

ESRC Future Research Leaders 2011 Frequently Asked Questions

This document will be updated to reflect those questions most frequently raised with ESRC. It is highly recommended that potential applicants review this document before contacting us for advice.

Last updated: 24 August 2011.

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Closing dates

When is the closing date for this competition?

This competition will be run in two stages, Outline and Invited Full applications. All applicants will be requested to supply an initial Outline proposal; the closing date for this stage is 16.00 on 15 September 2011. Those applicants who are successful at this stage will be invited to submit a Full proposal. The closing date for invited Full proposals will be 16.00 on 1 February 2012.

Will there be another competition next year?

ESRC certainly intends to continue its support for this scheme but the format will be informed by the outcome of, and feedback on, this year's exercise. For example, the ESRC will consider whether to continue with an annual closing date, whether to run the scheme on an open date basis or perhaps multiple cut off dates throughout the year.

If I am shortlisted at the outline stage this year, can I defer the submission of my full proposal until the next round?

No. If you submit an application to this year's competition you must be prepared to start the award on 1 October 2012 or shortly thereafter. If not, you must wait and apply to a future round.

Eligibility

Do I need to be within four years of submission of my PhD at the time of applying (ie September 2011) or on commencement of the grant (ie October 2012)?

Applicants need to be within four years of the submission of their PhD by the closing date for outline applications ie 15 September 2011.

By submission date are you referring to the original submission date or the final submission date after corrections?

The original submission date.

Why is ESRC measuring eligibility from submission rather than completion or graduation?

The use of the thesis submission date is consistent with other ESRC activities whether it's the submission rate survey undertaken for all ESRC funded students or the eligibility criteria employed on the ESRC's Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme. It also reflects feedback received from the First Grants Scheme which used to use the completion date but where concerns were raised about the sometimes considerable period between thesis submission and graduation which was outside the control of the applicant.

Can I apply if I'm studying for, but haven't submitted, my PhD?

Yes as long as you submit your PhD prior to the award start date of 1 October 2012 and can demonstrate your potential as a future research leader in your application.

When ESRC published its Delivery Plan it suggested that the Future Research Leaders Scheme would be for those within six years of their PhD – why has that now changed to four?

The specification for the Future Research Leaders Scheme was developed in consultation with members of the academic community, members of ESRC Committees and Council. Its development took in to account the closure of a number of ESRC schemes - Small Grants, First Grants and Postdoctoral Fellowships - as well as the need to provide an appropriate mechanism to support the Council's commitment to early career researchers. The outcome of these discussions was agreement that a four year measure was most compatible with the aims of the scheme.

I would have been eligible if the criteria had been six years but I am not under the new four year criteria and there are no other appropriate schemes to which I can apply.

Unfortunately it is the nature of a targeted scheme that there will be those who find they do not satisfy the specific eligibility criteria. However you can still apply to the Research Grants Scheme.

But I've heard that there's no point applying for a Research Grant if you haven't been a Principal Investigator on another award before?

The primary assessment criteria for all ESRC schemes, including Research Grants, is scientific excellence. If you have a good proposal and can demonstrate in the application that you have the appropriate skills and experience to undertake it there is no reason why you would not be successful in applying to the Research Grants Scheme. If you are concerned that there might be perceived gaps in your experience then you should consider how best to reassure assessors that there are appropriate mechanisms in place to support you for example through having other experienced members of the research team.

What is meant by "equivalent professional standing"?

An applicant may not have a PhD but has had experience of conducting research at postgraduate (and beyond) level and may hold a postgraduate qualification. This may apply to an applicant who has been working at an NGO, in Government or the private sector for example.

The specification states that career breaks will be disregarded from the four year criteria – how is ESRC defining 'career break'?

For the purpose of this scheme we will disregard periods of employment that would not have aided your academic career progression (ie employment outside of academia) along with periods of maternity, sick leave or unemployment.

But what about applicants who have been employed in a research post outside of academia following their PhD?

They would be eligible if they could demonstrate if they had no more than four years postdoctoral experience in a post that would not have aided their academic career progression. There would need to be a clear statement within the application to justify this.

I submitted my thesis in January 2007. However, since then I have taken a total of 10 months maternity leave. Does my maternity leave mean that I am still eligible to apply for the Future Research Leaders Scheme in September 2011?

Yes. The length of your maternity leave can be deducted from the length of time since you submitted your PhD. With a total of ten months away from work you qualify within the four year time frame.

I submitted my PhD in July 2006. However, since then I have taken periods of long term sick leave or have been unemployed. Does this mean that I am still eligible to apply for the Future Research Leaders Scheme in September 2011?

The length of your periods of sick leave or unemployment can be deducted from the length of time since you submitted your PhD so as long as this does not exceed four years, once sick leave or unemployment has been disregarded, you would still be eligible. The ESRC will require documentary evidence of illness to support these periods.

I submitted my PhD in 2001. However, I continued to work in the local education authority until 2008 when I first started my academic career as a Research Organisation employee. Am I still eligible to apply?

Yes, as you were employed outside academia in a role which would not have aided your academic career progression you would be eligible to apply to the Competition. You will need to provide a short statement in your application stating your circumstances to prove that you could be considered to have equivalent experience to someone within four years of their PhD.

I know the scheme is open to staff who have not previously been Principal Investigators on Research Council grants, but is an individual who has been named as a Co-Investigator on a previous grant still eligible to apply?

Yes, successful Co-Investigators are eligible to apply to the Future Research Leaders Scheme. A progress report should be included by any Co-Investigators who have recently finished or still working on an ESRC grant.

I am a research assistant on a current award - do I need to include a progress report with my application?

No.

I know the scheme is open to those who have previously held an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship but what about the MRC-ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme?

Having an MRC-ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship wouldn't preclude you from applying to the scheme but you would need to be clear that this is a new application demonstrate to assessors that these are new activities and not replicating work which should have been undertaken as part of the postdoctoral fellowship.

I don't have a PhD but have spent five years in a succession of research posts since completing masters – am I eligible?

Yes if you provide a short statement in your application outlining your circumstances to prove that you could be considered to have equivalent experience to someone within four years of their PhD.

Can I apply for a Future Research Leaders Grant if I meet the criteria eligibility but have gained a Professorship?

No, the scheme is aimed at researchers who need to improve their research leadership and management skills rather than those who technically satisfy the criteria.

Is the Competition open to non-British nationals?

The Competition is open to all nationalities but to apply the applicant must have the support of a UK Research Organisation where they will be based during the grant.

I read in the guidelines that applicants must be staff at a Research Organisation. Does the word 'staff' refer to individuals with permanent posts?

You do not need a permanent post to be eligible to apply to the Competition. As long as your Research Organisation is willing to provide the necessary support for your application and the remaining 40 per cent of your salary for the duration of the grant then you would be eligible to apply to the Competition. Please refer to Annex A of the ESRC Research Funding Guide (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/guidance/applicants/research-funding-guide.aspx>).

I would like to apply for a Future Research Leaders Grant but I have been awarded funding from a non-Research Council body (eg Leverhulme, National Science Foundation). Does this mean I'm ineligible for the Future Research Leaders Scheme?

No. If the research grant was administered by one of the seven UK Research Councils - AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, ESRC, MRC, NERC or STFC - you would not qualify for the Future Research Leaders Scheme. Any funding received from elsewhere will not affect your eligibility for this scheme, eg Wellcome Trust, Rowntree Foundation, Nuffield etc.

I have an RCUK Fellowship. Can I apply?

Yes, as long as you satisfy the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

Can I apply for a Future Research Leaders if I have had funding for an ESRC Studentship or Placement Fellowship?

Yes.

The scheme guidance says that awards are expected to start on 1 October 2012 – is there any scope for flexibility?

Unfortunately there is only limited scope for flexibility, awards can't start prior to 1 October 2012 but the latest permissible start date is 1 January 2013.

Is the scheme open to part time applicants?

Yes, part time applicants are eligible to apply for this scheme but can still only claim 60 per cent of their salary costs.

My institution isn't one of ESRC's accredited Doctoral Training Centres - can I still apply?

Doctoral Training Centres relate to ESRC's funding for postgraduate training ie study towards a PhD. The Future Research Leaders Scheme is open to Research Organisations approved by the ESRC to hold responsive mode grants. Please see the following website for more information:

<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/research/Pages/Eligibilityforrcs.aspx>

Commitment of the host institution

You have stipulated that the application must be accompanied by a letter of support from the Pro-Vice Chancellor of Research (or equivalent) – why not the Head of Department?

We have explicitly stated that applications must be supported by a statement from the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research (or equivalent) partly to demonstrate the institution's commitment to working in partnership with the ESRC in identifying and supporting the future research leaders but also to encourage institutions to think holistically about the number and quality of applications it submits.

The guidance states that you only expected to see a limited number of outline applications from a single research organisation – is there actually a limit?

There is no limit on the number of applications an institution can submit this year. However, ESRC is currently developing its policy on demand management and will be looking closely at both the volume and quality of applications institutions submit to this competition.

The specification states that you expect Future Research Leader grant holders to move in to permanent academic positions at the end of the grant – are you expecting the research organisation at which the award is held to take them on?

Obviously we can't require institutions to employ award holders once their funding has come to an end however we would hope that the candidates submitted to this scheme would be of the calibre to be successful in applying for a post should such an opportunity arise.

My host research organisation is proposing to fund that proportion of my time beyond that which a Future Research Leaders Scheme grant will cover. What developmental links between my grant activities and this other work might be considered appropriate?

Your host organisation is responsible for the tasks you undertake in that portion of your time that a Future Research Leaders grant does not cover, and also for supporting your wider development as a researcher. Depending on what these tasks were, synergies might be possible that would benefit your development as a researcher. Suppose your tasks included teaching. You might plan to develop your skills in research-led teaching by drawing on aspects of your research project. (For example, you might discuss parts of your research to illustrate how a substantive topic related to your area of enquiry is investigated, exemplify methods of data collection and analysis, or introduce a statistical technique and its application.)

A complementary possibility might be for your host research organisation to enable you to undertake a postgraduate qualification for teaching in higher education, so preparing you for a future academic role that includes research and teaching duties.

I note that the specification says that there is an expectation that Future Research Leader grant holders should move into permanent academic positions at the end of the grant, if they are not already in such a post - is that something you expect a commitment to in the Pro Vice Chancellor's statement?

This is more of a desired outcome than a commitment. We recognise that, particularly in the current financial climate, this might not be possible but we want institutions to be aware that this is the type of applicant that ESRC wishes to see apply to this scheme.

Activities

Is the Future Research Leaders Scheme an opportunity to lead a research project, an early career training scheme, or a chance to build up my network of contacts?

This scheme offers an integral opportunity for you to enhance your expertise as a researcher, while

building up your potential to take the lead on larger-scale research involving knowledge exchange in the future. It combines directing your own research project with related training and development plus network-building.

The Future Research Leaders Scheme is intended to help you accelerate the development of your specialist expertise as a researcher through an in-depth opportunity to 'learn by doing': through designing and taking overall responsibility as the principal investigator (PI) for carrying out a research project of larger scope than your past PhD investigation. You will also be able to learn through a complementary programme of research skills and knowledge exchange skills training and development. This programme of activities will be relevant to your present research project. Further, you will have the chance proactively to extend your network of colleague academics, policymakers and practitioners with an interest in your area of enquiry. They may both help you to shape your proposed research and benefit from learning about your findings, so maximising the academic, economic and societal benefits of your study.

This PI experience will help to prepare you leading future research on a larger scale. By the time your proposed programme of activities is completed, you should be in a strong position to capitalise on your completed investigation, the research and knowledge exchange skills you have acquired, and the network you have nurtured.

Should I justify why I have chosen my planned programme of training and development, and my networking activities?

Yes. Your outline proposal will be assessed against the four criteria set out in Section 11 of the Future Research Leaders Scheme specification. Bullet points elaborating aspects of these criteria draw attention to the quality of your plans to develop research and knowledge exchange skills, including those entailed in maximising the impact of your research. They also draw attention to any collaboration involved.

In preparing your proposal, you may first identify your priority learning needs that arise from the research and related tasks that you will have to carry out effectively if your research is to be successful and make a positive impact on key beneficiaries. Then you could creatively consider what programme of activities could meet these needs effectively, within the resource parameters of the scheme.

You may wish to identify a budget for meeting those priority learning needs of which you are already aware. (For example, you are likely to know now which international experts in your area of enquiry you would like to network with, and how you will go about it.) You could also budget for activities to meet learning needs that you cannot envisage in detail yet, but which might arise during the course of the research.

Some learning needs may be met directly through your experience of conducting the research and related tasks, coupled with reflecting on what you are learning from your experience in discussion with your mentor. Other learning needs may be met through carefully targeted training and development activities. You could justify your planned programme to your assessors by briefly indicating in your proposal:

- what learning needs your programme of activities will meet
- why meeting them is a priority (for example, because the tasks they embrace are essential to achieving your articulated research objectives)
- why the activities are likely to meet them effectively.

What range of activities to meet my priority learning needs might be considered appropriate?

Your assessor will need convincing that any activities you identify are appropriate, are likely to prove effective in meeting identified priority learning needs, and offer sound value for money. Bear in mind that a single activity might contribute to meeting multiple learning needs. (For example, a study visit to work with a leading international expert in your area of enquiry could help you learn more about the substantive topic, the problems and potential of theories and methods being employed, and possibly secondary data sources that might be useful to you. By offering to give a presentation to scholars and perhaps policymakers or practitioners associated with the leading expert you could learn to present your work, benefit from the content of the ensuing dialogue, and extend your network of contacts. You might even begin preparing the ground for future co-publication or collaborative research).

There is plenty of potential for you to be innovative and creative in putting together, with the support of your host research organisation, a set of learning opportunities which you can show will stand to meet your priority learning needs effectively. Depending on your research focus and approach, they might include (but are not limited to):

Research skills development

- training workshops offered by experts (for example, ESRC media training; research methods workshops run by ESRC investments such as the National Centre for Research Methods or the Researcher Development Initiative, professional development workshops run by VITAE)
- on-line learning resources relevant to your area of enquiry
- seminars on the substantive topic run by the learned society or professional association of which you are a member
- sessions within the staff development provision of your host research organisation (for example, on research project management).

Knowledge exchange skills

- creating an advisory group with different stakeholder group representatives who could feed into the detailed design of your research (for example, a data collection instrument), share their contacts to help you gain access to research sites, and give you formative feedback on your interim findings and their implications for policy and practice
- adopting a co-production approach to your research which engages with stakeholders beyond the academy at every stage
- organising a ‘think tank’ with different stakeholder representatives to explore aspects of your area of enquiry of mutual relevance
- work-shadowing arrangements with practitioners or policymakers in your area of enquiry to familiarise yourself with relevant aspects of their contexts and their work
- a short-term placement in an organisation relevant to your area of enquiry (for example, a private, public or third sector organisation whose practice could be informed by your research)
- dissemination events such as seminars or a conference for academics and other stakeholder representatives.

If the ESRC are funding 60 per cent of the applicant’s time, are you expecting the applicants to work full time on their programme of activities with their institution’s providing the remainder of their salary?

We expect the institution to support the remainder of the grant holder’s normal salary and would hope that this would be on relevant and parallel activities.

Can this include teaching?

Yes.

Are there any restrictions on where this money comes from? For example, can I be employed on other grants at my institution?

The funds could come from other grants if the grant was in an area that complementary and relevant to the work being undertaken on the Future Research Leaders grant.

One of the aims of the schemes is for applicants to develop skills in knowledge exchange – what kind of activities did you have in mind?

We are not being too prescriptive about the type of activities and would welcome innovative proposals from applicants. Applicants may like see the additional guidance available on the ESRC's website: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/impact-toolkit/what-how-and-why/knowledge-exchange/index.aspx>

Resources and costings

Will the ESRC be able to advise on costings?

No, applicants need to talk their Research Organisation Finance Office; there is usually a specific person who deals with ESRC grants who will be able to advise on costings.

If the scheme limit is £215,000 at 100 per cent fEC does that mean that the full cost of the activities (including the host institution contribution) cannot exceed £215,000?

No, the scheme limit relates to the amount you can apply for from ESRC and does not include the host institution contribution.

If I'm expected to be working on a programme of activities for 100 per cent of my time, do I cost 100 per cent of my salary in my application?

No, you should only include costs in your application that you are applying for from ESRC i.e. a maximum of 60 per cent of your salary. Indirect and estate costs should be costed in proportion to the salary being claimed.

I'm part time and my post is 0.6 FTE - does that mean I can claim my whole salary?

No you can claim up to 60 per cent of your salary - 60 per cent of a 60 per cent post in this instance.

I note that the scheme limit is £215,000 at 100 per cent fEC and that I can claim up to 60 per cent of my salary but there is also reference to an 80 per cent contribution - what does this mean?

ESRC always states its scheme limits at their 100 per cent fEC value but under the fEC model Research Councils make a standard 80 per cent contribution to the amount applied for.

Will ESRC fund the 60 per cent of the applicant's time in full?

No, ESRC will pay the standard 80 percent contribution to all costs.

So should I put the 80 per cent value in to Je-S?

No, Je-S will automatically calculate the 80 per cent contribution of the total cost applied for.

Can I modify the budget between the outline and full stage?

We won't hold you to the exact amount applied for on the outline application but we wouldn't expect there to be a significant change.

Can I include a consultant on the Project?

Yes, as long as it is within the overall limit for the scheme. This must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources and should be included under Other Directly Incurred costs.

Mentors**Why must I have a mentor?**

As an early career researcher, your learning stands to be enhanced by drawing on the expertise and contacts of an academic mentor, who will be internationally acknowledged as an expert in your field of enquiry. You can turn to your mentor regularly for advice on aspects of your research project, for an introduction to other academic experts and senior practitioners or policymakers in your mentor's network, and for advice on your research and knowledge exchange skills training and development programme.

Alongside your new research project, you may also work on preparing publications and other knowledge exchange activities arising from your PhD. Your mentor will be able to guide you in this work too.

What is expected of a mentor?

The role of the mentor is to supervise and support the work of the PI (both scientific and non-scientific). A mentor will answer any queries and help with any problems that may arise during your research, and will be involved in the Project in an advisory and supporting role. They will not be directly involved in running the Project. It is expected that regular contact will be maintained between the PI and mentor through the course of the project and that the mentor will review progress against agreed milestones (including the implementation of the training and development programme). Ideally applicants should have a single mentor based at the same Research Organisation as the PI. If it is not possible to find a mentor with all the suitable knowledge within the PI's Organisation a second mentor may be appointed for this purpose from another Organisation.

Can mentors be costed into the application?

No.

Should my mentor be from the same Research Organisation as me?

Applicants must justify their choice of institution within their application and we would expect that this would include a suitable mentor (as confirmed in the assessment criteria for this scheme). In exceptional circumstances your mentor could be based at another Research Organisation but there must be someone at your Research Organisation that can play a mentoring role perhaps on non-scientific aspects such as research management, milestones, line management etc.

Can I have more than one mentor?

Yes, this is particularly encouraged for applications that are on the borderline between social sciences and other disciplinary areas or where an extended period at an overseas institution is planned. The need for more than one mentor should be clearly articulated in the application.

Do I need to include a CV for my mentor?

Not for the outline stage but they will be required for those applicants invited to submit a full proposal in December. For the outline stage the statement provided by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (or equivalent) should outline the plans for mentoring.

Can my PhD supervisor be my mentor?

As confirmed in the scheme specification, the proposed mentor proposed should be of high academic standing and have a strong interest in the applicant's field of research, but should not normally be the applicant's former PhD supervisor.

Therefore we would not expect the mentor to be your supervisor although we do recognise that this is not always practical. Ultimately it's down to you to justify your choice within your application.

Co-Investigators and staff resources**I would like to apply for a Future Research Leaders Grant as the Principal Investigator and have a Co-Investigator from another institution. Is this allowed?**

No. The Future Research Leaders Grants Competition is intended for single investigators and therefore Co-Investigators are not allowed.

Can I include research staff on the proposal?

Yes. All costs, including staff ones, must be clearly and adequately justified in the proposal.

Can I include a linked studentship in my proposal?

No, studentships cannot be included in this scheme.

Where my research project includes employing a Research Assistant (RA), why is funding available to support the RA's development and training that is specific to this project?

Where your proposed research project entails employing someone as an RA, your responsibility as PI extends to supporting their development as a researcher. One priority for both of you will be to identify whether the RA has any learning needs related to fulfilling their project duties effectively, and to arrange appropriate opportunities to meet those learning needs. You may cost into your proposal a budget for meeting RA learning needs which would involve expenditure. They may be apparent now (for example, where innovative research methods are to be used, the RA and PI might both plan to attend a training workshop run by researchers who are at the leading-edge of this methodological development.) Equally, you may wish to include a budget for meeting the RA's priority learning needs that may emerge during the research.

Impact Requirements**I can see from the application form that the ESRC require an impact summary. What should I cover in this section?**

The ESRC expects that the researchers it funds will have identified the potential scientific, societal and economic impacts of their research, and will actively consider how these can be maximised and developed. As a result the ESRC requires all applicants submit an impact summary which addresses who will benefit from the research envisaged, how will they benefit from this research, and what will be done to ensure that they have the opportunity to benefit from this research. For more information, please refer to the Je-S Guidance for this scheme and the following page on the

website: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/impact-toolkit/what-how-and-why/esrc-expects.aspx>.

I can see that ESRC requires a Pathways to Impact document as a mandatory attachment to the application form. What do I need to include in this Plan?

The Pathways to Impact document is your opportunity to describe how the potential impacts of this research will be realised. The Plan is specific to users and beneficiaries of the research who are outside of the academic research community, for example the public sector, commercial private sector, third sector or the wider public in general.

In describing plans to maximise impact, applicants should consider what is achievable and expected for research of this nature. If your work is oriented towards academic beneficiaries only, then you should state that an Impact Plan is “not applicable” and briefly set out the reasoning behind this. Where this is the case, applicants should note that while ESRC recognises the value of this type of research, reviewers may comment on the applicant’s assessment during consideration of the application. Impact can take many forms, manifest at different stages in the research process, and be promoted in different ways. It may be helpful to consider impact in respect of the short term (during the currency of the award), medium term (up to one year afterwards), and the long-term. A statement about ESRC’s expectations of the research it funds is at <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/tools-and-resources/impact-toolkit/what-how-and-why/esrc-expects.aspx>

This can be expanded on at the full proposal stage.

There seems to be a discrepancy in the guidance about where to capture information on user beneficiaries - can you clarify?

We have tried to tailor the call guidance to fit the structure of the Je-S Outline Form and we didn’t want the requirements for providing information on potential impacts to be too onerous at the outline stage (we will require a more detailed statement from those applications invited to submit a full proposal).

For the purpose of completing the outline application, use the ‘impact summary’ section for information on academic beneficiaries and the pathways to impact attachment for the non-academic and the planned programme of knowledge exchange skills development.

However, we will allow applicants to have some discretion to utilise the limited space available as they feel appropriate (as long as they don’t exceed the page limits).

Resubmissions

I have previously applied to the First Grant Scheme and was unsuccessful. Is it possible to resubmit an amended version under this competition?

In June 2011 ESRC introduced an invited resubmission only policy. In light of that, and given the different aims of the scheme, you cannot resubmit an amended First Grant application to this call. You must submit an entirely new application that meets the aims of the Future Research Leaders Scheme. The same applies to all previous unsuccessful applications.

If I am unsuccessful this year can I apply to the next round?

If you meet the eligibility criteria in place at the time of application then you could apply to a future round as long as you submit a brand new application (ie not a resubmission of your previously unsuccessful application).

Joint Electronic Submission

The Je-S helptext gives different guidance than the call specific Je-S guidance that's available on the Future Research Leaders website - which do I follow?

Where the guidance varies, the call specific guidance must be adhered to.

I don't seem to be able to select myself as the principal investigator - does this mean that my mentor should be named as the principal investigator?

No, the applicant (ie candidate for a Future Research Leader) is the principal investigator, not the mentor. You need to check that you have the correct Je-S account type for this scheme ie a Je-S registered account that is verified by the RO. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to complete your application on Je-S, applications submitted after the closing date and time will not be accepted for processing so it is essential that you ensure you have the correct account set up as soon as possible.

But I set my account up when I applied for an ESRC Postdoctoral Fellowship and didn't have any problems then.

The Future Research Leaders Scheme is not a direct replacement for the Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme therefore you can't assume that the same conditions apply. You could apply to the Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme with a Je-S unregistered account but, as confirmed above, applicants to the Future Research Leaders Scheme require a Je-S registered account.

What font should the Je-S application be completed in?

Point 12 Times New Roman.

On the application form there is a character limit, does this include or exclude spaces?

The 4000 character limit includes spaces, tabs and character returns.

I'm having trouble accessing or using the Je-S system. Can you help?

If you have difficulty with the Je-S application form you can find guidance at the Je-S website (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx>) or you can contact the Je-S Helpdesk at jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk or 01793 444164. If you experience difficulties using Je-S or have questions regarding its use, Helpdesk staff can be contacted Monday to Friday 9.00 to 17.00 (excluding public and other holidays).

I am not sure how to fill out a particular section of the Je-S application form. Can you help?

If you are unsure of the requirements for the Je-S application form or how to fill out a particular section, please refer to the 'Guidance Notes for Applicants' document which is listed under the 'Supporting Documents' heading on the ESRC Future Research Leaders webpage (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities/15938/carousel-future-research-leaders.aspx>). This takes you through each section on the Je-S application form and what you need to fill in or attach under each heading.

Attachments

The Frequently Asked Questions document suggests that details of the mentor should be included in the letter from the Pro-Vice Chancellor however the Je-S guidance notes for

applicants say this should be in the case for support - presumably you don't want this twice?

With the case for support the applicant should justify their choice of mentor(s) whereas the statement from the Pro-Vice Chancellor should address how the applicant will be supported during the award which we would expect to include mentoring arrangements.

As the CV is limited to two sides of A4 can I include my publications as a separate attachment (ie as a 'list of publications' attachment)?

No. CVs are limited to two sides of A4 for most of ESRC's schemes and this should only include those publications you consider most relevant to the proposal.

So what's the 'list of publications' attachment for?

The list of publications is an optional attachment to be used, if appropriate, as the bibliography for publications cited in the case for support.

Can I include letters of support with my application?

At the outline stage you should try to keep any additional supporting documentation should be kept to a minimum. Please note that as a standard rule across all ESRC schemes, only letters of support that confirm access to an organisation that's essential for the successful completion of the research should be submitted with an application, general letters of support, for example confirming an interest rather than direct participation in a project, must not be submitted.

I'm finding it difficult to stick within the three page limit for the case for support - can I add additional information as an 'other attachment' type?

No. Applications must adhere to the page limits confirmed in the specification.

Where applications are submitted with attachments (other than the case for support) that either exceed the page limits or are not permitted under the scheme guidance these will be returned to the applicant to update or remove as appropriate.

Where an application is submitted with a case for support that exceeds the three page limit it will be rejected and not be accepted for processing.

Assessor comments

Will I receive comments from Assessors at the Outline stage?

Yes, this is our current aim. However due to the anticipated volume of applications we will be prioritising those applicants who are invited to submit a full proposal first.