



**NERC RESEARCH GRANTS AND  
FELLOWSHIPS HANDBOOK**

**GRANTS AWARDED ON FULL ECONOMIC COST  
BASIS**

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**Edition 2018 – 1.0**

**February 2018**

# NERC RESEARCH GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS 2018

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**Edition 2018-1.0 February 2018: for research grant and fellowship proposals from 1 September 2005 (after introduction of full economic costing) only. For awards made before 1 September 2005, please refer to Edition 2004 1.3 (available from [researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk))**

## Foreword

This handbook sets out the regulations governing research grants and fellowships awarded by the Natural Environment Research Council. It sets out the application procedures and eligibility requirements. It also outlines the funding and facilities available to grant-holders, and details the responsibilities of NERC, grant holders and research organisations. It must be read in conjunction with the core [terms and conditions](#) that have been agreed across all research councils.

The handbook focuses on grants and fellowships awarded through NERC Discovery Science (Responsive Mode), Innovation (Knowledge Exchange) and Strategic Research (Research Programmes). NERC Studentships and Training Grants are not covered by this handbook, but are instead governed by the [Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants](#)

The main changes to the regulations will be made in updates of the handbook. However, NERC reserves 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 handbook](#), available on the NERC website.

Please note that the financial conditions for proposals received from 1 September 2005 differ to those governing awards made previously, due to the implementation of full economic costing.

### **Changes and points to note (Edition 2018 – 1.0 February 2018).**

Paragraphs 13/20 – there is no longer a minimum amount per component for Standard or Large grants.

Paragraph 15 – update to the list of exceptions reasons

Paragraphs 38-46 Expanded and updated information on Innovations schemes.

Paragraph 52 – Clarification of Fellowship holders eligible to apply for NERC grants

Paragraph 57/58 – eligibility for New Investigators has been updated from three to five years of first becoming eligible for NERC funding as a Principal Investigator.

Paragraph 62 – update to the eligibility criteria for Researcher Co-Is

Paragraph 122 – removed obsolete information relating to the 2014/15 academic year.

Paragraph 169 – clarification that non-UK HEIs will normally be involved in proposals as project partners.

Paragraph 210/247-252 – updating the process for proposals requesting Antarctic logistic support.

Paragraphs 237-244 – updating the process for proposals requesting NERC shiptime and/or marine equipment

Throughout – updated references to High Performance Computing (HPC) to reflect the facilities now available.

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## Section A - INTRODUCTION

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### General Principles

1. The NERC research grant and fellowship schemes provide financial support for environmental scientists in UK universities and other approved institutions to conceive and develop their own projects. The scientific research carried out under NERC grants should be ethically sound, innovative and of the highest quality, and must fall within the NERC scientific remit.
2. New grants are awarded on the basis of a proportion of the full economic cost (fEC), calculated in accordance with the TRAC (Transparent Approach to Costing) methodology (Universities and other Higher Education bodies) or by an equivalent methodology by other Research Organisations. The proportion of fEC supported is 80%.
3. Grants awarded by the NERC are made to Research Organisations on the basis of the terms and conditions detailed in the NERC Research Grants and Fellowships Handbook (including the [Terms and Conditions for Research Council fEC Grants](#)).
4. Grants support eligible scientists or teams of scientists ('Investigators'), for a specified period to carry out a defined programme of research, or research related activity, including technology development where it has clear application for future research. The Investigators will be involved in the leadership and management of the research project.
5. Grant and fellowship proposals are normally assessed through independent scientific peer review. In evaluating proposals and selecting the best research, NERC uses the knowledge, advice and expertise of its [Peer Review College](#) or an equivalent panel of experts. Membership of the NERC Peer Review College comprises NERC grant holders, other research practitioners and public and private sector representatives of the science user community. There is an expectation that all NERC grant applicants should play their part in NERC peer review activity. There is a shared responsibility for delivering this essential part of the grants process.
6. Grant-holders will be given the freedom to develop the work in their own way, but NERC is obliged to retain adequate control over the use of public funds. Whilst there will be scope for flexibility in planning and executing the research, major changes from the programme originally proposed will need the prior approval of NERC.
7. NERC encourages collaborations between scientists and all applicants should consider the possibility of collaboration with other scientists in the UK and overseas and multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary team approaches when formulating proposals. Part of the assessment of a proposal will be based on the relationship with similar work being carried out elsewhere, and whether full advantage will be taken of opportunities for consultation and co-operation.

## Section B – TYPES OF AWARD

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8. NERC supports a number of grant and fellowship schemes through its Discovery Science (Responsive Mode), Innovation (Knowledge Exchange) and Strategic Research (Research Programme) funding. Whilst the exact conditions and closing dates vary, applicants for all of the schemes outlined below must meet the eligibility criteria set out in Section C.

### Discovery Science (Responsive Mode) Funding

9. Discovery Science supports excellent research in response to unsolicited ideas from research groups, teams or individuals, in any area relevant to the remit of NERC. NERC promotes unrestricted and innovative thinking; proposed research can be pure, applied or policy driven and must seek to address, or provide means to address – clearly defined science questions.
10. Through Discovery Science, NERC encourages (but does not demand):
- “adventurous” research (research that is innovative and high risk, challenging current conventions from a position of intellectual strength, exploring new boundaries or adapting novel techniques to an entirely different field).
  - “technology-led” proposals (proposals where there is a focus on technology development and the potential application of that technology falls within the remit of NERC. These can be distinguished from scientific, curiosity-driven proposals that contain an element of technology development, which are not considered to be technology-led. The “technology” can be any instrument, platform, sensor or technique developed, provided or used for environmental science. This includes information and communication technology and High Performance Computing (HPC) technologies as well as mathematical and statistical techniques).
  - Collaboration and the exchange of ideas across and within disciplines and institutional boundaries; and
  - collaboration with international and non-academic partners
11. Discovery Science is a key component of delivering the strategy of NERC and is intended to facilitate the identification of the next generation of strategic priorities. By providing early-career researchers with the opportunity to develop their careers, together with its support for cutting-edge areas of science, Discovery Science plays a crucial role in sustaining the UK’s position as a world leader in environmental science research.
12. Current Discovery Science funding schemes are listed below:
- Standard Grants (including New Investigator Grants)
  - Large Grants
  - Urgency Grants

➤ Fellowships

## Standard Grants

- 13.** There are two closing dates per year. One in late-January and the other in late-July. Closing dates will be [published](#) once available on our website. Proposals must be submitted to NERC in Je-S by 16.00 (4PM) and proposals will not submit after that time. See Section F for details of the application procedures. The previous minimum per complete proposal and per component of £65,000 no longer applies and components can request less than £65K if required. The maximum for the complete proposal is £0.8 million (100% fEC). The total cost includes facility costs (where applicable – see Section F). The previous restriction allowing a Standard Grant to be joint between a maximum of four Research Organisations no longer applies. There is no Je-S system validation for the upper limit and any standard grant proposal received that exceeds the maximum funding limit and does not have prior authorisation will be rejected by NERC.
- 14.** If in exceptional cases the research proposed requires resources above the £0.8 million limit, but is unable to meet the scale and complexity of research required in the Large Grant scheme, applicants may contact NERC prior to submission to request permission to submit a standard grant proposal that exceeds the maximum funding limit. Please note that as shiptime and/or marine equipment costs are not calculated prior to submission for standard grant proposals it is not necessary to request exceptional permission to exceed the standard grant maximum based on these anticipated costs.
- 15.** Where the proposal includes costs for the GEF Ocean Bottom Instrument(s), GEF seismometer(s), FAAM/ARSF/BAS Twin Otter aircraft (the facility will be able to advise on eligible instrument or aircraft costs), EISCAT Radar facility or other ship-time or marine facility related costs and as a result of these costs alone, the requested budget is greater than the £0.8million limit, please e-mail [researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk) at least 2 months before the call closing date and confirm:
- Principal Investigator (lead PI if joint proposal)
  - Research Organisation
  - Intended Standard Grant call closing date for submission
  - Project title
  - Estimated total cost at 100% fEC (for the whole project if a joint proposal) and the cost and details of the exceptional elements (the GEF Ocean Bottom Facility, GEF seismometer, FAAM, ARSF, BAS Twin Otter, EISCAT or other ship-time or marine facility related costs)
- The requested budget minus these facility costs must not exceed the £0.8million limit. NERC will confirm authorisation to exceed the standard grant funding limit at least 1 month before the call closing date.
- 16.** For all other requests to exceed the £0.8m limit, a full case must be made as detailed below. In order to request exceptional permission to submit a standard grant proposal exceeding the maximum funding limit please email [researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk) at least 2 months before the call closing date, attaching a document summarising the case for exceptional funding. Up to 2 sides of A4 is permitted to make the case, which should



contain as a minimum the following key information:

- Principal Investigator (lead PI if joint proposal)
- Research Organisation
- Intended Standard Grant call closing date for submission
- Project title
- Estimated project budget at 100% fEC (for whole project if joint proposal)
- Details of and justification for individual items expected to exceed 10% of the total budget (except indirect and estates costs)
- Explain why this research is exceptional in requiring resources above the standard grant funding maximum
- Explain why this research does not meet the criteria for the Large Grant scheme
- Explain why this research could not be supported via a series of grants below the standard grant funding maximum
- Related proposals e.g. resubmission

- 17.** NERC will provide a decision on whether or not authorisation to exceed the standard grant funding limit is granted at least 1 month before the call closing date. Budget information provided in the case is regarded as an estimate and may vary by up to 10% in any subsequent full proposal. Authorisation to exceed the standard grant funding limit is valid for submission to the next two standard grant closing dates and only applies to the first directly related submission following approval. For resubmissions the exceptional funding case must also be resubmitted for further consideration prior to re-application. Any standard grant proposal received that exceeds the maximum funding limit and does not have prior authorisation will be rejected by NERC.

### **New Investigator Grants**

- 18.** Investigators at the outset of their scientific career may apply for a Standard Grant as a New Investigator (for eligibility see Section C). The process to allocate Standard Grant funding is weighted to allow New Investigator led proposals an increased chance of success. Application is via the New Investigator call, under the Standard research grant scheme. Any component proposals must also use the New Investigator call. This isn't validated by Je-S so applicants should check that all submitted components have selected the correct call in Je-S. Closing dates match the standard grant closing dates (late January and July of each year). All application rules and funding limits are the same as for Standard Grants. The New Investigator must be the Principal Investigator. There are no limits on the number of Co-Investigators, but a Principal Investigator Leadership Statement must be provided in the track record, where the New Investigator must demonstrate that they are the proposal leader and will be responsible for its direction. See Section F for further details of the application process.

### **Large Grants**

- 19.** Large grants support adventurous, large scale and complex research tackling big science questions that cannot be addressed through other NERC schemes. Research funded via this scheme is expected to have the potential to be world-leading. Proposals will often involve multidisciplinary approaches via inter or intra-institutional collaboration, although this is not a requirement. Large grants can address any areas of science within

the NERC remit, including NERC strategic priorities or new curiosity-driven research challenges.

20. Large grants provide funding for up to five years with costs, as required by the research, up to a maximum of £3.7 million. This limit applies to the total (100%) fEC of the project. The total cost includes any Associated (Project) Studentships and facility costs (e.g. ship time, aircraft time). Proposals with a more modest budget are also encouraged. The minimum budget that can be sought in total for a Large grant is £1.2 million (100% fEC). There is no limit to the number of component Research Organisations requesting direct funding on Large grants. The previous minimum per component of £65,000 no longer applies and components can request less than £65K if required.
21. Applicants must first submit an outline proposal that will be assessed by members of the Peer Review College, plus independent experts as required. Selected proposals will then be invited to proceed to the full proposal stage. The closing date for submission of large grant outline proposals will be in March each year and the Large grant full proposal closing date will be in November in the same year. The actual closing date will be [published](#) as soon as possible on the NERC website. Proposals must be submitted to NERC in Je-S by 16.00 (4PM) and proposals will not submit after that time.
22. Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the NERC Office to discuss any questions on the Large grants scheme procedures or seek feedback regarding the most appropriate route for funding the proposed research. The research grants team ([researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk)) acts as the first point of contact for Large grant applications.

### Urgency Grants

23. Exceptionally, a proposal for a research grant may be submitted at any time for rapid consideration under the Urgency procedure. This is permitted only in cases where the proposal has been prompted by an unexpected and transient scientific opportunity created by the occurrence of sporadic natural events such as earthquakes, droughts, floods or ephemeral events in ecosystems.
24. The following situations **will not** be accepted as grounds for an Urgency proposal:
  - Time-limited logistical events, such as an unforeseen opportunity to participate in a particular experiment or observational programme or the unexpected availability of staff or facilities etc.
  - Opportunities created by deliberate direct human actions or decisions.
  - Events where planning could have allowed support for study via published funding opportunities, such as seasonal, relatively frequent, or periodic natural events.
  - Events that are expected to be imminent but have not yet occurred, such as forecast extreme weather conditions, volcanic eruption etc. Urgency grant funding cannot be used to undertake operational monitoring for the purpose of forecasting the occurrence of hazardous natural events.

- Responding to unexpected research findings.
- Continuation of monitoring or other existing projects for any reason.
- Collection of data to inform urgent policy or national/international decision making.

NERC reserves the right to limit the number of Urgency proposals considered or supported relating to the same event or location.

- 25.** The maximum funding that may be sought for an Urgency proposal is £65,000 (100% fEC) and includes any facilities costs. The maximum duration of an Urgency grant is 12 months. Urgency grants are expected to focus on urgent data collection and essential initial analysis only. A clear strategy for taking the research forward once the urgent phase is completed is required. Subsequent additional funding may be sought by applying for a Standard Grant in the normal way. This will be subject to the usual peer review process for Standard Grant proposals.
- 26.** Joint proposals are not allowed in the Urgency grant scheme. This does not mean that NERC will not accept proposals involving the participation of more than one Research Organisation, but the costs from all participating organisations must be included in one proposal. Items of equipment costing more than £10,000 may not be requested via the Urgency grant scheme. No studentships are awarded under this scheme.
- 27.** Prospective applicants **must** first contact the appropriate Programme Manager (see Annex A) with an outline of the proposed work and the reasons for the urgency. The outline (maximum of 2 sides of A4, font size 11, Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11) must be sent to the Programme Manager no later than 4 weeks from the first occurrence of the scientific opportunity to confirm eligibility. The outline is expected to include:
- A brief description of the urgent opportunity including its origin and timing.
  - Justification for urgency (relating to environmental science).
  - Objectives and methods of the proposed research.
  - Organisations and Investigators involved.
  - An estimate of the funding required.
  - A proposed start date and duration.
  - Potential Project Partners/co-funding and other funders approached to support the work.
  - Potential nominated reviewers.
- 28.** Following approval, full urgency proposals must be submitted to NERC via the Je-S system within 10 working days. NERC will not accept more than one Urgency proposal from an individual Investigator (either as Principal or Co-Investigator) in a 2 year period.

## Independent Research Fellowships (IRF)

- 29.** The aim of the NERC Independent Research Fellowship scheme is to enable outstanding research scientists to devote their time to research and to produce work of international importance with the expectation that they develop into science leaders. The IRF scheme supports applications from theoretical and observational scientists.
- 30.** NERC IRFs are early career fellowships and provide support for five years, giving successful fellows time to develop their research, start to build a research group and become internationally recognised. Up to two years can be spent at a collaborative institution in the UK or overseas. Section F contains details of the application procedures.
- 31.** NERC currently awards approximately 14 IRFs each year.
- 32.** The yearly closing date for proposals will be in October. [Future closing dates](#) will be published as soon as possible on the NERC website. The Je-S system closes at 16.00 (4PM) and proposals will not submit to NERC after that time. To ensure that NERC receives your proposal please aim to submit in good time ahead of this closing time.

- 33.** A summary of the annual IRF timetable:

October	IRF application deadline
November-January	Office checks and peer review
February	Sift panels
March	Interview panels
April	Award outcomes announced

- 34.** There are no funding limits for IRF proposals, but the fellowship applicant must be the only named researcher on the proposal and no equipment (costing more than £10,000 including VAT) can be requested.
- 35.** NERC IRFs must be 100% funded through NERC and cannot therefore be co-funded by another Research Council. All applicants should ensure that the majority of the work proposed within their fellowship application is within NERC remit.
- 36.** All Fellowships may be held full or part-time and NERC welcomes proposals from candidates who wish to work on a part-time/flexible basis in order to combine domestic responsibilities with a career.
- 37.** NERC encourages applicants to undertake their fellowships at a different institution to the one where they received postgraduate training or are currently employed. Nonetheless NERC recognises that there may be circumstances where moving institution is not appropriate, for example, due to the institution providing unique facilities or opportunities, or for domestic arrangements. In all cases the choice of institution must be fully justified and applicants should still be able to demonstrate that if awarded a fellowship, they will be genuinely working independently of senior colleagues with whom they might have previously collaborated or for whom they might be working in a supporting role.

## Innovation

38. Innovation grants aim to apply the outputs from past/current research in order to generate economic and societal impact. NERC funds a number of schemes to enable researchers to work with project partners from 'user' organisations such as business, policy and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Proposals for Innovation grants are expected to demonstrate how existing science can be developed into relevant outputs for a user organisation and what impact this will have. Proposals must include a letter of support from at least one 'user' project partner, unless otherwise stated in the Announcement of Opportunity. Proposals to Innovation funding schemes do not require a data management plan or Pathways to Impact. Innovation proposals are not subjected to peer review but are assessed by a panel of academic and industry experts. Standard eligibility rules apply for Innovation grants (see Section C) unless otherwise stated in the Announcement of Opportunity or in the How to Apply guidance.
39. Innovation funding calls can be 'open' or 'directed' into NERC Innovation Priority Areas which are often associated with NERC Innovation Programmes. The individual announcement of opportunity (AO) for each call will give details of the funding available and any specific terms and conditions that apply to that call. Current and future funding opportunities are publicised on the [NERC website](#).

#### **Innovation Follow-on scheme (previously Innovation Projects and Follow-on Fund)**

40. The Innovation Follow-on scheme is an 'open' call to increase and accelerate the uptake and impact of NERC funded research (or research council-funded research activity which falls within NERC remit – check the AO for details) by supporting translational, knowledge exchange activities. The Innovation Follow-on scheme also supports commercialisation of research ideas by providing funds to enable these ideas to be progressed to a stage where commercial opportunities (e.g. licensing, seed or equity funds) can be secured.
41. Full details are on the NERC website under [Innovation Funding](#). Proposals must include at least one end-user or project partner, which is required to provide a letter of support. Full proposals are submitted through the Je-S system. Applicants wishing to commercialise their research should note that they will need to involve their technology transfer office when completing the proposal.

#### **Follow on Fund Pathfinder**

42. NERC's Follow-on Fund Pathfinder is an 'open' scheme which supports small-scale, specific activities that may develop a better understanding of future work needs (such as a market assessment) and is a helpful precursor to submitting an Innovation Follow-on call proposal where a project is to be commercialised.
43. Further details are available on the NERC website, under [Innovation Funding](#).

#### **Innovation Placements (previously Innovation Internships)**

44. Innovation Placements can be 'open' or 'directed' and typically the academic researcher should spend between 80% and 100% of their time embedded in the partner (ie 'host') organisation.
45. Details of the call's scope, duration of projects, eligibility, and what will be included in the

NERC funding can be found on the Announcement of Opportunity on the NERC website under [Innovation Funding](#).

### **Knowledge Exchange Fellows**

46. Knowledge Exchange Fellowships can be “open” where applicants submit a proposal on a topic of their own choosing, or “directed” where applicants submit a proposal to undertake a programme of work within a theme. The fellowships are a maximum of three years in length and are part time (two to four days a week). Knowledge Exchange Fellows can be based at a university, research centre or independent research organisation. They are tasked with accelerating the uptake of research outputs and finding out what research needs to be done to meet the needs of users. Dates and requirements of specific calls are announced at the following webpage: [KE fellows](#).

### **Strategic Research**

47. NERC’s Strategic Research funding supports research into environmental areas of major economic and societal importance and aims to address key science challenges and priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are three types of [Strategic Research funding](#): Highlight Topics, Strategic Programmes and Joint Strategic Response and more detail is available on the NERC website. Strategic Research grants are generally awarded under the same terms and conditions as Discovery Science research grants. Strategic Research may also award Research or Knowledge Exchange Fellowships. Strategic Research opportunities are advertised on the NERC website. The individual announcement of opportunity (AO) for each call will give details of the funding available, closing dates and contact details for further information. The appropriate Programme Manager will be able to provide advice on the specific terms and conditions that apply to that call.

### **Funding Across Research Councils**

48. Discovery Science grant proposals, under the Standard (including New Investigator) and Large Grant Schemes, that extend beyond the remit of NERC may be assessed under the [Cross Council Funding Agreement \(CCFA\)](#).

### **Funding for International Collaborations**

49. [NERC is working internationally with other funding organisations](#) to help support excellent research collaborations. Agreements are now in place with the US’s National Science Foundation (NSF), FAPESP (Brazil) and Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR) in Luxembourg. The NERC website includes the guidance for applicants and will be updated as new agreements are set up. The very first stage for the NERC-NSF Lead Agency process is for the Principal Investigator to contact the proposed lead funding agency to confirm which will lead. This step is important as it affects the later process that applicants need to follow, which includes a preliminary/outline proposal or letter of intent stage before any full proposal can be submitted to NERC or NSF.

## Section C - ELIGIBILITY

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### Principal Investigator

- 50.** Potential applicants should contact NERC in advance of the submission deadline if they have any doubts concerning their eligibility to apply for a research grant from NERC.
- 51.** The Principal Investigator on the proposal must be resident in the UK and be employed by an eligible UK Research Organisation (Higher Education Institution, Research Council Institute or a recognised Independent Research Organisation). Employment should be at lecturer (or equivalent) level or above. NERC staff at Band 6 level and above are eligible to apply as Principal Investigators, if they have at least three years' postdoctoral experience and have been employed by NERC for at least one year. Exceptionally, NERC Centre Directors may make a case to NERC for experienced staff, without a PhD (e.g. engineers) to be eligible as a Principle/Co-Investigator. We would not usually expect an individual to apply as a Researcher or a Researcher Co-Investigator once they have applied as a Principle/Co-Investigator unless a change in employment circumstances has occurred which means they are no longer eligible to apply as a Principle/Co-Investigator. Individuals cannot be named as both investigators and researchers in proposals to the same call. Staff at BBSRC Research Organisations, at Band E level or above, are also eligible to apply as a Principal Investigator. Individuals who previously completed a fellowship but did not get a permanent position at the end of their fellowship can be named as a Researcher.
- 52.** Holders of research fellowships from the Research Councils and University Research Fellowships from the Royal Society are eligible (subject to other rules in this handbook). Fellowships awarded by other funders (charities, public sector organisations and eligible UK Higher Education Institutions) are also eligible to apply as Principal Investigators as long as the fellowship has a status equating to that of at least lecturer level and has been secured in open competition. The fellowship's terms and conditions must also allow the fellow to apply for further grants and funding. A statement from Departmental Heads confirming that these conditions are met should accompany any proposal submitted.
- 53.** At the time of application the Principal Investigators must either:
- Be employed by the Research Organisation submitting the proposal, or if not employed by the submitting Research Organisation (providing they are not in receipt of funding by non-eligible organisations), have an existing written formal arrangement with the organisation that enables him or her to carry out research there and receive all necessary management and infrastructure support from the organisation and that commits the Research Organisation to take full responsibility for the research and its proper governance.
  - Or be scheduled to move to the submitting organisation before the proposed start date of the grant in such a way that would ensure that the criterion stated above is met by the time the grant starts. Proposals should include a confirming statement from the employing Research Organisation where the grant is to be held.
  - In addition, the Principal Investigator must have a contract of employment that extends to beyond the duration of the proposed grant (or if not employed by the submitting

organisation, a formal non-salaried arrangement as described above that extends to beyond the duration of the proposed grant); Or an assurance from the submitting organisation that, if the proposal is successful, the pre-existing contract of employment, (or pre-existing formal commitment to provide support if not employed at the organisation), will be extended beyond the end date of the grant. Confirmation of this assurance from Departmental Heads should accompany any grant proposal. The exception to this is Research Council fellows whose award does not extend beyond the proposed end date of the grant. Research Council fellows may apply for the cost of their salary to the end of the proposal if their fellowship does not extend beyond the proposed end date of the grant.

- 54.** The following are not eligible to apply as Principal Investigators: research assistants, technicians, other researchers who are employed on short-term projects or Research Council grants, holders of fellowships that were not awarded following open competition.

Please note: It is incumbent upon individuals to check their own eligibility prior to submission of any application to NERC.

- 55.** 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 (e.g. Emeritus or honorary staff) should show their hours attributed to the project, but with zero salary cost request. Estates and Indirect costs can be requested. If a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator is retired, the expectation is that their involvement in the project would be covered by a contract with the Research Organisation. The cost of their time attributed to the project is thus likely to be a Directly Incurred cost.
- 56.** NERC will not accept proposals from a Principal Investigator who has been sanctioned for failure to participate appropriately in NERC peer review activities or for not completing NERC's required output and performance measures on previous grants (see also Section G).

### **New Investigator**

- 57.** An applicant for the New Investigators' scheme must be eligible to apply as a Principal Investigator, but in addition, eligibility is restricted to those Investigators at the outset of their independent scientific career. Applicants must therefore be within five years of first becoming eligible for NERC funding as a Principal Investigator (account will be taken of any career breaks) and must not have received competitive research funding from any source, as a Principal Investigator, that included post-doctoral research assistant staff support costs.
- 58.** Holders of NERC fellowships are eligible to apply for New Investigator grants during the period of their fellowship, until they have received research funding as a Principal Investigator. This scheme is not intended to support those whose independent research career is already established, so those in senior positions are not eligible to apply.
- 59.** Applicants for New Investigator grants must be the Principal Investigator on the proposal, but there can also be Co-Investigators on the proposal. A Principal Investigator Leadership Statement must be provided in the track record, where the New Investigator must demonstrate that they are the proposal leader and will be responsible for its direction. New Investigators can apply as a Co-Investigator on a second proposal to the



same standard grant round, but this proposal will not be considered as a New Investigator proposal.

### Co-Investigator

60. Co-Investigators must meet the eligibility criteria for a Principal Investigator above, but replacing the phrase “submitting organisation” with “eligible organisation”.
61. NERC will not accept proposals from a Co-Investigator who has been sanctioned (as a Principal Investigator on another grant) for failure to participate appropriately in NERC peer review activities or for not completing NERC’s required output and performance measures on previous grants (see also Section G).

### Researcher Co-Investigator

62. A Postdoctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) with a number of years’ previous experience as a PDRA, who is not eligible to be a Principal or Co-Investigator, but has made a substantial contribution to the formulation and development of the proposal and will be closely involved with the project (if funded) may be identified as a ‘Researcher Co-Investigator’. Applicants who are eligible to be either Principal Investigators or Co-Investigators may **not** be included on grant proposals as PDRAs or Researcher Co-Investigators.

A Researcher Co-Investigator must:

- Be a named researcher on the project and seek part or all of their salary as a Directly Incurred cost (unless in receipt of a salary from a fellowship). The expectation is that the researcher would be employed at least 50% FTE on the grant, but there may be circumstances where this may be less (for example, they might be full time for the first two years of a five year grant to conduct a particular piece of the research).
- Be employed by the same Research Organisation as either the Principal or one of the Co-Investigators (but not necessarily at the time of application).
- If applying from a NERC or BBSRC Research Organisation be employed at Band 6 (NERC) or unified Band D (BBSRC). Band 6 NERC Staff are no longer eligible to apply once they have applied as a Principal/Co-Investigator.

A Researcher Co-Investigator may not take over from the Principal Investigator.

### Fellowships

63. The fellowship applicant is the Principal Investigator. No Co-Investigators are allowed.
64. NERC Fellowships are open to applicants of any nationality, even those currently based at non-UK research organisations, although all Fellowship proposals must be submitted through and held at an eligible UK Research Organisation. Successful applicants from the Non-European Economic Area who require a visa to work in the UK will be eligible to be considered under the [Tier 1 \(Exceptional Talent\) visa route](#). Further information is available on the RCUK website under [International Fellows](#). Visa costs may be included as Directly Incurred within the fellowship application.

65. Applicants should not have a permanent academic position (or equivalent in institutions other than universities). NERC staff in Bands 5 and 6 only can apply for a fellowship and if successful, would have to resign from their position in order to take up the fellowship.
66. Applicants for NERC Independent Research Fellowships must expect to submit their PhD thesis before the fellowship interview would take place (April following the closing date) and if successful would not be able to take up the fellowship until the intent to award the PhD has been confirmed by the awarding university.
67. Applicants for NERC Independent Research Fellowships must have a maximum of eight years of full-time postdoctoral experience from the PhD award certificate date to the closing date of the fellowship competition to which they are applying. The eight year window is based on full-time working. Where applicants have worked part-time or had research career breaks, the eight year window would be extended accordingly. Research fellowship awards are treated as postdoctoral experience for the purposes of determining eligibility against this criterion and will be considered when determining years of postdoctoral experience.
68. A current NERC Postdoctoral Fellow may apply for a subsequent NERC Independent Research Fellowship as long as they meet the eligibility criteria above. Proposals will be considered in competition with other proposals in that round and should be, in themselves, discrete projects. The initial fellowship should be identified on the proposal form. NERC Advanced Fellows and NERC IRFs cannot apply for a further NERC fellowship.
69. In addition to Independent Research Fellowships, NERC supports a small number of fellowships through research programmes with the intention of supporting individuals and their research within strategically valuable areas. Details concerning eligibility criteria and the requirements of these fellowships will be included within the call announcement information.
70. Applicants can submit their proposal to both the IRF competition and a concurrent NERC research programme fellowship competition should both be open over the same period. Proposals must still meet the requirements of the competition to which they have applied to be considered eligible for funding.

### **Knowledge Exchange Fellowships**

71. The eligibility rules for Knowledge Exchange Fellowships may be wider than that for NERC research fellowships (e.g. NERC IRFs) and will be detailed on the Announcement of Opportunity.

### **Project Partners**

72. On research grant proposals the Principal Investigator may also name formal Project Partners, who will not receive funding directly from the award, but will have an integral role in the proposed research. Minor Directly Incurred costs may be requested to facilitate collaboration. Named Project Partners may include UK or overseas Research or User Organisations, but an organisation should only be named as a Project Partner if it is providing specific contributions (either in cash or kind) to the project. There is no limit to the number of Project Partners. Project Partners must be separate Research

Organisations to those submitting the proposal.

73. Project Partners should ensure the availability of the necessary facilities and infrastructure and provide a detailed letter of support of up to 2 sides of A4. It is the responsibility of named Project Partners to read and comply with the terms and conditions relating to proposals for research grants.
74. Fellowship proposals do not have a separate Project Partner section. Any significant collaborators (from outside the host Research Organisation) should be named and their role described in the Partnership Details section of the form and a letter of support should be attached from each person named in that section. Collaborators from the host Research Organisation submitting the proposal should not be named in this section and should not provide a letter of support. Internal collaborators can be mentioned in the section on “Choice of Host Institution”.
75. To have a Project Partner is a prerequisite for applications to [the Innovation Follow-on Call](#): specific guidance regarding Project Partners and Letters of Support can be found on the NERC website.

#### **Eligible Research Organisations**

76. NERC research and fellowship grants for all schemes may be held at approved UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), approved Research Council Institutes (RCIs) and approved Independent Research Organisations (IROs). Full details of [approved RCIs and IROs](#) can be found on the RCUK website.
77. The Research Councils have agreed that to help remove potential barriers to interdisciplinary research, all RCIs are eligible for grant funding from all Research Councils.
78. To apply to NERC, Research Organisations must also be registered as users of the Research Councils’ [Joint Electronic Submission system](#) and have had their costing methodology validated.

## Section D – GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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79. NERC Grants are awarded to Research Organisations on the basis of the [Terms and Conditions of Research Council fEC Grants](#). Information is included in this section where it is not covered in the Terms and Conditions.

### Confidentiality

80. Grant proposals are provided to NERC in confidence. NERC will not use the information contained in the proposal (or any further information provided later in support of the proposal) for any purpose except the purpose of reviewing the grant proposal and monitoring it, if it is funded. NERC may disclose the proposal to its employees, external reviewers and, possibly other funding bodies for the purpose of assisting it in deciding whether or not the proposal should be funded. NERC will not otherwise disclose the information unless:
- it is required to do so under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 or the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), or any other law or regulation to which NERC is or may become subject to; or
  - it is funded, in which case certain details (see below) will be entered onto the NERC website and other publicly available databases.

### Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations

81. NERC is a public authority for the purposes of FOIA and is subject to its terms. This means that it has a duty to respond to requests for information from the public and to provide certain information on request unless that information falls within certain exemptions that are specified in the Act. One of these exemptions applies to information that has been provided in confidence and which remains confidential and another is that the information requested is a trade secret or that its release would be likely to prejudice the commercial interests of any person.
82. See the [Grant Terms and Conditions](#) for more information.
83. Details of funded grants will be made available on the NERC website and other publicly available databases and in reports and/or paper documents. The following information will routinely be made available:
- Name of host Research Organisation;
  - Details of applicants (title, forenames, initials, surname, department);
  - Project title;
  - Technical and non-technical summaries of the research;
  - Duration of the project; and
  - Funding provided by NERC.

## Data Protection Act 1998

84. See the [Grant Terms and Conditions](#).
85. Applicants should be aware that, for the purpose of peer review, information may be sent to external experts in countries outside the European Union, including countries that do not have any data protection laws. By submitting a proposal to NERC, Investigators are agreeing that they consent to the transfer of personal information in this way.
86. Applicants must ensure that they have obtained the permission of any other person named on the proposal form (for example any Co-Investigators or Project Partners) for the provision of their personal information to NERC and the processing of their data by NERC for the purposes set out above.

## Responsibilities of the Research Organisation

87. Please refer to the [RCUK Grant Terms and Conditions](#).

## Responsibilities of the Grant Holder (Principal Investigator)

88. In order to support the peer review system Principal Investigators (lead and non-lead) of awarded NERC research grants and fellowships, submitted to closing dates from July 2012 (including the July Standard grant round), are required to consent to membership of the NERC Peer Review College (PRC), if a membership invitation is issued by NERC during the period of award (grant acceptance to grant closure). Failure to accept membership without adequate reason, or unsatisfactory performance as a PRC member, could lead to the application of sanctions in the form of withdrawal of eligibility to apply for NERC research grants for a period of 12 months.
89. The Principal Investigator is required to comply with the relevant [RCUK core terms and conditions for research grants](#) and specific NERC requirements in relation to Monitoring and Reporting (section G), engaging the public with NERC science (section H), publication of work (section I), exploitation and intellectual property (section J).
90. Please refer to the [RCUK Grant Terms and Conditions](#). The Principal Investigator must request the prior approval of NERC for any significant changes to the work carried out under the grant or to the staff or resources used. Specific requirements are outlined in the following sections, but Principal Investigators should consult NERC in any other instances where the research programme is likely to differ substantially from that for which funding was originally awarded.
91. NERC reserves the right to terminate an award at any time if the conduct of the award-holder(s) in carrying out the research is found to be unsatisfactory or contravenes the conditions under which the award was made.

## Research Governance and Misconduct

92. Please refer to the [RCUK Grant Terms and Conditions](#). Where an allegation of misconduct arises in respect of a researcher supported by a research grant NERC must be informed immediately and notified of the outcome of any investigation. The [RCUK Policy and Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct](#) can be found on the RCUK website.

## Permission for Research, the Use of Animals, Research Ethics and the Utilisation of Genetic Resources in NERC-funded Research

93. Please refer to the [RCUK Grant Terms and Conditions](#).
94. The [NERC ethics policy](#) sets out guiding principles that provide the ethical framework that we aspire to in all aspects of our work. We expect those who receive funding from us to respect the policy. The policy and additional information can be found on the website.
95. Applicants who intend to undertake research work on private or government property should consult the owner or organisation responsible, (e.g. the Forestry Authority or the Ministry of Defence), before submitting an application to NERC. Similarly, applicants intending to undertake fieldwork overseas must ensure that they have the necessary documentation and permissions.
96. The Investigator(s) and Research Organisation(s) must ensure that all research work funded through a NERC research grant complies with all relevant Government regulations. NERC will not be liable if an award-holder is found to be in breach of such regulations. When damage to the environment arising from a piece of research has been justified, Investigators are expected to minimise the extent and degree of harm consistent with achieving valid results and to ensure that the harm done is repaired as far as possible. NERC reserves the right to inspect and/or audit for compliance with health and safety regulations for any work areas covered by awards. Audit would be conducted against the Research Organisation's safety management systems.
97. NERC will only support work involving the use of animals on the basis that researchers and those administering the funding comply with legal provisions, plus any related codes of conduct or guidance issued by government departments and the specific conditions of licences and certificates. General Guidance can be found in the document, "[Responsibility in the Use of Animals in Bioscience Research: Expectations of the major Research Council and charitable funding bodies](#)" on the NERC website. Applicants are expected to have developed their proposals in accordance with the cross-funder guidance for the use of animals in research: Responsibility in the Use of Animals in Bioscience Research and NC3Rs Guidelines: Primate Accommodation, Care and Use. Experiments using animals funded by the NERC must comply with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (ASPA), amended 2012 and any further embodiments, in:
- Using the simplest possible, or least sentient, species of animal appropriate
  - Ensuring that distress and pain are avoided wherever possible
  - Employing an appropriate design and using the minimum number of animals consistent with ensuring that scientific objectives will be met.

Advice on opportunities and techniques for implementing these principles can be found on the [NC3Rs website](#). This includes the Experimental Design Assistant (EDA), a free online tool from the NC3Rs to help optimise experimental design and ensure that the number of animals used is consistent with the scientific objectives.

98. Researchers (grant holders and staff) and associated veterinary and animal care staff are primarily responsible for implementing the principles in this guidance, with support from their host Research Organisation and local ethics committees. Peer reviewers and Panel/Committee/Board members also have a key role in applying the principles consistently across the research spectrum.
99. Researchers are expected to give consideration to the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) in any research involving animals which has the potential to cause animals harm, and to explain in their research proposals (both in grant proposals to NERC and in research proposals and other information provided to ethics committees) how the 3Rs have been taken into account.
100. When collaborating with laboratories overseas, or where animal facilities are provided by third parties, researchers and the local ethics committee in the UK should satisfy themselves that welfare standards consistent with those required under UK legislation (e.g. the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986) and set out in this guidance are applied and maintained. Where there are significant deviations, prior approval from NERC should be sought. Where animals are being used overseas the [RCUK guidance](#) should be followed. A signed statement and, where appropriate, the additional questions on the use of rodents overseas form should be submitted with the proposal.
101. There are no formal restrictions or embargoes on countries that have not signed the treaties on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (nuclear, biological and chemical weapons). However, a voluntary vetting scheme (VVS) operates through the Ministry of Defence, covering researchers in relevant scientific areas from a number of countries of concern. Participation in the VVS is the responsibility of the Research Organisation.
102. Any proposal requesting Antarctic Logistic Support by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) and which involves experimentation on live animals will be subject to scrutiny by an Animal Welfare & Ethical Review Body convened by BAS and including external representation (by a veterinary surgeon and by a Home Office advisor). The purpose of this Body is to ensure that procedures which would be regulated by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 if conducted in the UK, meet the requirements of this legislation even though UK law is not applicable in Antarctica or South Georgia, where BAS operates. It is BAS policy to involve the Animal Welfare & Ethical Review Body to ensure that experiments performed in the Antarctic or at South Georgia meet the same Home Office requirements as if the procedures were to be conducted in the UK.
103. The [Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization](#) is now part of the international *Convention on Biodiversity*. Both the European Union and the UK have ratified the Protocol, becoming Party on 12th October 2014 and 22nd May 2016 respectively.
104. NERC-funded researchers utilising genetic resources accessed on or after 12th October 2014 are legally obliged to consider potential obligations under [Regulation \(EU\)](#)



[511/2014](#) on compliance measures for users and [UK Statutory Instrument No.821\(March 2015\)](#). Researchers are also subject to any prevailing national access laws for obtaining and utilising genetic resources originating in other countries.

- 105.** Researchers accessing and utilising genetic resources for NERC-funded projects should check whether their activities fall within scope of applicable legislation, both in Europe and the provider country. Where compliance is required, researchers should follow due process to obtain *Prior Informed Consent* (PIC) and seek *Mutually Agreed Terms* (MATs) for access and utilisation before obtaining the research material in question and conducting any research and development. Further guidance is available via [Defra](#).

### Health and Safety

- 106.** Please refer to the [RCUK Grant Terms and Conditions](#).
- 107.** For the purposes of safety and employment legislation, the Research Organisation is the employer and is therefore responsible for staff engaged on scientific work funded by NERC. The Research Organisation controls the work and must ensure that a safe working environment is provided for all individuals engaged in the research, including NERC funded fellows and students. The Research Organisation's policy and approach on health and safety must meet all regulatory and legislative requirements and be consistent with best practice as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive or other recognised expert authority. Appropriate precautions must be taken where researchers are working off-site particularly where other persons, including members of the public, may be affected by their research activities. The Research Organisation must satisfy itself that all reasonably foreseeable health and safety aspects are addressed. NERC reserves the right to monitor and audit health and safety arrangements for research that it funds and is undertaken by the Research Organisation. However, NERC does not accept liability for staff or other persons, including students, engaged in or affected by such research and will not indemnify the Research Organisation against any claims for which it is liable as the body responsible for directing the research and / or occupier of premises (e.g. for damages or personal injury).

### Starting Procedures

- 108.** Please refer to the [RCUK Grant Terms and Conditions](#).
- 109.** Exceptionally, the start date may be delayed by more than three months (for example due to sea-time scheduling issues or in the case of Antarctic fieldwork). Permission must be sought from NERC in advance by submitting a completed request for a delay to the starting date, via the Je-S system, to the RCUK Grants Team. This should detail the reasons for, and duration of, the required extension.

### Extensions

- 110.** It is not NERC policy to financially supplement an existing research grant or fellowship. An application for a funded extension to an existing or previous research grant must therefore be submitted as a new proposal and must demonstrate that the request is for funding a direct development of, but not a supplement to, the earlier work. Applications



for extensions will be considered in competition with other proposals for funding and should be, in themselves, discrete projects. The initial research grant to which the new work refers should be identified on the application form.

- 111.** NERC may, in exceptional cases, permit a short-term no cost extension to an award. This may occur only where unforeseen circumstances have severely affected the progress of the work (e.g. loss of key staff or external factors leading to the rescheduling of fieldwork/ship time), and is not intended to allow the pursuit of new avenues of enquiry. A research or fellowship grant may also be extended to cover periods of maternity/paternity/adoption/parental leave, extended jury service or sick leave exceeding three months. See the [RCUK Grants terms and conditions](#). Where an extension is approved for one component of a joint grant, NERC will not automatically extend any related grants and if other grants in the project also require an extension, a request should be made via Je-S grant maintenance. As the Principal Investigator for the lead grant in a project is no longer required to submit a final report, lead grant end dates do not need to match those of the component grants.

### **Money Follows Researcher / Transferring Grants in Europe**

- 112.** Transfer of funds into other European countries is permitted under the [Money Follows Researcher scheme](#) and allows researchers to take the remainder of their research grant to European countries where the Research Funding Organisation (RFOs) has signed up to the scheme.

Details of [other RFOs](#) who have signed up to the scheme can be found on the Science Europe website

The following criteria have been agreed by the UK Research Councils and must be met before any decision to transfer the grant can be made:

- The request to transfer a grant must state the date of the transfer which must be a minimum of 6 months before the grant end date; Only research grants can be transferred – fellowships are excluded from this arrangement;
- Councils should be assured that the research will not be impaired by the transfer;
- The new Research Organisation should enable the project to be successfully completed. The PI will have to make a scientific case for it and will have to explain the effects of the transfer, if any, on the aims and objectives of the proposal;
- Information will have to be given on the impact on any staff supported by the grant whether they intend to move with the grant or not;
- The normal requirement for the agreement of both the RO being left and the RO to which the grant is being moved must be provided;
- Research Grants will only be transferred under these arrangements when the lead grant PI moves. The move of a Co-Investigator will not trigger a transfer;
- Research Grants can only be transferred to an organisation equivalent to a UK HEI or other UK research organisation eligible to receive RCUK funding;
- The transfer will be made to the new home organisation of the PI;
- The new home organisation must be fully Je-S registered before any transfer can take place;

- Only Directly Incurred Costs (excluding Equipment) may be transferred. All other costs under the Directly Allocated, Estates Costs and Indirect Costs expenditure types are excluded from any transfer value;
- Payments will be made to the new home organisation on the same basis as UK-based grants, normally quarterly and in sterling.

Enquiries should be sent to [researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk) in the first instance.

## Public Engagement

- 113.** Please refer to the [RCUK Grants Terms and Conditions](#) and Section I.

## Data Availability

- 114.** NERC expects all applicants to have thoroughly considered how they will access any datasets that they expect to use or access for the duration of the proposal, in particular, the use of non-UK and non-open access datasets. Applicants are required to provide a list of all datasets required for the proposal and submit a letter of support from non-UK and non-open data suppliers stating their agreement to allow the applicant full access to the named data sets. Applicants should consider and note the risks of not being able to access such data sets, including providing evidence of alternative datasets (and their access policy; evidence of access agreements).
- 115.** Applicants working with overseas partners are encouraged to review their partner country's data access, field site access and transportation of physical samples policies before agreeing working partnerships and submitting joint proposals. Applicants must ensure that data produced by the proposed research activities will be released to the UK PI, including full rights to bring any data back into the UK for its storage as part of the grant terms and conditions and in line with [NERC data policy](#).
- 116.** NERC believes that datasets collected as a result of projects are an important resource that must be adequately managed. Investigators should therefore make sure that a NERC Environmental Data Centre is aware of any significant datasets to be compiled as a result of their projects, so that the long-term future of these data can be planned. A mandatory, single page, outline Data Management Plan (ODMP) is required for all proposals. The ODMP will identify data sets likely to be made available to NERC Data Centres for archiving and reuse at the end of the grant. From April 2014, the ODMP is a separate, mandatory attachment, on all grant schemes. The ODMP and Case for Support for successful proposals will be made available to the [NERC Environmental Data Centres](#) and where appropriate, used by them to draft, in collaboration with the Principal Investigator, a full Data Management Plan (DMP). This full DMP should be mutually agreed between the Data Centre and the Principal Investigator within three to six months of the start date of the grant. At the end of an award Investigators are required to offer the appropriate Data Centre a copy of any dataset generated, so that the data can be made available for other researchers to use.
- 117.** NERC reserves the right to access all unpublished papers, records, data or collections resulting from the work carried out under a grant, some of which may be required to be deposited with NERC. Similarly NERC reserves the right to use information on the outcome of awards to report on achievements e.g. in annual reports. NERC may, at any time, require detailed information on the results of work funded through grants for

use in scientific or financial audits.

- 118.** [NERC Environmental Data Centres](#) will give advice on issues relating to charging, licensing and exploitation of datasets. NERC policy in this area is described in more detail in the [NERC Data Policy Handbook](#) and the accompanying [Guidance Notes](#). Advice is also available from [NERC's data management coordinator](#).

### **Early Termination of Award**

- 119.** NERC normally expects a project funded by a grant to continue until the end of the period for which the award was made. However, NERC reserves the right to terminate the grant at any time before the end of the award. Where this becomes necessary, NERC will provide reasonable advance notice and will provide sufficient funding to cover any outstanding and unavoidable commitments.
- 120.** If a Research Organisation is unable to meet the conditions issued at the time of award, for whatever reason, then it may be required to relinquish the award. Similarly, an award may be relinquished voluntarily if the Principal Investigator encounters difficulties in carrying out any part of the research project.

### **Associated (Project) Studentships**

- 121.** Associated (Project) Studentships can be requested on Large Grant proposals. They cannot be requested on a Discovery Science Standard grant proposal or a Fellowship proposal. The individual announcement of opportunity for Strategic Research funding will give details of whether Associated Studentships can be requested. An Associated Studentship should constitute a distinct project, providing added value to the research grant. The main research grant project should still be viable without the studentship and should have distinct objectives that are not reliant upon the studentship. The student is expected to be able to develop novel research ideas while benefiting from working in a group environment. NERC will not accept proposals where a student is the only dedicated researcher/staff member on a grant, including individual component grants of joint proposals. All Associated Studentships must also meet the success criteria, which will be made available on the [postgraduate section](#) of the website.
- 122.** An Associated Studentship provides funding for up to 48 months for a research student to carry out a well-defined programme of work within the research grant, leading to the award of a PhD/DPhil. The Associated Studentship includes the student's maintenance grant and university fees, which should be requested on the proposal form as an Exceptions cost and will be paid at 100% FEC (unless co-funding is in place).
- 123.** Additional costs should be requested on the research grant proposal form for items such as fieldwork expenses, conferences and consumables. These should be requested as a Directly Incurred cost and will be paid at 80% FEC. No further funding is available for Associated Studentships beyond that requested on the grant.
- 124.** The latest rates for the [maintenance grant and university fees](#) can be found on the RCUK website. Where London Allowance is selected, £2000 will be added to the first year rate. To calculate the total cost for both the maintenance grant and tuition fees the first year rate will be multiplied by the duration of the studentship (between 36 and 48 months). Indexation for future years will be added in line with award practice by NERC.

- 125.** For research grant proposals requesting Associated Studentships, the period of the studentship must fall within the start and end date of the grant, whilst funding from the grant is being used. If there is a delay to the student starting, then a no-cost extension to the research grant should be requested.
- 126.** In line with other NERC studentships, Associated Studentships can be funded for between three and four years (for example, taking the first 42 months from the research grant and the remaining six months from a NERC Training Grant). In situations where the initial Associated Student has terminated and a replacement student is found, the research grant can be used to fund the replacement student initially then the remaining funding could be found from a NERC Training Grant.
- 127.** The student has to meet the eligibility requirements as set out in the [Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants](#). Students do not need to be nominated in advance to NERC. Research Organisations should provide details of the student within one month of their start date, through the Je-S Studentship Details Portal (SDP).
- 128.** Associated Students should not be included in the number of FTEs used in the calculation of a Research Organisation's Estates or Indirect costs. Investigators should not include supervision of Associated Students in their estimate of the number of hours they will spend on the research project.
- 129.** Co-funded Associated Studentships are now encouraged on some Research Programme calls. The co-funding can be through industrial partners or other appropriate funders (not Research Council training grants such as Doctoral Training Partnerships or Centres for Doctoral Training) and applicants must include details of these arrangements in the proposal.
- 130.** Associated Studentships must comply with the regulations governing other NERC research studentships, including those covering institutional and student eligibility. The Research Organisation must make the same level of provision for training and supervision that would be expected for any other NERC research student; this is particularly important if there is an Associated Student working in the Antarctic. Studentships based in Independent Research Organisations or NERC Centre/Surveys must be associated with a university as the degree-awarding body. An Associated Studentship may be held as a CASE award, if appropriate.
- 131.** Where there are funds for an Associated Studentship on the grant, and the original student terminates their studentship within the first year, a replacement student can be funded through the grant. No additional funding will be provided. Any shortfall should be found from other departmental funds (including NERC Training Grants,) or by virement of Directly Incurred funds from the research grant. If the student terminates more than one year into the studentship and/or there would be less than two years remaining on the grant by the time the replacement student started, the excess funds can either be vired into Directly Incurred costs and used to fund some technician or researcher staff effort or used to part-fund a replacement studentship, where other funding, such as that from a Training Grant, can be used to support the studentship once the research grant is finished.

- 132.** If the original or replacement studentship is a student eligible for payment of fees only, the stipend component can be vired into the Directly Incurred fund heading and used as required.

## Section E – FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

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- 133.** Subject to the following conditions, grant funds may be used, without reference to NERC, in such a manner as to best carry out the research. The value of a grant may be varied in accordance with the Treasury Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflators or to take into account any other Government decisions affecting the funding available to NERC.
- 134.** 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 project or activity. Any commitment incurred before a grant is formally announced, or any commitment in excess of the amount awarded, is the responsibility of the Research Organisation.
- 135.** 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).
- 136.** Proposals should be at current price levels with no allowance for inflation. Awards will include funding for future pay awards and inflation based on the Treasury GDP deflators. Costs awarded for equipment will not be inflated.
- 137.** NERC reserves the right to examine, in detail, all items of expenditure charged to an award, and in addition will visit selected Research Organisations as part of the cross-Council Funding Assurance Programme.
- 138.** The Research Councils have compiled a set of [frequently asked questions](#) concerning the application of fEC and financial policy on grants. These can be found on the RCUK website.
- 139.** A NERC grant will fund 80% of the Full Economic Cost (fEC) of a programme of research. There are no ineligible costs but all costs associated with the research project must be itemised and fully justified in the Justification of Resources, with the following exceptions:

  - Estates costs;
  - Indirect costs;
  - Investigators' salary costs (not time, which must be justified);
  - Some other Directly Allocated costs, e.g. Infrastructure Technicians.
- 140.** The main categories of costs which can be funded from a grant are as follows (not all categories can be funded on all grant schemes):

## Directly Incurred Costs

**141.** Directly Incurred costs are 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. They can include:

- Staff: payroll costs for staff, full or part-time, who will work on the project and whose time can be supported by a full audit trail during the life of the project e.g. research assistants or dedicated technicians.
- Travel and subsistence: funds for travel and subsistence for use by staff, including any Associated (Project) Students who work on the project, where these are required by the nature of the work.
- Equipment: the cost of individual items of equipment dedicated to the project and costing more than £10,000 (including VAT). This may include capital costs plus any maintenance and other related costs that are not included in the Research Organisation's estates costs, for example laboratory/workshop equipment, installation costs and costs of essential modifications necessary to house equipment. Items costing less than £10,000 (including VAT) should be included as Other Directly Incurred costs.
- Other costs: costs of other items dedicated to the project including, for example, consumables, books, purchase/hire of vehicles and items of equipment costing less than £10,000. Patent costs, and other IPR costs, such as those relating to licensing agreements and the establishment of spin out companies, are not eligible costs on grants. The costs of additional childcare, beyond that required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the job, and that are directly related to the project, may be requested as a directly incurred cost if the institutional policy is to reimburse them. However, childcare costs associated with normal working patterns may not be sought.
- Following the publication of the revised RCUK policy on access to research outputs, and the decision to provide research organisations with block funding for publication costs, NERC will no longer provide funding in grants for any publication costs associated with peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers. Publication costs associated with research outputs other than journal articles and conference papers, such as books, monographs, critical editions, catalogues etc may, however, continue to be included in grants as a Directly Incurred Other Cost. Any request for such costs will need to be fully justified in the justification of resources.

**142.** Fellowship proposals cannot request individual items of equipment (over £10,000), visiting researchers, research assistants or Associated (Project) Studentships. This £10,000 funding limit cannot be used to part-fund equipment costing more than the £10,000 limit.

## Directly Allocated Costs

**143.** Directly Allocated costs are 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. They include:

- Investigators' salaries: includes only the salaries of Investigators whose time is charged to the grant on estimates rather than actual costs (where costs are actual and auditable, they are included under the Directly Incurred Staff heading); they may be actual or the average of a band (dependent upon the policy at the Research Organisation).
- Estates Costs: these may include building and premises costs, basic services and utilities and any clerical staff and equipment maintenance/operational costs not already included under other cost headings. 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.
- Other Directly Allocated Costs: these may include, for example, the costs of shared resources including: estimated costs of technicians or other support staff in academic departments; technicians and other support staff who are part of a 'staff pool' supporting a range of projects and activities; Infrastructure Technicians; or access to institutional research facilities and shared equipment.

- 144.** Estimating investigator time: investigators should include only the estimated salary costs for the time they will spend working directly on the grant. 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). Salary costs must not include supervision time for postgraduate research students or time for writing publications after the end of the project. They may include the costs of a Principal Investigator's time for research, fieldwork, supervising other research staff, project management and interaction with Project Partners.
- 145.** Please note, although only the Principal Investigator can be listed as staff on fellowship proposals, Directly Allocated costs can be included to support pool staff time.

### **Indirect Costs**

- 146.** Indirect costs are non-specific costs charged across all projects based on estimates, which 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. Requests for minor consumables, such as postage, photocopying and telephone costs should also be covered in the Indirect costs.

### **Exceptions**

- 147.** These are Directly Incurred costs that NERC will fund at 100% of fEC, subject to actual expenditure incurred, or items that are outside fEC. These include Associated (Project) Studentships' maintenance grant and tuition fees.



## **Funding of Fellows on Research Grants**

- 148.** Research Council Fellows (or others wholly funded by a sponsor external to the Research Organisation) cannot request their salary on a research grant on which they are a Principal/Co-Investigator, during the period of their fellowship award. If the fellowship was awarded under fEC terms and conditions, Fellows cannot claim Estates or Indirect costs on the research grant during the period of their fellowship award. If the fellowship was awarded under non- or pre-fEC terms and conditions, Estates and Indirect costs may be claimed.
- 149.** NERC fellows can apply as a Principal or Co-Investigator for European Research Council (ERC) research grants. If successful, the NERC fellowship should be reduced to 50% to enable the fellow to spend the required 50% of their time on the ERC project. The NERC fellowship would then be extended accordingly, ensuring the same time overall is available to complete the NERC fellowship. The ERC grant would provide 50% of the fellows salary with the NERC fellowship providing the other 50%.

## **Details on Directly Incurred Costs**

### **Visiting Researchers**

- 150.** Distinguished researchers from the UK or overseas may be funded to visit the Investigator's institution in order to give full time advice and assistance on research in a particular field for up to 12 months during the project. Visiting Researchers will normally receive the same salary and conditions as other staff of an equivalent status within the Research Organisation. NERC will only pay their salary for the time that they will be directly working on the proposed project. Estates and Indirect costs will be paid where a visit exceeds 6 months. NERC will not fund a Visiting Researcher on a fellowship.
- 151.** Reasonable expenses will be paid for travel to and from the UK by Visiting Researchers, but not their families. The amount requested for the visit should be reduced if a contribution has been received from other sources or if the visit will be partly funded by the Visiting Researcher's own institution.

### **Travel and Subsistence**

- 152.** NERC will consider funding the cost of low-carbon approaches to collaboration (including, where appropriate, the costs of technology or of less economic, but more environmentally friendly means of transport) where it is consistent with Research Organisation policy. It must also be recognised that such policies, for example the use of videoconferencing rather than travel for attendance at meetings, may be more economic in the longer term. Please note that NERC (in common with all Research Councils), will not pay for the cost of proposed carbon offsetting arising from travel associated with grants.
- 153.** Funding may be requested to enable staff on the grant to visit a recognised centre abroad to study new techniques and research developments where this would be of direct benefit to the research project.
- 154.** Risk assessment for safety and security should be carried out for travel overseas.

- 155.** All travel claims should evidence value for money as the primary consideration. Consequently, these should only include travel by standard class by train and by economy class for flights.
- 156.** Requests for funding to attend conferences will be considered. These must be named, justified and costed in the proposal. The justification should show how the conference will either directly benefit the research or facilitate future impacts of research.

## **Equipment**

- 157.** The threshold for individual items to be classed as equipment is £10,000 (inclusive of VAT). For items of equipment costing between £10,000 and the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT), additional information is required in the justification of resources, including evidence of an evaluation of the use of existing relevant capital assets. Proposals requesting single items of equipment costing more than £138k (£115k ex VAT) must be accompanied by a business case (up to 2 sides of A4 outlining the strategic need for the equipment). The thresholds apply to individually capitaliseable assets, rather than by accumulating the value of a number of assets, except where individual assets are clearly intended to be used together as a combined asset. These thresholds apply during the application process as the trigger to determine which application process needs to be followed. They do not impact the procurement process when organisations will need to conform to the OJEU tendering limits that apply to their organisation.
- 158.** Research Organisations are required to make a contribution towards the cost of any equipment and this is expected to be at least 50% of the full cost. Proposals should cite the full cost of the equipment, confirm the % being required from NERC and provide confirmation that the remaining funds have been secured in the Justification of Resources or business case. The previous situation, where equipment valued up to £50,000 was funded at 80%, with any equipment above £50,000 funded at 100%, no longer applies.
- 159.** The requirement for additional justification or a business case will not apply to equipment to be used for instrument development. A proposal or group of proposals forming a single project will be classed as instrument development where it is wholly or mainly focussed on creating a novel instrument, or will substantially improve research capability not available using any existing instrument, or will substantially improve research capability beyond what currently exists, in a way that opens up significant new scientific opportunities. Instrument development might involve the construction of a wholly new instrument from its basic components or it might involve substantial modification of an existing instrument. Finally it might involve the integration of two or more existing instruments into a new combined one. In this latter case the proposed integration would need to be technically non-trivial and lead to a capability significantly beyond that of using the component instruments independently. The expectation is for the Research Organisation to contribute at least 50% of the cost, NERC will consider funding up to 100% of instrument development where the potential for Research Organisations to contribute to the costs of instrument development is limited.
- 160.** 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 best practise 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. They must approve the order/contract before it is placed with a supplier. For all items of equipment requested with a value over the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT), 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 2 blank documents as equipment quotes. For items of equipment which cost less than the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT) but more than £25k, it is optional to provide quotations and up to three can be uploaded.

- 161.** 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 NERC 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.
- 162.** NERC 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. NERC 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 NERC. After the research has ended, the Research Organisation is free to use the equipment without reference to NERC, 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, NERC 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.
- 163.** In accordance with TRAC methodology, the total fEC of a grant containing charges for use by the project of research facilities must not include any net depreciation costs if the facility was purchased with Research Council funding.
- 164.** Essential maintenance of equipment under the Provision and Use of Workplace Regulations (PUWER) 1998, should be justified and costed in the grant proposal. The Research Organisation is responsible for the safety maintenance and safe operation of equipment purchased under a grant. The Research Organisation must insure and protect such equipment to the same extent as any other equipment it owns.
- 165.** When equipment is to be bought from overseas, advice on taxes and duties should be sought from HM Revenue and Customs. NERC will not provide additional funding to cover fluctuations in exchange rates.
- 166.** Applicants should seek advice from overseas partner organisations on the delivery of any equipment to overseas countries and movement of equipment within overseas countries before submitting a proposal.
- 167.** Equipment requested in a research grant proposal may be available from one of the NERC equipment pools, and could be loaned to the Research Organisation for the duration of the award. If this is the case it will be made clear in the award letter. Pool equipment will be supplied fully serviced and in a condition safe to use; advice will be

given on any maintenance required.

- 168.** Any proposal to purchase an item of equipment in the final 6 months of the grant is subject to prior approval by NERC. NERC will wish to be assured that the item of equipment is essential to the research and will not cover purchases where this is not demonstrated.

### **Sub-contracting**

- 169.** NERC considers eligible institutions to be best placed to determine how their work is undertaken. If this involves sub-contracting aspects of the work to non-eligible institutions due, for example, to the lack of appropriate expertise in eligible institutions, this is acceptable. In such circumstances, NERC would pay the awarded eligible institution which in turn would sub-contract to the service provider as appropriate. This is, of course, without prejudice to the eligibility status of these other non-eligible institutions. Funds requested for sub-contracting should be included in the 'Other Directly Incurred Costs' section of the Je-S proposal form and NERC would provide 80% of any sub-contract costs. Organisations undertaking sub-contracting should refer to the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) for information on the training and development opportunities that should be made available to researchers by employers. Organisations that are eligible to receive funding directly from NERC cannot be sub-contractors. An organisation cannot be listed as a Project Partner and a sub-contractor. Except where providing a service only, or where a call allows overseas research organisations, non-UK HEIs are expected to fund their participation in projects so will be project partners, not subcontractors or PI/Co-Is.
- 170.** Except in instances where the service provider is from the public sector, the conferring of any IP, author or other rights to it by the contractor in relation to the research grant proposal for which it was contracted to provide a service, is not permissible. The inclusion of an acknowledgement in any resulting material of the sub-contracted organisation's contribution to the research is however acceptable. Should there be an intimation or desire on the part of the contractor and/or subcontractor not within the public sector, for other than such an acknowledgement e.g. co-author status on resulting publications, then the interaction between the parties concerned would be deemed to equate to a collaboration, in which case any costs incurred (either direct or indirect) can not be met by NERC.

### **Use of Services and Facilities**

- 171.** Applicants for NERC grants and fellowships may also apply to NERC for access to any of the NERC-supported scientific services and facilities. Further information on [NERC services and facilities](#) is in Section F and on the NERC website.

### **Casual Labour**

- 172.** Salary costs for any casual staff should be itemised as a Directly Incurred cost.

### **Contaminated Land: Applications in Real Environments**

- 173.** Costs associated with the **Contaminated Land: Applications in Real Environments (CL:AIRE)** scheme should be listed as a Directly Incurred cost. Investigators must

receive formal written approval from CL:AIRE before any Proposal can be made to NERC, and copies of this approval must be included with the proposal. Further details can be found on the [CL:AIRE](#) website.

### **Independent Research Fellowships: International Ocean Discovery Programme (IODP)**

- 174.** NERC IRF award holders are eligible to apply for support through IODP in addition to the funding awarded through their IRF. Due to the varied and wide range of factors affecting the suitability and feasibility of an IRF award holder receiving IODP support, prospective applicants must contact the [NERC IODP \(iodp@nerc.ac.uk\)](#) and fellowships ([fellowships@nerc.ac.uk](#)) teams well in advance of any submission.

### **Access to NERC Data**

- 175.** NERC has extensive holdings of environmental data. It is the policy of NERC to make its data available to anyone, either free of charge, or at rates intended to recoup only the costs of servicing the request. If proposals are to involve access to data held by NERC, Investigators should discuss their requirements in advanced with the appropriate [Environmental Data Centre](#) and identify any costs on the proposal form under the Directly Incurred cost heading. The data centres can also facilitate access to data held outside of NERC. Contact the relevant data centre for more information.

### **Grant Payment Details**

- 176.** Payments will normally be made to Research Organisations under the Research Councils' Profiled Payments procedures, as follows:
- Payments will normally be made on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the final month of the quarter, plus or minus 30 days. NERC reserves the right to amend the payment profile at its discretion. Research Organisations will be advised, in advance, of any such change. Changes to payment profiles may affect the overall value of the award.
  - A single payment will be made to the Research Organisation for all grants held. Details of the payment will be made available.
  - Payment for the purchase of equipment will normally be made in the initial year of the research grant. No allowances will be made for future inflation.
  - The Research Organisation may be required to return an annual statement 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 that expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the grant conditions, and that those grants shown as current are continuing. No further payments will be made until such confirmation has been received and accepted by NERC.

### **Final Expenditure Statements**

- 177.** Please refer to the [RCUK Grant Terms and Conditions](#).
- 178.** If the Final Expenditure Statement is not submitted within three months of the end of the grant (and prior written agreement to a postponement has not been given by NERC),

NERC will recover 20% of the expenditure incurred on the grant. The final payment to the Research Organisation will not be released until the Final Expenditure Statement has been received. If the Final Expenditure Statement has not been received within six months after the end of the grant (except where NERC has given prior agreement to a postponement), NERC will recover all expenditure incurred on the entire grant. Please note that these sanctions will be automatically applied by the RCUK Grants Team.

#### **Transfer of Funds between Headings (Virement)**

- 179.** Please refer to the [RCUK Grant Terms and Conditions](#). Associated (Project) Studentship costs can only be vired out of Exceptions in the event of a terminated or fees only studentship.

## Section F – APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

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### Application Procedures

- 180.** Any applicant to a Standard, Large or Innovation Projects call may submit no more than two proposals to that call closing date as an investigator, only one of these may be as the lead Principal Investigator (The PI on a non-lead proposal is a Co-I for these purposes). Standard Grant (New Investigator) proposals are counted as part of the Standard Grant call for these purposes. Involvement of a UK investigator in a submission to NSF (under the [NSF-NERC Lead Agency agreement](#)) counts as a submission as non-lead PI/Co-I to the next NERC Standard Grant call. Applicants can only submit one fellowship proposal to any fellowship call. Individual Strategic Research funding announcements of opportunity will advise on the number of proposals permitted per investigator. NERC must be notified of any change in the named Principal or Co-Investigator(s) in a proposal submitted to NERC still undergoing peer review.
- 181.** An institutional-level [submission policy](#) took effect from the July 2015 standard grant (including new investigator) closing date. This is based on historic application and award data and limits the number of applications an individual research organisation can make, where that organisation fails to meet a 20 per cent success rate quality threshold. Where a research organisation submits more applications to any round than allowed under the cap, NERC will office-reject any excess applications, based purely on the time of submission through the Je-S system (last submitted = first rejected). Any lead or component application from another research organisation linked to the rejected application will also be rejected. If any applications are subsequently rejected based on rule adherence or remit, a research organisation cannot submit alternative applications. Further information has been sent to Research Organisations and is available on the NERC website.
- 182.** Proposals for the same research project cannot be submitted to more than one Research Council or funding body. In addition proposals submitted to the same NERC call should be distinct in content and must not duplicate work outlined in one or more other proposals e.g. workpackages cannot be identical in any two proposals. NERC fellowship applications are exempt from this resubmission requirement. Any support sought or received, in the last three years, from any source for research in the same field as the proposal must be detailed in the “Related Proposals” or “Other Support” sections of the Je-S form. A proposal may not be submitted for a project for which a grant or fellowship has already been awarded. The same research project may not be submitted to concurrent NERC research grant rounds (Discovery Science or Strategic Research). There are further rules on resubmissions of proposals later in this section.
- 183.** The Research Councils aim to ensure that there are no gaps between the Councils’ subject domains and that there is equality of opportunity for proposals at the interface between traditional disciplines. The Research Councils have substantially revised their [protocol for assessing and funding proposals that straddle their](#) remits and this protocol can be found on the RCUK website. If applicants are uncertain about which Research Council they should apply to, contact: [nercremit@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:nercremit@nerc.ac.uk). Applicants will be notified if funding by more than one Research Council has been agreed.

- 184.** Applicants submitting proposals to Discovery Science Standard Grant (including New Investigator) and Fellowship calls have to select [a panel](#) to assess their proposal. The panel area selected for component proposals must match that selected for the lead proposal. NERC reserves the right to change the panel allocation post-submission but applicants will be consulted if any changes are made.
- 185.** Proposals requesting the use of Antarctic Logistic Support will only be accepted by NERC if the Pre award Operational Planning Support Questionnaire (OSPQ) has been submitted to the Antarctic Funding Office at BAS, before the associated deadline, and subsequently approved by the NERC Antarctic logistics panel. All proposals submitted to NERC will require confirmation that this approval has been received (see later advice for proposals requesting Antarctic Logistic Support).
- 186.** Proposals must be submitted using the Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). To use this system, the applicant's Research Organisation must be registered as a Je-S user. Full details are available on the [Je-S website](#). Further information can also be obtained by contacting the Je-S Helpdesk by email at [JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk) or by telephone on 01793 44 4164. Applicants can now also [create or connect their ORCID identifier](#) (ORCID iD) in Je-S (see paragraph 285-286).
- 187.** Applicants must ensure that their proposal is received by NERC by 4pm (16.00) on the relevant closing date. The Je-S system will close at 16.00 and proposals will not submit to NERC after that time. They should leave enough time for their proposal to pass through their organisation's Je-S submission route before 16.00 on the relevant closing date. Any proposal that is incomplete or does not meet the eligibility criteria of NERC, will be rejected and will not be considered. All component proposals must use the same call as the lead proposal or the whole proposal (lead and components) will be rejected. Any standard grant proposal received that exceeds the maximum funding limit and does not have prior authorisation will be rejected by NERC.
- 188.** All attachments, with the exception of letters of support and services/facilities/equipment quotes, submitted through the Je-S system must be completed in single-spaced typescript of minimum font size 11 point (Arial or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size to Arial 11), with margins of at least 2cm. Please note that Arial narrow, Calibri and Times New Roman are not allowable font types and any proposal which has used either of these font types within their submission will be rejected. References and footnotes should also be at least 11 point font and should be in the same font type as the rest of the document. Headers and footers should not be used for references or information relating to the scientific case. Embedded diagrams or pictures or numerical formulae may contain text that is smaller than 11 point but applicants should ensure that the font is legible. Text in tables and figure labels not within embedded diagrams should be at least 11 point. If applicants are not able to use Arial font and are unsure whether the font type they plan to use will meet NERC guidelines then they should contact the NERC Grants Team at [researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk) before submitting their proposal for confirmation of whether or not the font type they plan to use is acceptable. The correct attachment type should be used in Je-S as that determines whether attachments are visible to reviewers and/or moderating panel members. Letters of support must be on headed paper and signed/dated. Attachments must not exceed the page limits specified for the attachment type and scheme (see below), regardless of the number of component Research Organisations. Attachments should be converted to PDF and checked prior to attaching to the proposal in Je-S, as PDF conversion of documents with



any non-standard fonts (scientific notation, diagrams etc.) can result in changes, such as missing data or increased document length. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that font size and margins remain the same when documents are converted to a pdf.

- 189.** Each Project Partner must provide a letter to confirm that support and facilities will be made available of up to 2 sides of A4. The letter of support should be provided on headed paper with a date and the signature of the named contact in the collaborating organisation. It should confirm the organisation's commitment to the proposed project, identify the value, relevance and possible benefits of the proposed work to the partner, the period of support, the full nature of the collaboration and how the partner will be involved in the project and provide added value. Partner contributions, whether in cash or in kind, should be explained in detail in the case for support, including the equivalent value of any in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions can include staff time, access to equipment, sites or facilities, the provision of data, software or materials. The letter should be written when the proposal is being prepared and targeted specifically to the project. NERC reserves the right to remove all other letters from proposals.
- 190.** On submitting the proposal through Je-S to NERC, each Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator, and Project Partner is confirming their consent of the use of data by NERC. As part of its normal business as a publicly funded award-giving body and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, NERC will use personal data provided on the grant proposal form and acquired subsequently in connection with a proposal and any resulting grant. For further details see Section D.
- 191.** For all proposals for NERC grants (research grants and fellowships), the Principal Investigator must submit the relevant Je-S form, together with a Case for Support. Applicants referring to websites should note that referees may choose not to use them. Any proposal in which the Case for Support does not comply with these specifications will be rejected.

The Case for Support for most schemes should have two parts:

Part 1 – Previous Track Record

Part 2 – A Description of the Proposed Research

All parts of the Case for Support must be submitted as one document; these parts must not be attached separately under other attachments types. Further parts are required for some grant schemes (e.g. Large Grants) and Parts 1 and 2 are combined for the Fellowship scheme. Scheme requirements are detailed below.

- 192.** The Previous Track Record should:
  - Provide a summary of the results and conclusions of recent work in the technological/scientific area that is covered by the research proposal. Include reference to both NERC and non- NERC funded work. Details of any relevant past collaborations.
  - Indicate where your previous work has achieved significant academic or socio-economic impact.

- Outline the specific expertise available for the research at the host organisation and that of any associated organisations and Project Partners.

**193.** The Description of the Proposed Research should address the following points:

- Underlying rationale, scientific and technological issues to be addressed.
- Specific objectives of the project, including their potential relevance to UK and international research work in the field, relevance to the NERC Strategy (Annex A) and anticipated achievements and outputs, including datasets.
- Methodology and approach.
- Risks and mitigation strategies.
- Programme and/or plan of research, evidence of access to required facilities, data, collections.
- Management of both project and resources, identifying the training and career development opportunities for personnel working on the project.

**194.** The Outline Data Management Plan (a separate attachment) should: identify data sets likely to be made available to NERC Environmental Data Centres for archiving and reuse at the end of the grant ([guidance available](#) on the NERC website). One page should be used only for this purpose. Costs associated with management of the data once it has been passed to the Data Centres will be funded separately from the grant and should not be included in the grant proposal. Any costs associated with preparation of the data by the Investigators team should be included on the grant proposal. The Case for Support and the Outline Data Management Plan for successful proposals will be made available to the NERC Environmental Data Centres and where appropriate, used by them to draft, in collaboration with the Principal Investigator, a full Data Management Plan (DMP). This full DMP should be mutually agreed between the [Data Centre](#) and the Principal Investigator within three to six months of the start date of the grant.

**195.** The Justification of Resources (JoR) should be submitted as a separate attachment in the Je-S system. It should include justification for all Directly Incurred Costs, Investigator effort, use of pool staff resources and any access to shared facilities and equipment being sought. Up to 2 pages of A4 are allowed for this purpose. No justification for Directly Allocated Estates and Indirect Costs is required. If resources are not fully justified, they will be subject to reduction. An example of a [well-written JoR](#) can be found on the NERC website. Guidance on what should be included is also available in the [Je-S Helptext](#) (under the Standard Proposals then Case for Support and Attachments section). This has been agreed by all Research Councils. The JoR should also include full justification of all sea-time and facility costs requested on proposals. For High Performance Computing (HPC) no cost estimates are required, but an estimate of the use of ARCHER in Million Allocation Units (MAUs) should be included and an application must be attached when use of ARCHER exceeds 160 MAU (in any one year) for the whole project.

**196.** For all items of equipment costing between £10,000 (including VAT) and the RCUK

Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT), but excluding that to be used for instrument development, the Research Organisation will need to provide evidence of an evaluation of the use of existing relevant capital assets. The Justification of Resources should be used to:

- confirm that the piece of equipment is not readily available for use within the host institution, or any other assessable location (for instance by making reference to any asset registers consulted);
- provide evidence that all other reasonable options have been considered;
- explain, if the equipment requested will replace existing equipment, what will happen to the existing equipment;
- set out what contribution the Research Organisation will be making towards the cost of the equipment.

Requests for all single items of equipment above the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT) (excluding that to be used for instrument development) must be accompanied by a business case outlining why NERC should invest in this item of equipment. [Further guidance](#) can be found on the RCUK website. The business case will be subject to peer review and separate consideration for funding. The business case should be no more than 2 sides A4 and is additional to the Justification of Resources and the Case for Support. There may be duplication between the Case for Support and the business case but it is important that the business case contains sufficient information to allow separate peer review assessment. A separate business case must be provided for every capital item of equipment over the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT). These should be submitted by the component Research Organisation requesting the equipment in joint Standard or Large grant proposals.

- 197.** Research Assistants, whether named or unnamed, should be requested at a salary level commensurate with the skills, responsibilities, expertise and experience necessary to carry out the proposed research activity. This level must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources. Research Assistants must be employed and working at the same Research Organisation as at least one of the Investigators on the grant.
- 198.** Funds for technicians and other support staff who will be dedicated to the research project, or who will undertake work directly related to the proposed project and whose time can be fully supported by an auditable record (e.g. timesheets) during the life of the project, may be sought as directly incurred costs. The need for these staff must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources. Funds for technicians and other support staff who will undertake work directly related to the proposed project, but whose time will be shared with other projects or activities and will not be supported by an auditable record, should be claimed as Other Directly Allocated Costs. The need for these allocated pool staff must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources. Infrastructure Technicians should be identified separately from Estates costs. As this category of technician represents another overhead which was previously a component of the Estates costs, it does not need to be justified in the Justification of Resources.
- 199.** Successful grants will include funding for the basic salary, National Insurance and superannuation costs for staff to be supported by the grant. An element for future pay

awards will be added to grants by NERC. This will be based on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflators issued by the Treasury. Where individuals opt for a personal pension plan (in place of their employer's scheme), NERC will normally meet the cost of this, provided the cost does not exceed the USS/JSS contribution. There is no barrier to the recruitment of scientific staff from overseas, provided that they have permission to work in the United Kingdom. The Research Organisation is solely responsible for the procurement of work permits.

- 200.** Where support is requested for an Associated (Project) Studentship the studentship must be justified fully in the proposal. All costs for the student's travel and subsistence, consumables etc. must be itemised as Directly Incurred costs on the grant proposal form. Associated studentships may not be included in Urgency grants, Fellowships or Discovery Science Standard grants.
- 201.** Where prior approval has been received for proposals requesting Antarctic Logistic Support, the Preliminary Request for Antarctic Logistic Support form should be submitted with the proposal, as a Facility Form attachment type, specifically detailing the date that logistics approval was received and quoting the logistic bid reference number.
- 202.** NERC also requires all grant proposals to include a Pathways to Impact attachment, which should focus on engagement with users (industry, business, government, charities or the general public). This should not exceed 2 sides of A4. Any costs associated with socio-economic impact activities must be included in the appropriate section of the Je-S form. Academic impact activities, such as conferences, should **not** be included in the Pathways to Impact. The Pathways to Impact should consider:
- a. Who could potentially benefit from the proposed research over different timescales?
  - b. How might the potential beneficiaries benefit?
  - c. What will be done during and after the project to increase the likelihood of the research reaching the identified beneficiaries and maximise the likelihood of the identified benefits being achieved?

Points a. and b. should be described in the Impact Summary section of the proposal and point c. should be detailed in the Pathways to Impact attachment. In both cases these refer to economic and societal impacts only. Full details of the [requirements](#) can be found on the NERC website.

### Standard Grants

- 203.** For Standard Grant proposals the following should be submitted to NERC via the Je-S system:

Document/ attachment type	Requirements (see also paragraph 188)
Proposal Form	Je-S proforma (All component proposals must use the same call as the lead proposal or the whole proposal (lead and components) will be rejected.

Case for Support	Incorporating the Previous Track Record (up to 2 sides A4) and Description of Proposed Research (up to 8 sides A4)
Outline Data Management Plan (ODMP)	up to 1 side A4
Justification of Resources	up to 2 sides A4 for all Research Organisations in the proposed grant, including justification for items of equipment between £10,000 and the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT)
C.V.	<p>CVs are required for named research staff (including Researcher Co-Investigators), Visiting Researchers, all Principal and Co-Investigators named in the proposal (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV). There is a Je-S validation requiring the same number of CVs as named investigators and researchers on the proposal.</p> <p>Note: Only CVs for the PI, any CoIs and named researchers will be sent out for peer review. Other submitted CVs e.g. from Project Partners should not be attached and will not be made available to reviewers or panel members.</p>
Pathways to Impact	up to 2 sides A4
Project Partner Letter of Support	From any named Project Partners (up to 2 sides A4 each). There is a Je-S validation requiring the same number of attachments as Project Partners
Letter of Support	Letters of support should generally be from Project Partners or relevant to the Pathways to Impact so be attached as above. No further letters of support should be attached, except in exceptional cases where permission has been received from <a href="mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk">researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk</a> . Letters of support can only be attached to the lead proposal. Applicants should ensure that any letter of support adds value to the scientific case e.g. where access to data is being granted. NERC reserves the right to not make letters of support available to reviewers and panel members where they do not add value to the scientific case.
Facility Form	Use only for application forms for Ship-time/Marine Equipment (SME), Antarctic Logistics Support and for High Performance Computing (HPC) when use of ARCHER exceeds 160 MAU (in any one year) for the whole project.
Technical Assessment	Mandatory for any <a href="#">NERC Facility</a> selected on the Je-S proforma except those listed in the previous row. The full list is on the NERC website. The attachment should be a quote from the relevant facility.
Non-UK Components	To be used only where specific guidance requires this attachment. For example, where NERC and an International Funding Organisation have a <a href="#">joint agreement</a> (e.g. NSF or FAPESP)
Equipment Section attachments.	Under the Equipment Section up to three quotations for each item of equipment requested over £25K can be attached and there is a Je-S validation requiring three quotations and a Business Case (up to 2 sides A4) for each item of equipment over the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT) (see paragraph

	157).
Other attachment	This attachment does not go out to reviewers and should not be used, except where a Head of Department is required to confirm the eligibility of one or more of the Investigators. If the document does not fit within any of the attachment types above, it probably should not be submitted. Contact <a href="mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk">researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk</a> if unsure.
Proposal Cover Letter	This attachment does not go out to reviewers, so should not be used except to flag up a significant issue to the NERC Office (e.g. a request not to use a certain reviewer). This attachment should be used to <a href="#">declare any relevant interests</a> .

### New Investigator Grants

- 204.** The same requirements apply as for Standard Grant proposals, except for the need to include a Principal Investigator Leadership Statement in the Previous Track Record section, where the New Investigator must demonstrate that they are the proposal leader and will be responsible for managing most of the research. Application is via the New Investigator call, under the Standard research grant scheme. Any component proposals must also use the New Investigator call or the whole proposal (lead and components) will be rejected.

### Urgency Grants

- 205.** For Urgency Grant proposals the following should be submitted to NERC via the Je-S system:

Document/ attachment type	Requirements (see also paragraph 188)
Proposal Form	Je-S proforma
Case for Support	Incorporating the Previous Track Record (up to 2 sides A4) and the Description of Proposed Research (up to 4 sides A4). The Description of the Proposed Research must include justification for the urgency, detailed workplans and methodologies and the strategy for taking the research forward after the urgent phase is completed.
Outline Data Management Plan (ODMP)	up to 1 side A4
Justification of Resources	up to 2 sides A4
C.V.	CVs are required for named research staff (including Researcher Co-Investigators), Visiting Researchers, all Principal and Co-Investigators named in the proposal (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV). There is a Je-S validation requiring the same number of CVs as named investigators and researchers on the proposal.  Note: Only CVs for the PI, any CoIs and named researchers will be

	sent out for peer review. Other submitted CVs e.g. from Project Partners should not be attached and will not be made available to reviewers or panel members.
Pathways to Impact	up to 2 sides A4
Project Partner Letter of Support	From any named Project Partners (up to 2 sides A4 each). There is a Je-S validation requiring the same number of attachments as Project Partners
Letter of Support	Letters of support should generally be from Project Partners or relevant to the Pathways to Impact so be attached as above. No further letters of support should be attached, except in exceptional cases where permission has been received from <a href="mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk">researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk</a> . Applicants should ensure that any letter of support adds value to the scientific case e.g. where access to data is being granted. NERC reserves the right to not make letters of support available to reviewers and panel members where they do not add value to the scientific case.
Facility Form	Use only for application forms for Ship-time/Marine Equipment (SME), Antarctic Logistic Support and for High Performance Computing (HPC) when use of ARCHER exceeds 160 MAU (in any one year) for the whole project.
Technical Assessment	Mandatory for any <a href="#">NERC Facility</a> selected on the Je-S proforma except those listed in the previous row. The full list is on the NERC website. The attachment should be a quote from the relevant facility.
Other attachment	This attachment does not go out to reviewers and should not be used, except where a Head of Department is required to confirm the eligibility of one or more of the Investigators. If the document does not fit within any of the attachment types above, it probably should not be submitted. Contact <a href="mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk">researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk</a> if unsure.
Proposal Cover Letter	This attachment does not go out to reviewers, so should not be used except to flag up a significant issue to the NERC Office (e.g. a request not to use a certain reviewer). This attachment should be used to <a href="#">declare any relevant interests</a> .

## Large Grants

- 206.** Applicants must first submit an outline proposal on the outline proposal proforma in the Je-S system. It will be assessed by a panel comprising members of the Peer Review College, and independent experts, if required, against the criteria potential excellence and fit to scheme. Applicants whose outline proposal is successful at the sift meeting will be invited to submit a full proposal at least 4 months before the closing date for full proposals. Lead Research Organisations should check the eligibility of all organisations involved before submitting the proposal. NERC will not automatically check eligibility until the full proposal is received, although advice can be provided on request.
- 207.** The Je-S outline proposal form should include the expected Co-Investigators and their Research Organisations. If successful, some of the Co-Investigators would then become the Principal or Co- Investigators on the component grant proposals and not be named on the lead grant proposal.



- 208.** The Je-S outline proposal form should be accompanied by a Case for Support including the following information as **one** attachment. The Case for Support must not exceed 4 sides of A4 in total and should include summary information on the following:
- Objectives and anticipated outputs.
  - Outline of research proposed and its international context.
  - Justification for a Large grant approach (the outline proposal should clearly justify why a Large grant is more appropriate than multiple Standard grants).
  - Composition and experience of the research team.
  - Role of Project Partners and co-funding (proposed and secured).
  - Outline of project management plan and data management plan.
  - Proposed use of any NERC facilities, including ship time/marine equipment and associated SME form (initial discussions should be held with the relevant facilities on feasibility at this stage).
  - Equipment to be requested and the expected NERC % contribution required.
  - Proposed Pathways to Impact.
  - References.
- 209.** A Justification of Resources attachment is not required, but it is the responsibility of applicants to undertake sufficient planning at the outline proposal stage to determine that the full costs of research proposed (including any facility costs) can be accommodated within the fixed financial limits of the scheme. The Resources indicated at the outline proposal stage are considered as estimates only and may be amended in a subsequent full proposal, within the financial limits of the Large grant scheme. No CVs or Project Partner letters should be submitted at the outline proposal stage.
- 210.** If the Large grant will require Antarctic logistics support then a Pre award Operational Planning Support Questionnaire (OSPQ) must be submitted to the Antarctic Funding Office at BAS ([afibas@bas.ac.uk](mailto:afibas@bas.ac.uk)) by the outline closing date. Further details are available on the [BAS website](#). If the Large grant outline requires Shiptime and/or Marine Equipment, indicative costs will be required. To obtain these costs, a SME must be submitted and approved by Marine Planning at least two months prior to the outline call closing date.
- 211.** NERC will only accept full proposals that have been submitted as an outline proposal in the first instance and for which the PI has had subsequent confirmation from NERC that a full proposal can be submitted.
- 212.** For Large grant proposals the following should be submitted to NERC via the Je-S system:

<b>Document/attachment</b>	<b>Requirements (see also paragraph 188)</b>
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type	
Proposal Form	Je-S proforma
Case for Support	<p>comprising a common Previous Track Record incorporating all Research Organisations involved (up to <b>3</b> sides of A4), a common Description of the Proposed Research (up to <b>16</b> sides of A4 including all necessary tables, references and figures) and a Description of the Proposed Management Structure and plans, participant responsibilities, and scheduling chart. (up to 2 sides A4).</p> <p>The Case for Support should explain the overarching scientific question, issue or theme that justifies a Large grant approach.</p>
Outline Data Management Plan (ODMP)	up to 1 side A4
Justification of Resources	<p>Up to 4 sides A4 for all Research Organisations in the proposed grant, including justification for items of equipment between £10,000 and the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT).</p> <p>It should also include full justification of all sea-time and facility costs (excluding High Performance Computing (HPC)) included as estimates on proposals. Use of ARCHER should be included as an estimate in Million Allocation Units (MAUs). A brief justification for the use of High Performance Computing (HPC) should be included.</p>
C.V.	<p>CVs are required for named research staff (including Researcher Co-Investigators), Visiting Researchers, all Principal and Co-Investigators named in the proposal (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV). There is a Je-S validation requiring the same number of CVs as named investigators and researchers on the proposal.</p> <p>Note: Only CVs for the PI, any CoIs and named researchers will be sent out for peer review. Other submitted CVs e.g. from Project Partners should not be attached and will not be made available to reviewers or panel members.</p>
Pathways to Impact	up to 2 sides A4
Project Partner Letter of Support	From any named Project Partners (up to 2 sides A4 each). There is a Je-S validation requiring the same number of attachments as Project Partners
Letter of Support	<p>Letters of support should generally be from Project Partners or relevant to the Pathways to Impact so be attached as above. No further letters of support should be attached, except in exceptional cases where permission has been received from <a href="mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk">researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk</a>. Letters of support can only be attached to the lead proposal. Applicants should ensure than any letter of support adds value to the scientific case e.g. where access to data is being granted. NERC reserves the right to not make letters of support available to reviewers and panel members where they do not add value to the scientific case.</p>
Facility Form	Use only for application forms for Ship-time/Marine Equipment (SME), Antarctic Logistic Support (BAS should already have been

	approached before the outline proposal stage) and for High Performance Computing (HPC) when use of ARCHER exceeds 160 MAU (in any one year) for the whole project.
Technical Assessment	Mandatory for any <a href="#">NERC Facility</a> selected on the Je-S proforma except those listed in the previous row. The full list is on the NERC website. The attachment should be a quote from the relevant facility.
Non-UK Components	To be used only where specific guidance requires this attachment. For example, where NERC and an International Funding Organisation have a <a href="#">joint agreement</a> (e.g. NSF or FAPESP).
Equipment Section attachments.	Under the Equipment Section up to three quotations for each item of equipment requested over £25K can be attached and there is a Je-S validation requiring three quotations and a Business Case (up to 2 sides A4) for each item of equipment over the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT) (see paragraph 157).
Other attachment	This attachment does not go out to reviewers and should not be used, except where a Head of Department is required to confirm the eligibility of one or more of the Investigators. If the document does not fit within any of the attachment types above, it probably should not be submitted. Contact <a href="mailto:researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk">researchgrants@nerc.ac.uk</a> if unsure.
Proposal Cover Letter	This attachment does not go out to reviewers, so should not be used except to flag up a significant issue to the NERC Office (e.g. a request not to use a certain reviewer). This attachment should be used to <a href="#">declare any relevant interests</a> .

## Fellowship Grants

- 213.** For Discovery Science Independent Research Fellowship (IRF) proposals the following should be submitted to NERC via the Je-S system:

Document/attachment type	Requirements (see also paragraph 188)
Proposal Form	Je-S proforma
Case for Support	This should include the Previous Track Record and Description of Proposed Research and Research Vision (up to 10 sides A4).
Outline Data Management Plan (ODMP)	up to 1 side A4
Justification of Resources	up to 2 sides A4
C.V.	CV for the fellowship applicant only (up to 2 sides A4).  Note: Only CVs for the fellowship applicant will be sent out for peer review. Other submitted CVs e.g. from Project Partners should not be attached and will not be made

	available to reviewers or panel members.
Publication List	No page limit, but this should not duplicate information in the CV. No publications should be attached.
Pathways to Impact	Up to 2 sides A4
Project Partner Letter of Support	Fellowship proposals do not have the Project Partner screen or attachment type – see below
Letter of Support	For fellowship proposals, any significant collaborators (from outside the host Research Organisation) should be named in the Partnership Details section of the form and a letter of support (up to 2 sides A4) should be attached from each person named in that section. Collaborators from the host Research Organisation submitting the proposal should not be named in this section and should not provide a letter of support. Internal collaborators can be mentioned in the section on “Choice of Host Institution”. Personal References should not be included with the proposal.
Head of Department Statement	This is mandatory for Fellowship schemes – see paragraph 217. This attachment is added at the submitter/approver stage of Je-S submission.
Facility Form	Use only for application forms for Ship-time/Marine Equipment (SME), Antarctic Logistic Support and for High Performance Computing (HPC) when use of ARCHER exceeds 160 MAU (in any one year) for the whole project.
Technical Assessment	Mandatory for any <a href="#">NERC Facility</a> selected on the Je-S proforma except those listed in the previous row. The full list is on the NERC website. The attachment should be a quote from the relevant facility.
Other attachment	This attachment does not go out to reviewers and should not be used. If the document does not fit within any of the attachment types above, it probably should not be submitted. Contact <a href="mailto:fellowships@nerc.ac.uk">fellowships@nerc.ac.uk</a> if unsure.
Proposal Cover Letter	This attachment does not go out to reviewers, so should not be used except to flag up a significant issue to the NERC Office (e.g. a request not to use a certain reviewer). This attachment should be used to <a href="#">declare any relevant interests</a> .

**214.** The Case for Support (Parts 1 and 2) should be a maximum of 10 sides A4 and address the points listed in Paragraphs 192 and 193 as well as those below. There are no further page limit restrictions for the Parts 1 and 2, although a guideline would be to devote around 2 sides to the track record and 8 sides to the proposed research, in which the applicant should also:

- demonstrate their research vision and philosophy and outline ways in which their research could be developed;
- explain how they will contribute to the international research area and interact with the leading international groups in their field;

- explain how they will enable the potential economic and societal impact of their research to be realised.
- 215.** The Description of Proposed Research (part of the Case for Support) should provide more detail on the research proposed for the first three years of the fellowship. The research proposed for the final two years can be more speculative and reflect the applicant’s research vision. However, sufficient information will be required in order to inform reviewers of the direction and feasibility of the research and enable appropriate costs to be requested on the proposal.
- 216.** The detailed research proposed (and costed) on the proposal should be manageable by the Fellow. Some fieldwork or technical assistance can be requested on Fellowship proposals, but the proposal must not include costs for a research assistant and should not assume access to PhD Students. As part of the demonstration of research vision, the applicant would be expected to outline their future research direction and how they would build their group through PhD studentship projects and Research grants, but costs should not be included on the Fellowship proposal. Applicants should discuss with their host institution what would be a reasonable starting salary (based on the applicant’s age when taking up the appointment and their previous salary level and experience). The Head of Department’s statement should include justification for a higher than average starting salary.
- 217.** There will be a greater expectation for the host institution to provide support and mentoring to NERC IRFs to facilitate their development into future science leaders. The Head of Department of the host institution will be required to demonstrate:
- the availability of structured institutional support, including infrastructure and facilities, funds to support research, and access to PhD students;
  - support for personal development of the fellow, including mentoring, appropriate review and training courses.
- 218.** Any significant collaborators (from outside the host Research Organisation) should be named in the Partnership Details section of the form and a letter of support (up to 2 sides A4 on headed paper) should be attached from each person named in that section. Collaborators from the host Research Organisation submitting the proposal should not be named in this section and should not provide a letter of support. Internal collaborators can be mentioned in the section on “Choice of Host Institution”. Personal References should not be included with the proposal.

### **Strategic Research Fellowships**

- 219.** For Strategic Research Fellowship rounds, the requirements may vary from those for NERC IRFs and where appropriate they will be detailed on the call documentation on the website.

### **Joint Standard and Large Grant Proposals**

- 220.** The following guidance (paragraphs 220 to 225) applies where a research proposal consists of more than one component proposal, which enables funding to be awarded

directly to different Research Organisations. Any component proposals must use the same call as the lead (e.g. all components must use the New Investigator call, if the lead is a New Investigator proposal) or the whole proposal (lead and components) will be rejected. Alternatively a single proposal may include Co-Investigators from the non-lead Research Organisation and funding for a number of Research Organisations. In this case the award would be made to the lead/submitting Research Organisation which would pass funds on to collaborating Research Organisations (including Directly Allocated and Directly Incurred costs). Where the award to a Research Organisation would be under £65,000, funding must go via the lead Research Organisation.

- 221.** The Principal Investigator's Research Organisation will normally be the administering Research Organisation, but NERC will allow a Standard Grant to be joint between a maximum of four Research Organisations (including the lead Research Organisation) for financial purposes. There is no limit to the number of component Research Organisations requesting direct funding on Large grants. Proposals exceeding the maximum number of component Research Organisations stipulated by the scheme to which they are applying, will be rejected.
- 222.** The minimum sum that can be awarded to an individual Research Organisation in a joint proposal is £65,000 (100% fEC). Where an individual Research Organisation is requesting more than £65,000 (100% fEC) they can either be included as part of the lead proposal or can submit their own component proposal. There will be one overall lead Principal Investigator and lead Research Organisation with responsibility for the management of the project as a whole. In addition, each constituent Research Organisation must name a Principal Investigator who will have responsibility for the input of the component organisation.
- 223.** The following information should be common to all proposal proformas and text such as "See Lead Proposal" should not be submitted:
- Title of proposal
  - Objectives
  - Summary
  - Academic Beneficiaries
  - Impact Summary
  - Preliminary Request for Antarctic Logistic Support form (for proposals requiring Antarctic Logistic Support)
- 224.** For each component Research Organisation we require:
- CVs for named research staff (including Researcher Co-Investigators) and Visiting Researchers at the component Research Organisation (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV). These should be attached to the relevant component Research Organisation proposal.
  - CVs for all Principal and Co-Investigators named in the proposal (up to 2 sides A4 for each CV).

- Business case for items of equipment above the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT) (up to 2 sides A4 for each item)
- Price quotations/documentary evidence of estimated cost for equipment costing more than £25,000.
- Facilities forms, where relevant.

**225.** The following should be included in the lead Research Organisation proposal pro-forma or submitted as attachments to the lead Research Organisation proposal **only**:

- Nominated referees.
- Project Partners.
- Letters of support from named Project Partners.
- Case for Support (all parts)
- Outline Data Management Plan (ODMP)
- Justification of Resources (including any justification for items of equipment between £10,000 and the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT)).
- Pathways to Impact.
- Pre Award Operational Support Planning Questionnaire (for proposals requiring Antarctic Logistic Support)

### Summary of Requirements for Joint Standard and Large Grant Proposals

Document Type	Common to all proposals	Submitted by Lead Only	Submitted by Individual components
Title of proposal (pro forma) *	✓		✓
Objectives (pro forma) *	✓		✓
Summary (pro forma) *	✓		✓
Academic Beneficiaries (pro forma) *	✓		✓
Impact Summary (pro forma) *	✓		✓
Panel area (pro forma)	✓		✓
* The title and content of all the sections above should be the same on all components. Do not use “see lead” (or similar) as the individual grants of any successful projects are included on the website and in reporting systems, like “Grants on the Web”.			
Nominated referees (pro forma)	✓	✓	

Project Partners (pro forma)	✓	✓	
Associated (Project) Student details (pro forma)			✓
Facility (pro forma)			✓
Previous Track Record (Part 1 of the Case for Support).	✓	✓	
Description of Proposed Research (Part 2 of the Case for Support)	✓	✓	
Outline Data Management Plan (ODMP)	✓	✓	
Description of the Proposed Management Structure (Large grants only – Part 3 of the Case for Support).	✓	✓	
Business Case for items of equipment above the RCUK Equipment Threshold of £138k (£115k ex VAT)	✓		✓
Justification of Resources	✓	✓	
Pathways to Impact	✓	✓	
Letters of support from named Project Partners	✓	✓	
CVs for all Principal and Co-I Investigators, named research staff and Visiting Researchers from all component Research Organisations			✓
Price quotations/documentary evidence of estimated cost for equipment costing more than £25,000.	✓		✓
Pre Award Operational Support Planning Questionnaire (for proposals requiring Antarctic Logistic Support)	✓	✓	
Facility forms (Ship-time/Marine Equipment, High Performance Computing involving ARCHER, if total use likely to exceed 160 MAU (in any one year) for the whole project			✓

<a href="#">Technical Assessment/quote</a> for all other NERC facilities selected.			✓
<a href="#">Non-UK component.</a>	✓	✓	

### Innovation Follow-on Call

- 226.** Full Proposals for the Innovation Follow-on Call should be made through the Je-S system. Potential applicants should see the [Innovation Follow-on Call guidance](#).

### Innovation Follow-on Pathfinder

- 227.** Details on the [Follow-on Fund Pathfinder](#) scheme can be found on the NERC website. Full proposals should be made through the Je-S system. Applicants should note that their technology transfer office is required to provide a statement of support on the Je-S form.

### Strategic Research and Other Schemes

- 228.** Details of the application procedures for Strategic Research and other schemes can be found in the relevant Announcement of Opportunity which will be published on the NERC website.

### Resubmission of Proposals

- 229.** For the Standard (including New Investigator) grant scheme and the International Ocean Discovery Programme (IODP), unsuccessful proposals can be resubmitted after a period of at least **nine months** from the closing date of the original submission. Resubmitted proposals will be assessed alongside all other proposals and will not receive preferential treatment. No account will be taken of previous reviews or feedback comments from the Moderating Panel in assessing a resubmitted proposal. Please note that unsuccessful proposals to the NERC research fellowship scheme cannot be submitted to responsive research grant schemes until at least nine months after the closing date of the original fellowship submission.
- 230.** Proposals which duplicate 40% or more of the stated Objectives and/or work packages of an unsuccessful submission involving the same PI or Co-I(s) will not be accepted if submitted within nine months of the closing date for the funding round to which the original proposal was submitted. Applicants are reminded that directly resubmitted proposals should be noted at the appropriate point in the Je-S submission procedure.
- 231.** For a proposal to be considered significantly different (and therefore not a direct resubmission) NERC would expect more than 60% of the stated Objectives and/or work packages to be identified as 'new' i.e. not listed in proposals previously submitted to NERC by the applicants. Any decision regarding whether a proposal is deemed to be significantly different will be made by NERC and will be considered as final.
- 232.** Proposals for the same research project cannot be submitted to more than one



Research Council. Unless specifically invited, or if prior approval from the NERC Office has been obtained, proposals that have already been considered by another Research Council must not be submitted to NERC. Proposals where resubmission has been approved, must be accompanied by a covering letter explaining the circumstances of the previous proposal, its outcome and the modifications subsequently made to the proposal. It is expected that substantive changes will have been made to any resubmission. Acceptance of such proposals remains at the discretion of NERC.

- 233.** A proposal may not be submitted for a project for which a grant or fellowship has already been awarded. The same research project may not be submitted to concurrent NERC research grant (Discovery Science or Strategic Research) rounds. Proposals with overlapping content cannot be submitted to the same call. A fellowship proposal should not have been previously submitted as a research grant proposal. Applicants can not submit a similar proposal (less than 60% different) as a Large grant outline at the same time as a Highlight Topic full proposal.
- 234.** Large grant proposals unsuccessful at the full proposal stage may not be resubmitted unless specifically invited by NERC. In this case, applicants will be advised of the most appropriate closing date. Unsuccessful Large grant outline proposals may be resubmitted. Proposals unsuccessful in the closed Consortium grant scheme cannot be resubmitted to the Large grant scheme (outline or full proposal) unless resubmission was specifically invited by NERC at the time of rejection. Unsuccessful Highlight Topic applicants can resubmit parts of the proposal (up to £800k) to the standard grants round (or another relevant NERC call) or resubmit to the Discovery Science Large grants outlines or Highlight Topics rounds after a period of at least nine months from the closing date of the original submission. Any resubmission (as with any proposal) must be substantially different to any projects that have been funded by NERC e.g. via the Highlight Topics call or other schemes.
- 235.** Unsuccessful proposals to Strategic Research calls cannot be resubmitted into subsequent funding rounds unless specifically invited to do so. This is because, unlike Discovery Science schemes, different funding rounds within a Strategic Research Programme often have different funding priorities. A proposal that is unsuccessful in a Strategic Research call, but that is within the NERC remit, can be resubmitted into a Discovery Science scheme. Those that are rejected on the basis of Strategic Research programme remit can be resubmitted at any time. However, those that have been through the peer review process cannot be resubmitted until at least nine months after the original closing date. This includes where applicants choose to resubmit their unsuccessful proposal as a Large grant outline proposal.

### **Proposals Requiring Use of NERC Services and Facilities**

- 236.** Applicants for NERC grants may also apply to NERC for access to any of the NERC services and facilities. Further information on [NERC services and facilities](#) is on the NERC website. Prior to submitting the grant proposal, the applicants must first contact the facility to seek agreement that they could provide the service required and obtain a technical assessment (quote). Applicants should contact the relevant facility at least one month prior to the grant or fellowship proposal closing date to ensure that the facility can provide the quote in time to be submitted with the proposal. Advice on the application procedure for a particular facility should be sought from the [relevant contact](#). For most facilities and schemes, the notional costs of using the facility should

be included in the grant proposal, under the directly incurred other costs heading. On the Je-S proposal proforma the facilities box should be ticked and the relevant facility(s) selected from the drop-down box, the units and costs fields should be entered here too. There is a system validation requiring a “technical assessment” (quote) for the [NERC Facilities on this list](#). For some facilities the costs will then be removed from the grant and awarded notionally (where NERC provides the funding directly to the facility). If the relevant facility costs have not been requested on the grant proposal, they will not be added later. Different rules apply for ship time/marine equipment and High Performance Computing (HPC) which are covered below.

### **Proposals Requesting Ship Time and/or Marine Equipment**

- 237.** Principal Investigators bidding for ship time or marine equipment are required to speak to Marine Planning to discuss their requirements before submission of their online Ship-time and Marine Equipment (SME) application form. Failure to do so may result in their request not being included in the NERC Marine Facilities Programme. This requirement is to ensure that a realistic start date and relevant costs are included in the grant proposal, and to confirm that NERC can supply the required capability. The Marine Planning contact is Dr Natalie Clark ([natcla@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:natcla@nerc.ac.uk) 07703 380220).
- 238.** Applicants wishing to utilise NERC’s marine facilities must complete an online Ship-time and Marine Equipment (SME) application form through the [Marine Facilities Planning](#) webpage. SME forms need to be submitted and then assessed and approved by Marine Planning well in advance of the grant proposal deadline and to the following timescales. Please note that timescales should be worked back from any deadlines imposed by a PI’s institution which may be in advance of a call deadline.
- Discovery Science Standard Grants/Fellowships - SMEs for Standard Grant (including New Investigator) and Fellowship proposals must be submitted at least one month before the call deadline to allow time for assessment and approval by Marine Planning. A pdf of the approved SME will then need to be attached to the Je-S submission and the SME number included in the facilities section of the Je-S form. Costs are not required for Standard Grant/Fellowship proposals.
  - Discovery Science Large Grants - SMEs should be submitted at least two months before the call deadline to allow time for assessment and approval by Marine Planning and the production of costs to include in the proposal. SMEs are required at both the outline and the full proposal stage as costs are required for both stages of the submission process.
  - NERC Strategic Research Calls – the deadline for SMEs may vary depending on the particular call and will be detailed in the announcement of opportunity. PIs are encouraged to submit their SME and start discussions with Marine Planning as soon as possible. If costing is required, the two month deadline will apply, unless agreed and advised otherwise with the Strategic Research programme manager(s).
  - Non-NERC funding streams – SMEs should follow the guidelines for Large Grants, with SMEs submitted at least two months before the call deadline. This includes the equivalent of both outline and full stage proposals.
- 239.** For proposals which include a request for Mooring Equipment from the National Marine Equipment Pool (NMEP), then the [NERC Moorings Policy](#) will apply. The Principal

Scientist is required to submit a Risk Management form two months prior to the relevant closing date or deadline. Advice can be gained from Debbie Mason (email [deso@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:deso@nerc.ac.uk)) at NERC Marine Planning at any time.

240. For proposals which include Seismic/Geophysics Operations, it is the responsibility of the Principal Scientist for the cruise to conduct an environmental impact assessment and/or ascertain whether Marine Mammal Observers are necessary. These costs should be included at the time of grant application.
241. The SME number should be included on the Je-S grant proposal form under Services and Facilities. A pdf of the final approved SME form should be attached to the submission as a Facility Form but it should be noted that it will not be included as one of the documents sent to peer reviewers. You are therefore advised to include all necessary cruise detail information within your Case for Support.
242. PIs should notify Marine Planning as soon as they have knowledge of their grant funding outcome. If funding is approved, PIs must also confirm funding on the SME workflow on the Marine Facilities Planning website.
243. Proposals must have confirmed funding by 1<sup>st</sup> April to be considered for the following financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March). Funded proposals received after 1<sup>st</sup> April closing date will only be scheduled in the following year's programme on an opportunistic basis if a suitable time window remains and there is enough time to obtain diplomatic clearances. Otherwise these proposals will be carried over to the next year. Publication of the NERC Marine Facilities Programme will occur as soon as possible in the summer/autumn for the following financial year.
244. No research grant involving a ship time application will be allowed to commence until the proposal has been formally allocated a place in the NERC marine facilities programme, unless approval has otherwise been agreed between Marine Planning and the Strategic Research Programme Manager.

### **Proposals involving High Performance Computing**

245. Grant proposals with High Performance Computing (HPC) requirements should indicate in the appropriate place on the Je-S form that Research Council Facilities are required and select the relevant facility/ies: ARCHER, RDF (Research Data Facility, Edinburgh) and/or JASMIN. Applicants should contact the relevant consortia leader prior to submission of the grant proposal to get an estimate of the required usage. The HPC "new" application form is only required as an attachment to the grant proposal form where the total use of ARCHER is likely to exceed 160 MAU (in any one year) for the whole project. The NERC contact for High Performance Computing is: [hpc@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:hpc@nerc.ac.uk).

### **Proposals involving Cross-Council Large Facilities (Diamond, ISIS and CLF)**

246. The cross-Council large facilities, [Diamond \(DLS\)](#), [ISIS \(pulsed neutron and muon source\)](#) and the [Central Lasers Facility \(CLF\)](#) are free at the point of access. Applicants should indicate in the appropriate place on the Je-S form that Research Council Facilities are required and select the relevant facility/ies but enter "0" for cost, units and proposed usage. Applicants are required to apply directly to the facility for

access.

## Applications for Antarctic Logistic Support

- 247.** Logistic support in Antarctica for NERC-funded projects is provided by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), which is a NERC Research Centre. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of BAS, will NERC sanction funding applicants to negotiate their own logistic arrangements with a commercial operator. In the event that BAS cannot support the fieldwork as proposed, applicants will be advised of what is feasible, thereby enabling the proposal to be modified accordingly. Very occasionally, the proposed logistics cannot be supported because it is evident that an unacceptably high level of risk is inherent in the plan. At its discretion, BAS may broker arrangements with other national Antarctic operators, or commercial logistic providers, to facilitate Antarctic fieldwork operations (especially in 'deep field' locations) and to ensure that NERC resources are used in the most efficient and effective manner.
- 248.** To ensure that BAS is able to consider the likely logistic support requirements at an early stage, before proposals have been developed in detail, applicants must complete a Pre award [Operational Planning Support Questionnaire \(OSPQ\)](#). This is a new online form based on SharePoint which replaces the 'Preliminary Request for Antarctic Logistic Support'. Applicants must email the Polar Funding Office (PFO) at BAS ([afibas@bas.ac.uk](mailto:afibas@bas.ac.uk)) stating their name, institution and proposal title. The PFO will set up a new, numbered Pre award OSPQ and send the link to the applicant along with instructions for completion. The Pre award OSPQ should be submitted to the PFO **no later than three months prior to the submission deadline** of the intended call.

Reminders of the deadlines will be posted on the [NERC website](#) and on the [BAS website](#) and are also sent out on the NERC listservers.

- 249.** Pre award Operational Planning Support Questionnaires are considered by a logistics panel, convened at BAS, with representation from BAS Operations and Logistics; NERC Head Office; and the PFO, shortly after the deadline for receipt of those requests. For funding opportunities where only a small number of such requests are received, however, the BAS Operations Manager will advise NERC (via the Polar Funding Office at BAS) of the feasibility of providing the requested support. In all cases, feedback will be provided to the applicants, by NERC Head Office.

If your proposed project is entirely ship-based, there is no need for you to submit a Pre award OSPQ. Instead, you should contact the NERC Marine Planning Officer, Natalie Clark ([natcla@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:natcla@nerc.ac.uk)) at an early stage to discuss your project planning requirements before completing a Ship-time and Marine Equipment (SME) application form. If your activity is both field and ship-based you will need to complete the Pre award OSPQ **and** an SME form.

- 250.** Subject to the logistic requests receiving approval, NERC will send applicants a numbered PDF of their Pre award OSPQ which must be included as an attachment with their funding application to NERC using the Je-S system. The reference number and approval date of the Antarctic logistic requests should be clearly stated in the relevant sections.
- 251.** Approval of the Antarctic logistics requests will be valid for a 12 month period from the

date of application to BAS. Any funding applications that request Antarctic logistic support without having received prior logistic approval will **not** be accepted by NERC. Please note that the Pre award OSPQ will not be sent with the proposal for Peer Review.

- 252.** There are three types of [costs for Antarctic fieldwork](#) which are treated differently on the grant. Applicants are advised to discuss their detailed requirements with Katie Gosling (Tel: 01223 221399, e-mail [afibas@bas.ac.uk](mailto:afibas@bas.ac.uk)) at the NERC Polar Funding Office (located at BAS).

Provision of Antarctic fieldwork support by BAS is not costed in grant proposals; the support is provided free of charge to Investigators, as part of BAS National Capability. This includes use of Antarctic research station facilities, together with use of BAS ships and aircraft, and fieldwork support by Field General Assistants.

Items that are eligible costs and will not be removed from the grant (e.g. travel to and from RAF Brize Norton, travel to BAS and any required training, other training costs).

Items that should be costed into the proposal, but will be removed from the grant and awarded to BAS (flights to and from the Falkland Islands, meals/accommodation/transport relating to Stanley/Punta Arenas/Mount Pleasant, fieldwork clothing, additional aviation fuel, specialist clothing, e.g. diving suits).

#### **Applications involving European Space Agency (ESA) data**

- 253.** Successful applicants for NERC grants have streamlined access to ESA data. NERC funded proposals may by-pass the ESA peer review system and accelerate the data acquisition process. This applies to projects proposals involving ERS-2 and Envisat data.
- 254.** The successful PI must submit a proposal for Category 1 data to ESA via [the web interface](#). The application should be marked 'NERC approved'. The Principal Investigator must then inform NERC by email to [eoprog@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:eoprog@nerc.ac.uk) about their submission and NERC will provide a letter to ESA with the peer review results. ESA will then check feasibility of data provision, assign data quota and provide data at category 1 conditions. Data will be provided by ESA at cost of reproduction. These costs should be identified in the NERC proposal. For further information please email: [eoprog@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:eoprog@nerc.ac.uk).

#### **Assessment of Proposals**

- 255.** Information on [assessment of proposals](#) for Discovery Science, Strategic Research and Innovation funding can be found on the NERC website and in individual Strategic Research Announcements of Opportunity.

## Section G – MONITORING AND REPORTING

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### Final Expenditure Statements

- 256.** A Final Expenditure Statement is required from the Research Organisation within three months of the grant end date. Further information is in Section E.

### Annual Reporting of Output and Performance Measures (OPM)

- 257.** NERC, along with the other Research Councils, is required to report to the Department for Business Innovation, and Skills annually on the outputs from grants during the previous financial year. A similar report is also made to NERC Council.
- 258.** All Principal Investigators (for lead and component grants) are required to provide an annual update of information relating to the outputs, outcomes and impacts (referred to as research outcomes) that arise from their RCUK funded research. They are required to have a Researchfish account and to use the Researchfish system to provide these updates annually during the period of the awards and usually for five years after their awards have finished. Where appropriate, data can be replicated across all components of a joint grant. There may be specific reporting requirement for individual Strategic Research or Innovation grants, which will be included in the Announcement of Opportunity and in the offer letter.
- 259.** In general, publication in refereed scientific journals and publication of datasets (e.g. through their deposition with a NERC Data Centre) is the most appropriate way to report and disseminate the findings of a NERC-funded project. NERC is also keen to encourage dissemination to users of science and to non-scientific audiences (see Sections H and J). Much of the content submitted through Researchfish will be accessible to the public and potential collaborative partners through [Gateway to Research](#).
- 260.** Principal Investigators may record and attribute research outcomes to awards at any time during the year. The required update of research outcomes information takes place during the annual RCUK Researchfish submission period. During this period a 'SUBMIT TO RESEARCHFISH' button is enabled for each award, and by clicking on this button the researcher formally confirms that the currently attributed outcomes represent a full and up-to-date record of the outcomes known to have arisen from that award. The submission period will be scheduled for a defined period each year. Researchers will always be contacted directly and given appropriate advance notice of the scheduled period. Researchers are required to maintain an active email address in the Researchfish system to allow this communication to take place.
- 261.** In cases of agreed extended absence such as parental leave, sickness etc. researchers can request a temporary suspension of the RCUK requirement to provide an annual update by contacting their research office and/or [researchoutcomes@rcuk.ac.uk](mailto:researchoutcomes@rcuk.ac.uk). Researchers have the opportunity to discuss with RCUK when they feel that no further outcomes will arise from an award and request that the award is 'closed' in Researchfish. If this is agreed, the outcomes information and award will still be visible in the system but the researcher will not be able to associate any further outcomes to



the award, and will no longer be required to provide an annual update of information for that award. Further information on [Researchfish](#), including the compliance and sanctions policy, can be found on the RCUK website.

- 262.** NERC has the capacity to issue Digital Object Identifiers (DOI) to any datasets held in its Data Centres. NERC Grantholders are encouraged to apply for these DOIs and use them as citations in academic papers. NERC can then derive citation metrics for datasets in the same way as for publications.
- 263.** NERC uses the OPMs to demonstrate to government the benefits of environmental science and make the case for further funding. A selection of the top science and organisational achievements will be used in the NERC Annual Report, and many lead to:
- Impact case studies sent direct to government to demonstrate the impact of NERC's environmental research.
  - Features for [Planet Earth](#) and our Planet Earth magazine, for a public audience.
  - Inclusion in [impact case studies](#) to demonstrate the impact of our research to stakeholders, including industry, policy-makers and the general public.

We need a clear explanation of the scientific achievements and examples of when the work has had knowledge exchange benefits or economic, policy or societal impact. We do not need an entry for every activity undertaken during the year. It is important that the entry is written in plain English and gives enough detail for us to understand the full impact and excellence of the work.

- 264.** The NERC Knowledge exchange team can be contacted directly ([knowledge@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:knowledge@nerc.ac.uk)) to discuss whether work would be suitable for a case study.

## Section H - ENGAGING THE PUBLIC WITH NERC SCIENCE

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### Why you should engage with the public

265. NERC is committed to engaging the public with the science it funds, a commitment that is set out in the [NERC Charter](#) and endorsed by RCUK in the [RCUK Statement of Expectation on Economic and Societal Impact](#). NERC award holders have a responsibility to communicate their research to audiences outside the scientific community – such as the public, journalists, schoolchildren, teachers, industry and policy-makers – and to explain how NERC science affects them.
266. Public engagement describes the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit.
267. Applicants should outline their ideas and/or specific proposals for meeting their requirement to communicate in the case for support and the Pathways to Impact plan. Pathways to Impact allows researchers to apply for funds to support their work in delivering impact arising from their research. Public engagement work should be reported annually through the ResearchFish system.

### Press and publicity

268. Award holders must inform the NERC press office of any planned or unplanned media activity (Tel: 01793 411561, email: [pressoffice@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:pressoffice@nerc.ac.uk)) surrounding any research supported by NERC. In addition, if the award involves Antarctic Logistic Support by the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), award-holders should inform the BAS press, public relations and education office (Tel: 01223 221448, email: [lmca@bas.ac.uk](mailto:lmca@bas.ac.uk)).
269. All award holders must contact the NERC communications team whenever they have had a paper accepted for publication, and if there are plans for any publicity around NERC-funded research. The communications team has excellent links to local, national and international media and can advise award holders on a variety of activities that will get the best coverage for your story. As well as press releases, these include content for [Planet Earth](#) – news stories, blogs, video and the Planet Earth Podcast – and writing features for [Planet Earth magazine](#).
270. Scientists often have to deal with contentious issues. Dealing with journalists or a questioning public in these circumstances can be intimidating. The NERC communications team is trained to deal with these situations and can offer advice, guidance and support.

For press enquiries: [pressoffice@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:pressoffice@nerc.ac.uk)

For Planet Earth Online and publications enquiries: [editors@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:editors@nerc.ac.uk).



## Websites

271. Websites can be an ideal way to communicate with certain audiences but should only be developed if there is a clear goal and audience in mind. Public-facing websites may have to comply with Central Office of Information guidelines, and award holders should consider their ability to meet these when developing new content.
272. There are some useful guidelines on [web standards and accessibility](#). Contact NERC communications team if there is doubt about which guidelines apply: [editors@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:editors@nerc.ac.uk). Research Organisation communications team should be able to advise award holders about what is necessary to comply with them. You might also find the [Government Digital Service's guidelines](#) on accessibility helpful.
273. Websites should be treated as any other public engagement activity. All the content should be accessible, using audio transcripts and closed captions where necessary, and captions should describe the content of the image or item they describe so text readers can make sense of them. It is good practice to evaluate the success of the site using a metrics service like Google Analytics, which will help track the number of visitors, page views and time spent on the site.

## Training Courses

274. There are a number of [courses](#) available to increase knowledge and skills in public engagement. Please see the [NERC public engagement webpages](#) or [contact NERC external affairs and engagement team](#) if you would like further information or advice about public engagement.

## Section I - PUBLICATION OF WORK

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### Publication of Work/Open Source Software (OSS)

- 275.** NERC attaches great importance to the dissemination of results and all NERC award-holders are expected to publish the results of their research in the appropriate journals. They are, however, invited to consult NERC if other arrangements seem desirable. All published papers should acknowledge any support received from NERC and should cite the award reference number(s) using the following form of words: "This work was supported by the Natural Environment Research Council [NERC grant reference number xxx]. This is essential in helping to publicise the work of NERC and providing an indicator of the success of the investment. Please help us to ensure continued funding for environmental science research remains a priority by acknowledging NERC when you publicise your research project.
- 276.** It is important, when formulating a proposal for a grant, that sufficient time for the preparation of manuscripts is incorporated into the design and timing of the proposed project.
- 277.** NERC is committed to the principles articulated in the [RCUK Policy on Open Access](#) and to ensuring that the ideas and knowledge derived from its research, survey and monitoring activities are made available as widely, rapidly and effectively as practicable. NERC requires that an electronic copy of any published peer reviewed paper, supported in whole or in part by NERC funds, is deposited at the earliest opportunity in an e-print repository. NERC has established an [e-print repository](#) for use by its staff. Staff at all UK organisations funded by NERC, now have access to their own [Institutional Repository](#).
- 278.** Jisc has sponsored development of the [RIOxx](#) metadata profile to allow repositories to make funder and grant ID information harvestable in a standard way. NERC assumes that all UK repositories holding publications arising from this funding will conform to this profile by the end of 2013. Items deposited in repositories must also acknowledge the support received from NERC, using the form of words from the [Research Information Network](#).
- 279.** Full implementation of this requirement will mean that current copyright and licensing policies, such as embargo periods, are maintained by publishers and respected by authors. Under this policy, at no time will individual authors be required to negotiate copyright and licensing arrangements with their publishers. NERC will work with publishers to put in place mechanisms for publishers submitting publications on behalf of authors, where this is possible. The version of the paper deposited will depend upon publishers' policies on deposit in repositories.
- 280.** NERC reserves the right of access to all unpublished papers, records, or collections resulting from the work carried out under an award, some of which may be required to be deposited with NERC. Similarly NERC reserves the right to use information on the outcome of fellowships, grants or studentships in annual reports, strategic plans, and for scientific and financial audit, and may from time to time require current and former award holders to provide detailed information on the results of work funded.

- 281.** NERC funded projects that aim to produce software outputs must specify a proposed software exploitation route at the start of the project. At completion of a project, the software must be exploited either commercially, within an academic community or as OSS.

### **Deposition of organisms in culture collections**

- 282.** Where published work includes the description of new species or subspecies or other novel organisms, Principal Investigators are expected to make these available to other researchers through deposition in a recognised culture collection. Recognised collections are considered to be those which publish catalogues of holdings and which make organisms available for sale to all UK researchers with appropriate expertise.
- 283.** Organisms should be offered to the most appropriate UK culture collection. If no UK collection is able to accept them, they should be offered to a recognised overseas collection. If no collections will accept the organisms it is expected that the Principal Investigator should make them available to the scientific community for a minimum period of 2 years following publications of any paper describing those organisms.
- 284.** Principal Investigators should note that the requirements of intellectual property rights may mean that organisms may have to be lodged in a culture collection registered for this purpose under the 1977 Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the purpose of Patent Procedure.

### **ORCID identifiers**

- 285.** Researchers can now [create or connect their ORCID identifier](#) (ORCID iD) in the Research Councils' grants system (Je-S) by logging in to their personal information page. This is an important first step towards improving the flow of research information across the higher education sector.
- 286.** ORCID offers a platform for researchers to capture their scholarly activities throughout their careers even if they change name, publish under different variations of their name, move institutions, or switch fields. This helps them get exposure and recognition for their work. Increasingly it will be a tool to link and re-use research information unambiguously across multiple systems whether that's for funders, publishers or their university.

## Section J – EXPLOITATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

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- 287.** NERC is committed to turning scientific and technological knowledge in universities and other research organisations into commercial success for the benefit of the UK. NERC has a strategy to improve the commercialisation of NERC science and activities in our research centres. Recipients of NERC funding **must** endeavour to ensure that the outcomes of research are exploited and used to the advantage of the UK. Commercialisation includes contributing to new products and services and the management of intellectual property rights as outlined below.
- 288.** Scientific research gives rise to inventions such as new devices, materials or processes, ideas, know-how and other results which are often manifest as data. Such products are referred to as intellectual property. It is NERC's policy that any such intellectual property generated from NERC supported research should be exploited. However, NERC's policy requires that intellectual property rights be properly conferred on all parties. It is the responsibility of Principal Investigators to respect the intellectual property of others when used in their research (e.g. models) and to accord it all appropriate recognition.
- 289.** Please refer to the [RCUK Grant Terms and Conditions](#).
- 290.** Further information on [commercialisation and intellectual property \(IP\)](#) is provided on the NERC website.
- 291.** Award holders are expected to notify the Knowledge Exchange team ([knowledge@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:knowledge@nerc.ac.uk)) when NERC funded intellectual property is exploited. This information should also be included in the annual ROS return.
- 292.** NERC [Environmental Data Centres](#) will give advice on issues relating to charging, licensing and exploitation of datasets. NERC policy in this area is described in more detail in the [NERC Data Policy](#) and the accompanying Guidance notes.

## Section K – NERC SCIENTIFIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

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- 293.** NERC provides a wide range of [scientific services](#) for the environmental sciences research community. Any individual or group of researchers eligible for a NERC training award or research grant may apply for access to any of the services and facilities listed. For some of these, access is provided free at the point of delivery to the user, subject to peer-review and prioritisation of applications by the relevant facility steering committee to ensure that the highest quality science is supported. In other cases, they are funded on a pay-as-you-go (PAYG) basis. Researchers can only apply to PAYG facilities once they have secured funds to cover the full costs from one or other of the NERC funding modes or other sources (although limited support may be available for students and small proof-of-concept studies depending on the facility). Spare capacity in any of the facilities may be made available to non-NERC researchers or commercially.
- 294.** [Application procedures](#) are outlined on the NERC website. Prospective applicants must first seek the advice of the appropriate NERC or service contact before a formal application is submitted. It is incumbent upon the Principal Investigator to ensure the logistics of the proposed project. NERC does not consider itself to be responsible for any element of the logistics that are not included within the proposal. Applications for the use of facilities to support student training should be made by the student's supervisor.
- 295.** It is important to state on the fellowship or grant proposal forms what services and facilities are required, with whom contact has been made to discuss the work, and whether a separate application has been made to the relevant facility. When submitting through the Je-S system, applicants will have to either select a facility or tick a no facility used box before being able to submit a proposal. Most facilities also require the attachment of a technical assessment/quote or a facility form – see section F.
- 296.** A full listing of individual [Services and Facilities contacts](#) (and Swindon Office alternates) can be found on the NERC website.

### Applications for the Provision of New Services and Facilities

- 297.** The NERC portfolio planning process will identify where there is a need for new services and facilities to underpin delivery of NERC strategy, including Discovery Science. However, NERC is always interested in receiving ideas for additional services and facilities. In the first instance contact the services and facilities management team ([sfmt@nerc.ac.uk](mailto:sfmt@nerc.ac.uk)).

## ANNEX A – FURTHER INFORMATION

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### NERC Contact Points

For the most up-to-date listing of [NERC contact points](#), who can provide advice on NERC funding policy.

Queries relating to the [Je-S system](#) (including fEC queries) should be directed to the Je-S Helpdesk

All queries concerning maintenance and updates to existing grants (research grants, fellowships and training grants) should be directed to the [RCUK Grants Team](#)

For advice on specific scientific issues, please contact the Programme Manager ([first point of contact](#)) for the appropriate research area, which are listed on the website.

### Other NERC Webpages:

[NERC Strategy](#)

[NERC Science Remit](#)

[NERC Science Topics](#)

[Current Opportunities](#)

[NERC Complaints Procedure](#)

[Statement of Council Policy on conflicts of interest](#)

[Managing conflicts of interest in peer review](#)

[NERC Scientific Services and Facilities](#)

[NERC Data Centres](#)