default transfer. If the RO later establishes that it has incurred costs beyond this limit they may not be claimed from ESRC. They may, with the agreement of the second RO, be claimed from it. The second RO may however only pass these costs on to ESRC as long as all claims by it (including these amounts) do not exceed the cash limit for transferred grant.

If a grant is transferred from one RO to another, it will not be re-costed to take account of different indirect and estate charges used in the new RO. The Directly Allocated and Indirect costs awarded to the new RO should be calculated on the basis of the amount of time that has passed since the grant started.

Similarly pre-fEC grants will not normally be re-costed and will remain as pre-fEC grants if transferred to a different RO.

Right to terminate

The ESRC reserves the right:

- To revise or amend at any time the conditions of the grant
- To suspend or terminate a grant at any time.

In reserving these rights the ESRC will, where possible, seek to ensure that in the event of changes or termination, reasonable notice is given to the RO and grant holder. The minimum notice will be six months.

In appropriate cases, the ESRC will consider paying such final instalments as may be necessary to cover outstanding and unavoidable commitments.

Reporting requirements

Risk management

Risk Management Plans in the form of Risk Registers must be produced by all large grant holders within three months of being contracted. These should be fully commensurate with

the host institution's Risk Register and should be sent to ESRC for initial comment. The Risk Register should identify, assess and manage key risks in relation to the delivery of outputs required under the funding agreement. This should include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Governance and staffing
- Delivery and outputs
- Infrastructure and facilities
- Finance, income management, procurement and VfM-related matters
- Legal, DPA, FOIA and IPR-related matters
- Quality
- Research sustainability
- Ethics, scientific fraud and misconduct
- Reputational aspects
- Socio-political factors.

End of Award reports

(GC18 of Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants)

An End of Award report must be submitted for all ESRC research grants within three months of the final date of the grant period. Grant holders will be reminded up to three months in advance of this date of the reporting requirements for their grant. The preparation and submission of the End of Award Report is the responsibility of all the named grant holders. Grant holders will not be eligible for further ESRC funding where an acceptable End of Award Report has not been received or where the report is overdue. The final payment on a grant will be withheld by the ESRC until a report is submitted which meets the criteria laid down in the guidelines which accompany the form.

If the final report is not received within the period allowed, a sanction of 20 per cent of expenditure incurred on the grant will be applied. All payments may be recovered if the report is not received within six months of the end of the grant. Grant holders will be expected to provide an explanation in the report where the use of funds has been significantly different from that anticipated at the start of the grant.

Impact Report

Grant holders must submit an Impact Report 12 months after the end date of the grant. This report will detail the early and expected scientific and practical impacts of the project. Grant holders will not be eligible for further ESRC funding while the report is overdue or has not been accepted by ESRC. Grant holders are encouraged to supplement this report beyond the lifetime of the grant by submitting an Impact Record as and when further impacts arise from the grant.

Following acceptance by the ESRC, the End of Award Report and Impact Report will be made publicly available on the ESRC website where applicable.

Changes to reports will not normally be accepted after ESRC has confirmed its acceptance.

Please refer to the ESRC Research Catalogue section above for additional terms and conditions relating to uploading outputs to the ESRC Research Catalogue / RCUK Research Outcomes System.

Anniversary reminders

The ESRC Research Catalogue (www.esrc.ac.uk/impacts-and-findings/research-catalogue) holds a database of ESRC-funded grants and all research outputs and impacts arising from those grants. As part of the final reporting process, grant holders will be asked to confirm that details of outputs from their grant have been submitted to the Research Catalogue. Once a year, on the anniversary of the grant start date, grant holders will also be asked to update the output and impact records for the grant, as well as ensuring that ESRC has correct contact details for the grant holder(s). Completion of these enquiries (including the upload and update of outputs and impacts) for up to five years after the end of the grant is a condition of ESRC funding.

Retired academics

Salaries for retired academics who have pensions from schemes other than the USS can be funded in full.

Salaries for retired academics who receive USS pensions can be funded in full provided they are working on a part time contract where the annualised pay plus pension does not exceed the full time rate for the job.

Retired academics in receipt of USS pensions whose actual pay rate is being abated by their employer because the annualised pay for the hours they work plus their pension exceed the normal salary for the job, are only eligible for funding on the adjusted (ie reduced) pay scale on which they are engaged.

RCUK terms and conditions of grants

Terms and conditions of Research Council fEC Grants

These terms and conditions relate to grants, comprising Research Grants and Fellowships, costed and funded on the basis of full economic costs (fEC), calculated in accordance with the TRAC methodology (universities and other higher education bodies) or by an equivalent methodology by other Research Organisations.

Grants awarded by the Research Councils are made to Research Organisations on the basis of this single set of core terms and conditions. The Research Councils are:

- Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
- Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
- Medical Research Council (MRC)
- Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)
- Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)

Individual Councils may add additional conditions to the grant to reflect the particular circumstances and requirements of their organisation, or the nature of a particular grant. Acceptance of a grant constitutes acceptance of both the core conditions and any additional conditions. Any request by the grant holder to the Council to vary these terms and conditions must be submitted through the Je-S grants maintenance facility and approved in writing by someone authorised to do so on behalf of the Council.

The Research Councils reserve the right to vary these terms and conditions.

Definitions

Research Council: any of the bodies listed above.

Grant: support for a proportion of the full economic costs of a project. A Grant may be either a Research Grant or a Fellowship.

- **Research Grant:** a contribution to the costs of a stated research project which has been assessed as suitable for funding through the procedures established by the relevant Research Council.
- **Fellowship Grant:** a grant made through a fellowship competition providing a contribution to the support of a named individual. It covers the cost of the time dedicated by the fellow to their personal research programme, and may or may not include research support costs.

Grant holder: the person to whom the grant is assigned and who has responsibility for the intellectual leadership of the project and for the overall management of the research. The grant holder is either the Principal Investigator (in the case of a Research Grant) or a Research Fellow (in the case of a Fellowship Grant)

Co-Investigator: a person who assists the grant holder in the management and leadership of a project.

Research Organisation: the organisation to which the grant is awarded and which takes responsibility for the management of the research project and the accountability of funds provided.

Full Economic Costs (fEC): a cost which, if recovered across an organisation's full programme, would recover the total cost (direct, indirect and total overhead) including an adequate recurring investment in the organisation's infrastructure.

Directly Incurred Costs: costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project, are charged as the cash value actually spent and are supported by an audit record.

Directly Allocated Costs: the costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities. They are charged to projects on the basis of estimates rather than actual costs and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis.

Indirect Costs: non-specific costs charged across all projects based on estimates that are not otherwise included as Directly Allocated Costs. They include the costs of the Research Organisation's administration such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services.

Exceptions: Directly Incurred Costs that Research Councils fund at 100 per cent of fEC, subject to actual expenditure incurred, or items that are outside fEC.

Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC): an agreed methodology used by universities and other higher education bodies for calculating full economic costs.

Funding Assurance Programme: a programme of visits and office-based tests to seek assurance that grant funds are used for the purpose for which they are given and that grants are managed in accordance with the terms and conditions under which they are awarded.

Data Protection Regulations

The Research Councils will use information provided on the grant proposal for processing the proposal, the award of any consequential grant, and for the payment, maintenance and review of the grant. This may include:

- Registration of proposals
- Operation of grants processing and management information systems
- Preparation of material for use by referees and peer review panels
- Administration, investigation and review of grant proposals
- Sharing proposal information on a strictly confidential basis with other funding organisations to seek contributions to the funding of proposals
- Statistical analysis in relation to the evaluation of research and the study of trends
- Policy and strategy studies.

To meet the Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, details of grants may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

After completion of the grant, the Research Council may contact the grant holder concerning funding opportunities or events, or for the purposes of evaluation. In some instances, the Research Council may wish to authorise an affiliate organisation to contact the grant holder on its behalf. It is assumed that, by agreeing to these terms and conditions, the Research Organisation consents to this on behalf of the grant holder, but if the grant holder prefers not to be contacted in this way, he or she should state this to the Research Council. Grant holders may choose to opt out at any point, provided they comply with all other terms and conditions associated with the grant.

Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations

Attention is drawn to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs). Research Councils have issued Publication Schemes which set out the types of information publicly available on their websites or published as documents. In addition, Research Councils have an obligation to respond to specific requests and may be required to disclose information about or provided by Research Organisations. In some cases the Research Council may consult the Research Organisation before disclosure, but it is under no obligation to do so. If a Research Organisation considers that any information it provides to a Research Council would be subject to an exemption under FOIA or the EIRs it should clearly mark the information as such and provide an explanation of why it considers the exemption applies and for how long. The Research Council will consider this explanation before disclosure, but it is not obliged to accept it as binding.

Where a Research Council determines that a Research Organisation is holding information on its behalf that it requires in order to comply with its obligations under FOIA or EIRs, the Research Organisation undertakes to provide access to such information as soon as reasonably practicable on request of the Research Council and in any event within five working days.

In some cases Research Organisations may be directly responsible for complying with FOIA and the EIRs; in such cases the Research Councils accept no responsibility for any failure to comply by the Research Organisations.

Grant Conditions GC1 – GC25

GC 1 Responsibilities of the Research Organisation

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

- The Research Organisation must ensure that any part of the Full Economic Cost of the project not funded by the Research Council grant is committed to the project before it starts.
- The Research Organisation must ensure that the grant holder and co-investigators are made aware of their responsibilities and that they observe the terms and conditions of grants.
- The Research Organisation must ensure that the research supported by the grant complies with all relevant legislation and Government regulation, including that introduced while work is in progress. This requirement includes approval or licence from any regulatory body that may be required before the research can commence.
- The Research Organisation is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for the management of research staff set out in the 2008 Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, and subsequent amendments. The Research Organisation must create an environment in which research staff are selected and treated on the basis of their merits, abilities and potential. It must ensure that reliable systems and processes are in place so that the principles of the Concordat are embedded into practice within the Research Organisation. It must

ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and Government regulation, including any subsequent amendments introduced while work is in progress.

- The Research Organisation is expected to adopt the principles, standards and good practice for public engagement with research set out in the 2010 Concordat for Engaging the Public with Research: www.rcuk.ac.uk/per/Pages/Concordat.aspx. The Research Organisation must create an environment in which public engagement is valued, recognised and supported. It must ensure that reliable systems and processes are in place so that the principles of the Concordat are embedded into practice within the Research Organisation.
- The Research Organisation must appoint a Research Fellow as an employee for the full duration of the grant.
- The Research Organisation must integrate the Research Fellow within the research activities of the host department, whilst ensuring that he or she is able to maintain independence and focus on their personal research programme.
- The Research Organisation must notify the Research Council of any change in its status, or that of the grant holder, that might affect the eligibility to hold a grant.
- The Research Organisation must ensure that the requirements of the Employing Organisation under the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (or equivalent) are met for research involving NHS patients, their organs, tissues or data, and that the necessary arrangements are in place with partner organisations. Where it also accepts the responsibilities of a Sponsor (as defined in the Governance Framework), it must also ensure that the requirements for Sponsors are met.
- The Research Organisation must ensure proper financial management of grants and accountability for the use of public funds.

GC 2 Research governance

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to ensure that the research is organised and undertaken within a framework of best practice that recognises the various factors that may influence or impact on a research project. Particular requirements are to ensure that all necessary permissions are obtained before the research begins, and that there is clarity of role and responsibility among the research team and with any collaborators. The Research Councils expect research to be conducted in accordance with the highest standards of research integrity and research methodology.

Research ethics

The Research Organisation is responsible for ensuring that ethical issues relating to the research project are identified and brought to the attention of the relevant approval or regulatory body. Approval to undertake the research must be granted before any work requiring approval begins. Ethical issues should be interpreted broadly and may encompass, among other things, relevant codes of practice, the involvement of human participants, tissue or data in research, the use of animals, research that may result in damage to the environment and the use of sensitive economic, social or personal data.

Use of animals in research

Wherever possible, researchers must adopt procedures and techniques that avoid the use of animals. Where this is not possible, the research should be designed so that:

- The least sentient species with the appropriate physiology is used.
- The number of animals used is the minimum sufficient to provide adequate statistical power to answer the question posed.
- The severity of procedures performed on animals is kept to a minimum. Experiments should be kept as short as possible. Appropriate anaesthesia, analgesia and humane end points should be used to minimise any pain and suffering.

The provisions of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, and any amendments, must be observed and all necessary licences must have been received before any work requiring approval takes place.

Medical and health research

The Research Organisation is responsible for managing and monitoring the conduct of medical and health research in a manner consistent with the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (or equivalent). There must be effective and verifiable systems in place for managing research quality, progress and the safety and wellbeing of patients and other research participants. These systems must promote and maintain the relevant codes of practice and all relevant statutory review, authorisation and reporting requirements.

Research involving human participants or data within the social sciences that falls outside the Department of Health's Research Governance Framework must meet the provisions and guidelines of the ESRC's Research Ethics Framework. While this research may involve patients, NHS staff or organisations, it is defined as research that poses no clinical risk or harm to those who are the subjects of research. Research Organisations must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for independent ethics review of social science research that meets local research ethics committee standards.

Significant developments must be assessed as the research proceeds, especially those that affect safety and wellbeing, which should be reported to the appropriate authorities and to the Research Council. The Research Organisation must take appropriate and timely action when significant problems are identified. This may include temporarily suspending or terminating the research.

The Research Organisation is responsible for managing and monitoring statutory requirements for which it accepts responsibility; for example, in relation to legislation on clinical trials, use of human organs, tissues and data.

Guidance by the MRC on the conduct of medical research, and by ESRC on the conduct of social science research, provided on behalf of all Research Councils, must be observed.

Health and safety

The Research Organisation is responsible for ensuring that a safe working environment is provided for all individuals associated with a research project. Its approach and policy on

health and safety matters must meet all regulatory and legislative requirements and be consistent with best practice recommended by the Health & Safety Executive.

Appropriate care must be taken where researchers are working off-site. The Research Organisation must satisfy itself that all reasonable health and safety factors are addressed.

The Research Councils reserve the right to require the Research Organisation to undertake a safety risk assessment in individual cases where health and safety is an issue, and to monitor and audit the actual arrangements made.

Misconduct and conflicts of interest

The Research Organisation is required to have in place procedures for governing good research practice, and for investigating and reporting unacceptable research conduct that meet the requirements set out in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (2012) (<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/publications/pages/concordattosupportresearchintegrity.aspx>) and the Research Councils' Code of Conduct and Policy on the Governance of Good Research Conduct (2009) and any subsequent amendments.

GC 3 Use of funds

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

Subject to the following conditions, grant funds may be used, without reference to the Research Council, in such a manner as to best carry out the research.

Grant funds include a provision for inflation based on the GDP Deflators published by HM Government. The value of the grant may be varied by the Research Council during the lifetime of the grant in accordance with the deflators or to take into account any other Government decisions affecting the funding available to the Research Councils. Grant funds are provided for a specific research project. Under no circumstances may Directly Incurred and Exceptions funds be used to meet costs on any other grant or activity.

Directly Incurred and Exceptions funds cannot be used to meet the costs of an activity that will fall beyond the actual end date of the grant, eg when travel falls after the end of the grant, the costs cannot be charged to the grant even if the tickets, etc. can be purchased in advance.

Any proposal to purchase an item of equipment in the last six months of the grant is subject to prior written approval by the Research Council. The Research Council will wish to be assured that the item of equipment is essential to the research.

GC 4 Starting procedures

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The process for activating a grant consists of two separate stages. The Research Organisation must formally accept the grant by completing and returning the Offer Acceptance within 10 working days of the offer letter being issued. Returning the Offer Acceptance will result in the Start Confirmation and the Payment Schedule being issued. The Start Confirmation must be submitted within 42 (calendar) days of the research/training

starting and the start date shown on the start confirmation will be regarded as the start date of the grant. The start of research may be delayed by up to six months (ESRC three months) from the start date shown in the offer letter, the duration of the grant remaining unchanged. The grant may lapse if it is not started within this period.

Where there are staff funded by the grant who were intended to be appointed from the start date, payments will take effect from the date when the first such staff start work. Otherwise, payments will take effect from the start date given on the start confirmation.

Expenditure may be incurred prior to the start of research and subsequently charged to the grant, provided that it does not precede the date of the offer letter.

GC 5 Changes in research project

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The Research Council must be consulted in the event of any major change in the proposed research, including failure to gain access to research facilities and services, or to gain ethical committee approval for the research, particularly those which make it unlikely that the objectives of the research can be achieved. If appropriate, revised proposals may be required. The Research Council reserves the right to make a new grant in place of the existing grant, or to revise, retain or terminate the existing grant.

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to manage the resources on the grant, including the staff, and the Research Council need not be consulted if staffing levels on the grant are changed. However, a proportionate reduction should be made in the value of Estates, Indirect Costs and Infrastructure Technicians claimed by the Research Organisation in the following circumstances:

- A post that attracts these costs is not filled
- A staff member who attracts these costs leaves more than six months before the end of the period for which the post was funded and is either not replaced, or is replaced by a category of staff that does not attract the costs – eg project student or technician.

GC 6 Transfers of funds between fund headings

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

Transfers of funds between fund headings are permitted only within and between Directly Incurred costs and Exceptions, excluding equipment. Equipment funding is ring-fenced and transfers into or out of the equipment headings, whether under Directly Incurred or Exceptions is not permitted. Transfers will be at the rate applicable for the heading, as set out in the grant letter. Funds can only be transferred and used to meet the cost of activity or activities that meet the agreed aims and objectives of the project. While approval does not need to be sought from the Research Council for transfer of funds, the Research Councils reserve the right to query any expenditure outlined in the Final Expenditure Statement, which has not been incurred in line with the Grant Terms and Conditions.

GC 7 Extensions

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

Research Grants: After a research grant has started, the duration may be extended, subject to prior written approval, to cover staff absences (excluding the principal and co-investigators unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant). The grant may be extended by a total of up to six months to cover breaks or delays in the appointment of staff, parental leave, extended jury service or paid sick leave exceeding three months (or possibly shorter periods of sick leave if the member of staff is disabled for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 or other exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Research Council); or by an overall total of up to 12 months to cover periods of maternity, paternity or adoption leave. In the case of other exceptional circumstances, the duration may be extended at the discretion of the Research Council.

Fellowship Grants: After a fellowship grant has started, the duration may be extended to cover maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave, extended jury service or paid sick leave for a Research Fellow in line with the terms and conditions of the fellow's employment. Otherwise, the conditions for extending Fellowship grants are the same as apply to research grants.

Any request for an extension should be made via the Grant Maintenance facility in Je-S once the required duration is known. All requests for extensions must be made before the grant ends.

GC 8 Staff

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.

The Research Organisation must provide research staff with a statement at the outset of their employment, setting out the provisions for career management and development, including personal skills training, and ensure that they have access to appropriate training opportunities.

Provided it is related to the research project on which they are currently working, Research staff and Research Fellows may, during normal working hours, undertake teaching and demonstrating work, including associated training, preparatory, marking and examination duties, for up to an average of six hours a week (pro rata for part-time staff) calculated over the period that they are supported on the grant.

GC 9 Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The research organisation will be compensated at the end of the grant to cover any additional net costs that cannot be met within the cash limit, of paid maternity, paternity,

adoption and parental leave for staff within the Directly Incurred and Exceptions fund headings (excluding the principal and co-investigators, unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant) if they fulfil the relevant qualifying conditions of the employing Research Organisation.

The net cost is the amount paid to the individual less the amount the Research Organisation can recover for Statutory Maternity Pay and Statutory Adoption Pay from HMRC.

Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental pay is payable by the Research Council only for directly incurred staff that are funded for 100 per cent of their contracted time on the grant (apart from staff acting as principal or co-investigators unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant).

Grant funds, within the announced cash limit, may be used to meet the costs of making a substitute appointment and/or extending the grant to cover a period of maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave for staff within the directly incurred and exceptions fund headings (excluding the principal and co-investigators, unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant). The duration of a grant will be extended only if the period can be accommodated within the maximum period allowed for extensions. Directly Allocated and Indirect funds will not be increased as a result of such extensions.

Research Grants: Research Grant funds may be used to meet the costs of paid maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave only to the extent that it is taken during the original period of the grant. The Research Organisation will be responsible for any liability for maternity, paternity, parental and adoption leave pay for staff supported by the grant outside the original period of the grant. If, for example, a grant ends while a member of research staff is part-way through her maternity leave, the Research Organisation will be responsible for that part of the maternity leave which is taken after the research grant has ended.

Fellowship Grants: Fellows are entitled to take maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave in accordance with the terms and conditions of the fellow's employment. If requested, consideration will be given to allowing a fellowship grant to be placed in abeyance during the absence of the Research Fellow for maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave, and the period of the fellowship extended by the period of leave. Consideration will be given to requests to continue the fellowship on a flexible or part-time basis to allow the Research Fellow to meet caring responsibilities.

GC 10 Sick leave

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The Research Organisation will be compensated at the end of the grant to cover any additional net costs, that cannot be met within the cash limit, of paid sick leave for staff within the Directly Incurred and Exceptions fund headings (excluding the principal and co-investigators, unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant) who fulfil the qualifying conditions of the Research Organisation. The net cost is the amount paid to the individual less the amount the Research Organisation can recover from HMRC.

Sick pay is payable by the Research Council only for directly incurred staff that are funded for 100 per cent of their contracted time on the grant (apart from staff acting as principal or co-investigators unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant).

Grant funds, within the announced cash limit, may be used to meet the approved costs of making a substitute appointment and/or extending the grant to cover a period of sick leave for staff within the directly incurred and exceptions fund headings (excluding the principal and co-investigators, unless they are also research fellows or research assistants funded by the grant). The duration of a grant will be extended only if the period can be accommodated within the maximum period allowed for extensions. Directly Allocated and Indirect funds will not be increased as a result of such extensions.

Research Grants: Where there is a continuous period of sick leave in excess of three months, the Research Organisation may apply to the Research Council to discuss the possibility of a substitute appointment to safeguard progress on the project. Where a Research Assistant has been on sick leave in excess of three months the Research Organisation must comply with all their obligations to consider reasonable adjustments before making a substitute appointment. Where a Research Assistant has been on sick leave for an aggregate (not necessarily continuous) period in excess of three months, where this is due to a single condition or a series of related conditions, the Research Organisation may request an extension to the duration of the project .

Fellowship Grants: Fellows are entitled to take sick leave in accordance with the research organisation's terms and conditions. If requested, consideration will be given to allowing a fellowship grant to be placed in abeyance during the absence of the Research Fellow due to sick leave, and the period of the fellowship extended by the period of sick leave. The additional salary costs for the fellow (pro rata to their percentage FTE on the fellowship) should be claimed, as necessary, at the end of the extended period.

GC 11 Procurement of equipment

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The procurement of equipment, consumables and services, including maintenance, must comply with all relevant national and EU legislation and the Research Organisation's own financial policy and procedures. Accepted procurement best practice in the higher education sector must be observed. For all equipment and services where the contract value is more than £25,000, excluding VAT, professionally qualified procurement staff must be consulted before the procurement process begins, and, where appropriate, at the market research stage, and must approve the order/contract before it is placed with a supplier.

GC 12 Ownership and use of equipment

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

Equipment purchased from grant funds is primarily for use on the research project for which the research grant was awarded, and belongs to the Research Organisation. In certain circumstances the Research Council may wish to retain ownership throughout the period of

the grant and possibly beyond. In such cases, the grant will be subject to an additional condition.

The Research Council must be informed if, during the life of the research grant, the need for the equipment diminishes substantially or it is not used for the purpose for which it was funded. The Research Council reserves the right to determine the disposal of such equipment and to claim the proceeds of any sale.

Any proposal to transfer ownership of the equipment during the period of the grant is subject to prior approval by the Research Council. After the research project has ended, the Research Organisation is free to use the equipment without reference to the Research Council, but it is nevertheless expected to maintain it for research purposes as long as is practicable.

Where there is spare capacity in the use of the equipment, the Research Council expects this to be made available to other users. Priority should be given to research supported by any of the Research Councils and to Research Council-funded students.

GC 13 Transfer of a grant to another Research Organisation

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The Research Organisation must notify the Shared Services Centre via the Grant Maintenance facility in if the grant holder intends to transfer to another organisation. If this organisation is eligible to hold grants, and is able to provide a suitable environment to enable the project to be successfully completed, the expectation is that the grant would be transferred with the grant holder. Written agreement to this is required from both the relinquishing and receiving organisations; this will normally be triggered automatically by the initial request to Je-S.

The Research Council will wish to be assured that satisfactory arrangements have been agreed that will enable the project to be undertaken, or to continue, in accordance with its research objectives. If suitable arrangements cannot be agreed, the Research Council will consider withdrawing its support or terminating the grant.

Where there is a basis for continuing involvement by the relinquishing organisation, agreement should be reached between both organisations on the apportionment of work and the distribution of related funding.

Grants will not be re-costed following transfer. The unspent balance of Directly Incurred and Exceptions, together with a pro rata share of Directly Allocated and Indirect costs, will be transferred to the new Research Organisation. The receiving organisation will be required to confirm, by return of an offer acceptance, that it will provide any balance of resources needed to complete the project.

GC 14 Change of grant holder

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

Research Grants: The Research Organisation must consult the Research Council via the Grant Maintenance facility in Je-S if it is proposed to change the grant holder, for example, following retirement or resignation. Where the grant holder is transferring to another organisation eligible to hold a grant, the provisions of GC 13 will apply. In other circumstances, the Research Organisation may nominate a replacement grant holder. The Research Council will wish to be assured that the replacement meets the eligibility criteria and has the expertise and experience to lead the project to a successful conclusion, in accordance with its research objectives.

Fellowship grants: A fellowship grant is awarded on the basis of a named individual's suitability to undertake and benefit from the period of research: therefore changes to the grant holder are not permitted. The resignation of the Research Fellow, or the termination of their employment, constitutes the end of the grant for the purpose of submitting a final report and the Council's financial liabilities.

GC 15 Annual statement

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The Research Organisation may be sent a statement to return each year showing payments made by the Research Council during the previous financial year for all the grants it holds. Where a statement is required, the Research Organisation must certify, by returning the statement, that:

- Expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the grant conditions
- Grants shown as current are continuing.

No further payments will be made until the annual statement has been received and accepted by the Research Council.

GC 16 Expenditure statements

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The Research Organisation must complete and return an expenditure statement within three months of the end date of a grant. Once an expenditure statement has been received and the expenditure incurred has been reconciled against payments made, it will be considered as final.

Expenditure shown in the Directly Incurred and Exceptions headings must show the actual expenditure incurred by the project. Settlement by the Research Council will reflect the proportion of fEC stated in the grant letter applied to actual expenditure, within the cash limit.

For the Directly Allocated and Indirect Costs headings, the Research Council will pay the amount shown as spent, within the cash limit, provided that the grant ran its full course. Where a grant is terminated more than six months before the planned end date, a pro rata share will be paid. Where a grant terminates within six months of the planned end date, estates and Indirect Costs will be paid in full, but Investigators' costs and Other Directly Allocated Costs will be paid pro rata.

Costs arising from maternity, paternity, adoption or sick leave should be identified in the Absence heading of the statement.

The Research Council reserves the right to require the Research Organisation to complete and submit a statement of expenditure at any time during the course of a grant, or to provide supplementary information in support of an interim or final expenditure statement.

If there are exceptional reasons that will prevent submission of the expenditure statement within the period allowed, a written request may be made via the Grant Maintenance facility in Je-S, before the due date passes, for the submission period to be extended.

GC 17 Inspection

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The Research Council reserves the right to have reasonable access to inspect the records and financial procedures associated with grants or to appoint any other body or individual for the purpose of such inspection.

The Research Organisation must, if required by the Research Council, provide a statement of account for the grant, independently examined by an auditor who is a member of a recognised professional body, certifying that the expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the research grant terms and conditions.

Research Councils will undertake periodic reviews of Research Organisations within the Funding Assurance Programme to seek assurance that grants are managed in accordance with the terms and conditions under which they are awarded.

GC 18 Final report

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

Where required, a report on the conduct and outcome of the project must be submitted by the Research Organisation within three months of the end of the grant, on the form provided. No further application from a grant holder will be considered while a final report is overdue.

If there are exceptional reasons that will prevent submission of the final report within the period allowed, a written request may be made via the Grant Maintenance facility in Je-S before the due date passes, for the submission period to be extended.

The Research Councils have also developed online systems to collect information on the outputs and outcomes of research, and have issued Council-specific guidance on the use of these systems and the timing and scope of reporting that is required. The Research Organisation must ensure that the appropriate system is used in accordance with the guidance provided.

GC 19 Sanctions

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The Research Councils reserve the right to impose financial sanctions where they identify areas of non-compliance in relation to the terms and conditions of grants. Further details on the assurance requirements of the Research Councils can be found at:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/about/aboutRCUK/aims/units/pages/Assurance.aspx>

If the final report or the financial expenditure statement is not received within the period allowed, the research council may recover 20 per cent of expenditure incurred on the grant. All payments may be recovered if the report or statement is not received within six months of the end of the grant.

In relation to the current quality assurance and validation project for TRAC implementation in universities, the Research Councils reserve the right to apply sanctions of 75 per cent of the non-compliant rate where an institution is found to be using rates which are materially inaccurate (more than 10 per cent variance on any single rate). These sanctions would only apply to future applications, although Councils may exercise a higher sanction where there has been evidence of significant overpayments to a research organisation based on inaccurate rates.

GC 20 Public engagement

(See also 'Expectations about funded research, including societal and economic impact')

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation and the grant holder and co-investigators to communicate the research to the public at both local and national level, and to raise awareness of the role of science and research in any related issues of public interest. Special schemes exist in some Research Councils providing additional support for these activities.

GC 21 Exploitation and impact

(See also 'Expectations about funded research, including societal and economic impact')

It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation, and all engaged in the research, to make every reasonable effort to ensure that the intellectual assets obtained in the course of the research, whether protected by intellectual property rights or not, are used to the benefit of society and the economy. Research outcomes should be disseminated to both research and more widespread audiences - for example to inform potential users and beneficiaries of the research.

Unless stated otherwise, the ownership of all intellectual assets, including intellectual property and responsibility for their application, rests with the organisation that generates them.

Where the grant is associated with more than one research organisation and/or other project partners, the basis of collaboration between the organisations, including ownership of intellectual property and rights to exploitation, is expected to be set out in a formal collaboration agreement. It is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to put such an agreement in place before the research begins. The terms of collaboration agreements must not conflict with the Research Councils' terms and conditions.

Arrangements for collaboration and/or exploitation must not prevent the future progression of research and the dissemination of research results in accordance with academic custom and practice. A temporary delay in publication is acceptable in order to allow commercial and collaborative arrangements to be established.

The Research Council may, in individual cases, reserve the right to retain ownership of intellectual assets, including intellectual property (or assign it to a third party under an exploitation agreement) and to arrange for it to be exploited for the national benefit and that of the Research Organisation involved. This right, if exercised, will be set out in an additional grant condition.

There should be suitable recognition and reward to researchers who undertake activities that deliver benefit through the application of research outcomes. The Research Organisation must ensure that all those associated with the research are aware of, and accept, these arrangements.

GC 22 Research monitoring and evaluation

(See also 'ESRC evaluation')

While it is the responsibility of the Research Organisation to manage the research, the Research Council reserves the right to call for periodic information on progress or to visit the project team. The grant holder may also be asked to attend meetings to exchange information and ideas with others undertaking research in the same or similar fields.

The grant holder must make all reasonable efforts, if so invited, to respond to requests for information or to attend events or activities organised by the Research Council concerning the research undertaken. Such events may be held after a grant has finished.

GC 23 Publication and acknowledgement of support

(See also 'Expectations about funded research, including societal and economic impact')

The grant holder should, subject to the procedures laid down by the Research Organisation, publish the results of the research in accordance with normal academic practice. Publications and other forms of media communication, including media appearances, press releases and conferences, must acknowledge the support received from the Research Council, quoting the grant reference number if appropriate.

Journal publications should acknowledge the funding source using the standard format agreed by funders and publishers and detailed in the additional information accompanying this grant.

GC 24 Disclaimer

(See also 'A successful proposal: What happens next?')

The Research Councils accept no liability, financial or otherwise, for expenditure or liability arising from the research funded by the grant, except as set out in these terms and conditions, or otherwise agreed in writing.

Where studies are carried out in an NHS Trust, the Trust has a duty of care to its patients. The Research Council does not accept liability for any failure in the Trust's duty of care, or any negligence on the part of its employees.

The Research Councils reserve the right to terminate the grant at any time, subject to reasonable notice and to any payment that may be necessary to cover outstanding and unavoidable commitments.

Further to GC3, the Research Councils reserve the right to amend the payment profile at their discretion. The Research Organisation will be advised, in advance, of any such a change. Changes to payment profiles may affect the overall value of the grant.

If a grant is terminated or reduced in value, no liability for payment or redundancy or any other compensatory payment for the dismissal of staff funded by the grant will be accepted, but, subject to the provisions of GC16, negotiations will be held with regard to other contractual commitments and concerning the disposal of assets acquired under the research grant.

GC 25 Status

These terms and conditions will be governed by the laws of England and Wales; all matters relating to the terms and conditions will be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

If any provision of these terms and conditions is found by a court or other legitimate body to be illegal, invalid or unreasonable, it will not affect the remaining terms and conditions which will continue in force.

These terms and conditions, together with any additional conditions set out in the grant; contain the whole agreement between the Research Council and the Research Organisation in relation to the stated research grant. The Research Council and the Research Organisation do not intend that any of these terms and conditions should be enforceable by any third party.