Funding opportunity

AHRC responsive mode: Curiosity Award: round five

Opportunity status:	Upcoming
Funders:	**Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)**
Funding type:	Grant
Maximum award:	£100,000
Publication date:	15 July 2024
Opening date:	31 July 2024 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	30 October 2024 4:00pm UK time

Flexible awards to fund fundamental research that leads to new research agendas, networking activity and idea generation, which enables the development of further research opportunities and new research agendas.

Awards are available for projects up to £100,000 full economic cost (FEC) and Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) will fund 80% of this. Funding is available for projects up to five years in duration.

This funding opportunity will launch as consecutive rounds with defined opening and closing dates. Applications may be submitted at any time while a round is open.

Who can apply

Before applying for funding, please check:

- the **eligibility of your organisation**
- your **eligibility as an individual**. UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has introduced new role names for funding opportunities being run on the new UKRI Funding Service
- that your **proposal is suitable for AHRC funding**
- the **remit query form** if you are unsure whether your proposed research falls within the remit of AHRC

Who is eligible to apply

Years of active research experience

We do not consider years post-PhD or job title to be an authoritative marker of career progression. Eligibility is determined on the basis of grant-holding history as project lead.

Employment

The project lead and any project co-leads must be employed and supported by an eligible organisation for at least the duration of the UKRI support; it is not a requirement that a contract be in place at the point of application submission. It is also not a requirement to have a permanent employment contract to apply for funding.

Skills and qualifications

You must have the appropriate skills to lead the project in line with UKRI's terms & conditions. There are no specific qualification requirements, and you do not necessarily need a qualification such as a PhD. During your project, you must be primarily based and permitted to work in the UK.

You do not need to hold an academic research or teaching post to apply; applications are welcomed from those working, for example, as archivists, curators, librarians, technicians and practitioners.

International researchers

We also encourage international researchers to participate as project co-leads. See sections two and three of the **AHRC research funding guide** for full details on eligibility of researchers, organisations, and costs.

Project co-leads

Project co-leads are permitted and encouraged for interdisciplinary applications or where a co-lead would provide specific technical expertise that is essential to the project. This can include international co-leads as per the guidance below.

However, it must be clear that the project lead is responsible for leading the project. Project co-leads are permitted to have previously led or be currently

leading a significant research project and are not required to meet the eligibility criteria above.

Other roles

Other roles that are supported by this funding opportunity are listed in the 'How to apply' section below.

Who is not eligible to apply

We do not support project studentships (funding PhD study) within this funding opportunity.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.

We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances. This includes:

- career breaks
- support for people with caring responsibilities
- flexible working
- alternative working patterns

Find out more about **equality, diversity and inclusion at UKRI**.

What we're looking for

Scope

Curiosity awards support early-stage ambitious and novel fundamental research which has the potential to act as a springboard towards new and exciting research agendas.

The funding opportunity celebrates the full diversity of the arts and humanities. It is flexible, and applications are welcomed from teams, networks, and solo researchers.

Projects can be single discipline, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary. The majority of the disciplinary focus of the project must fall within our subject remit; see section seven of the **AHRC research funding guide** for our remit coverage. Practice-based and practice-led research is supported by this funding opportunity.

Partnerships and collaboration are supported. Where partnerships are already established, you should outline how this funding supports novelty in your collaboration. Applications should articulate how collaborative activity will be conducted, considering good practice in creating equitable partnerships. Further guidance is available in the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) **good research resource hub**.

The funding opportunity is intentionally flexible. An indicative list of examples of the activities we will fund are provided as follows. You are encouraged to request and justify costs for activities that best meet the aims of your project. This may include:

- idea generation
- seed corn funding
- high risk and high potential concepts
- novel research
- networking activity
- partnership building
- knowledge exchange
- public engagement
- international collaboration
- scoping and piloting, for example, early-stage proof of concept for ideas or change of direction
- pivots in research focus at any career stage
- mentoring for members of the research team

To note, this is not a prescriptive or exhaustive list.

Duration

The duration of these awards is up to five years.

The earliest permissible start date for applications to round five is 31 January 2025, however the project start date must also be at least six months from the point of the application submission to us.

Funding available

The full economic cost (FEC) of your project can be up to £100,000 and we will fund 80% of the FEC.

Costs associated with international co-leads will be funded at 100% FEC but must not exceed 30% of the total project costs. Please refer to sections two and three of the **AHRC research funding guide** for details on eligibility of such costs.

Where mentoring is included for the researchers, salary costs to cover the mentor's time can be claimed from the grant.

What we will fund

You are encouraged to request and justify costs for activities that best meet the aims of your project.

Supporting skills and talent

We encourage you to follow the principles of the **Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers** and the **Technician Commitment**.

International collaboration

If your application includes international co-leads, project partners or collaborators, visit sections two and three of the **AHRC research funding guide** for details on eligibility of researchers, organisations and costs.

Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)

UKRI is committed in ensuring that effective international collaboration in research and innovation takes place with integrity and within strong ethical frameworks. Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I) is a UKRI work programme designed to help protect all those working in our thriving and collaborative international sector by enabling partnerships to be as open as possible, and as secure as necessary. Our **TR&I Principles** set out UKRI's expectations of organisations funded by UKRI in relation to due diligence for international collaboration.

As such, applicants for UKRI funding may be asked to demonstrate how their proposed projects will comply with our approach and expectation towards TR&I, identifying potential risks and the relevant controls you will put in place to help proportionately reduce these risks.

See **further guidance and information about TR&I**, including where applicants can find additional support.

How to apply

We are running this funding opportunity on the new UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service so please ensure that your organisation is registered. You cannot apply on the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system.

The project lead is responsible for completing the application process on the Funding Service, but we expect all team members and project partners to

contribute to the application.

Only the lead research organisation can submit an application to UKRI.

To apply

Select 'Start application' near the beginning of this Funding finder page.

1. Confirm you are the project lead.
2. Sign in or create a Funding Service account. To create an account, select your organisation, verify your email address, and set a password. If your organisation is not listed, email **support@funding-service.ukri.org** Please allow at least 10 working days for your organisation to be added to the Funding Service. We strongly suggest that if you are asking UKRI to add your organisation to the Funding Service to enable you to apply to this opportunity, you also create an organisation Administration Account. This will be needed to allow the acceptance and management of any grant that might be offered to you.
3. Answer questions directly in the text boxes. You can save your answers and come back to complete them or work offline and return to copy and paste your answers. If we need you to upload a document, follow the upload instructions in the Funding Service. All questions and assessment criteria are listed in the How to apply section on this Funding finder page.
4. Allow enough time to check your application in 'read-only' view before sending to your research office.
5. Send the completed application to your research office for checking. They will return it to you if it needs editing.
6. Your research office will submit the completed and checked application to UKRI.

Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. You should:

- use images sparingly and only to convey important information that cannot easily be put into words
- insert each new image onto a new line
- provide a descriptive legend for each image immediately underneath it (this counts towards your word limit)
- ensure files are smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Watch our **research office webinars about the new Funding Service**.

For more guidance on the Funding Service, see:

- **how applicants use the Funding Service**
- **how research offices use the Funding Service**

- **[how reviewers use the Funding Service](#)**

References

Applications should be self-contained, and hyperlinks should only be used to provide links directly to reference information. To ensure the information's integrity is maintained, where possible, persistent identifiers such as digital object identifiers should be used. Assessors are not required to access links to carry out assessment or recommend a funding decision. Applicants should use their discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

References should be included in the appropriate question section of the application and be easily identifiable by the assessors for example (Smith, Research Paper, 2019).

You must not include links to web resources to extend your application.

Deadline

The proposed start date of your project must be at least six months after the date of your application.

During the initial phases of the Funding Service, the system will continue to develop in response to internal and external user needs. AHRC responsive mode funding opportunities will run as consecutive rounds with defined closing dates. Opening in rounds means we will be able to accommodate system developments and assess applications in a batch submitted under the same conditions.

Applications may be submitted at any time while a round is open; you do not need to wait until the closing date. We will begin to process applications as soon as we receive them, therefore, if an application is submitted early in a round, we may be able to provide you with an earlier decision.

We must receive your application to round five by 30 October 2024 at 4:00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply to round five after this time, instead you will need to complete a new application and submit it to round six.

Make sure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines.

Following the submission of your application to this funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed, and applications will not be returned for amendment. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected.

If your application is rejected and invited for resubmission, your funding outcome may be later than advertised for this round.

Round six will open on 30 October 2024 and close on 30 January 2025. Details of subsequent rounds are available on the **AHRC website**.

Personal data

Processing personal data

AHRC, as part of UKRI, will need to collect some personal information to manage your Funding Service account and the registration of your funding applications.

We will handle personal data in line with UK data protection legislation and manage it securely. For more information, including how to exercise your rights, read **our privacy notice**.

Publication of outcomes

If your application is successful, we will publish some personal information on the **UKRI Gateway to Research**.

Summary

Word limit: 500

In plain English, provide a summary we can use to identify the most suitable experts to assess your application.

We usually make this summary publicly available on external-facing websites, therefore do not include any confidential or sensitive information. Make it suitable for a variety of readers, for example:

- opinion-formers
- policymakers
- the public
- the wider research community

Guidance for writing a summary

Clearly describe your proposed work in terms of:

- context
- the challenge the project addresses
- aims and objectives
- potential applications and benefits

Core team

List the key members of your team and assign them roles from the following:

- project lead (PL)
- project co-lead (UK) (PcL)
- project co-lead (international) (PcL (I))
- specialist
- professional enabling staff
- research and innovation associate
- technician

Only list one individual as project lead.

Mentor details should not be entered in this section, instead please outline their name and contribution in the 'Applicant and team capability to deliver' section.

Find out more about **UKRI's core team roles in funding applications**.

Discipline classification – primary

Word limit: 5

Please provide the primary research area of your proposal.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

You must select only one of these research disciplines.

This information will be used for the purposes of processing your proposal and in the selection of appropriate assessors.

- archaeology
- area studies
- classics
- cultural and museum studies
- dance
- design
- development studies
- drama and theatre studies
- education
- history
- human geography
- information and communication technologies
- languages and literature
- law and legal studies
- library and information studies
- linguistics
- media

- music
- philosophy
- political science and international studies
- social anthropology
- theology, divinity and religion
- visual arts

Discipline classification – secondary

Word limit: 50

Please describe, using keywords, the research area of your proposal and where relevant the approach, time, or geographical area.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

This will further help with the selection of appropriate assessors.

Eligibility to apply for funding opportunity

Provide confirmation that you meet the eligibility requirements for the Curiosity award scheme.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Confirmation that you meet the scheme criteria for eligibility by either:

- confirming that the project lead has not been a current or former lead on a significant grant or fellowship from any funder
- if they have been a project lead, provide an explanation on how this meets the aims on permitted exclusions stated in the Who can apply section above

You should refer to the Who can apply section above for information about previous awards status.

Application questions

Vision

Word limit: 550

What are you hoping to achieve with your proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how your proposed work:

- is of excellent quality and importance within or beyond the field(s) or area(s)

- has the potential to advance current understanding, or generate new knowledge, thinking or discovery within or beyond the field or area
- is timely given current trends, context, and needs
- impacts world-leading research, society, the economy, or the environment

Within the Vision section we also expect you to:

- identify the potential direct or indirect benefits and who the beneficiaries might be

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

References may be included within this section.

Approach

Word limit: 1,650

How are you going to deliver your proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how you have designed your approach so that it:

- is effective and appropriate to achieve your objectives
- is feasible, and comprehensively identifies any risks to delivery and how they will be managed
- uses a clearly written and transparent methodology (if applicable)
- summarises the previous work and describes how this will be built upon and progressed (if applicable)
- will maximise translation of outputs into outcomes and impacts
- describes how your, and if applicable your team's, research environment (in terms of the place and relevance to the project) will contribute to the success of the work

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

References may be included within this section.

Applicant and team capability to deliver

Word limit: 1,650

Why are you the right individual or team to successfully deliver the proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Evidence of how you, and if relevant your team, have:

- the relevant experience (appropriate to career stage) to deliver the proposed work
- the right balance of skills and expertise to cover the proposed work
- the appropriate leadership and management skills to deliver the work and your approach to develop others
- contributed to developing a positive research environment and wider community

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

The word count for this section is 1,650 words: 1,150 words to be used for R4RI modules (including references) and, if necessary, a further 500 words for Additions.

Use the Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) format to showcase the range of relevant skills you and, if relevant, your team (project and project co-leads, researchers, technicians, specialists, partners and so on) have and how this will help deliver the proposed work. You can include individuals' specific achievements but only choose past contributions that best evidence their ability to deliver this work.

Complete this section using the R4RI module headings listed. Use each heading once and include a response for the whole team, see the **UKRI guidance on R4RI**. You should consider how to balance your answer, and emphasise where appropriate the key skills each team member brings:

- contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies, or knowledge
- the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships
- contributions to the wider research and innovation community
- contributions to broader research or innovation users and audiences and towards wider societal benefit

As a minimum, all named members of the Leadership Team should be discussed within this section of the form.

If references or citations are deemed appropriate, these will be included within the section's word count. We would advise you not to include hyperlinks, as assessors are not obliged to access the information they lead to or consider it in their assessment of your application. If you are linking to web resources, to maintain the information's integrity, include persistent identifiers (such as digital object identifiers) where possible. You must not include links to web resources to extend your application.

Additions

Provide any further details relevant to your application. This section is optional and can be up to 500 words. You should not use it to describe additional skills, experiences, or outputs, but you can use it to describe any factors that provide context for the rest of your R4RI (for example, details of career breaks if you wish to disclose them).

Complete this as a narrative. Do not format it like a CV.

UKRI has introduced new role types for funding opportunities being run on the new Funding Service.

For full details, see **Eligibility as an individual**.

Project partners

Add details about any project partners' contributions. If there are no project partners, you can indicate this on the Funding Service.

A project partner is a collaborating organisation or individual who will have an integral role in the proposed research. This may include direct (cash) or indirect (in-kind) contributions such as expertise, staff time or use of facilities.

Add the following project partner details:

- the organisation name and address (searchable via a drop-down list or enter the organisation's details manually, as applicable)
- the project partner contact name and email address
- the type of contribution (direct or in-direct) and its monetary value

If a detail is entered incorrectly and you have saved the entry, remove the specific project partner record and re-add it with the correct information.

For audit purposes, UKRI requires formal collaboration agreements to be put in place if an award is made.

Project partners: letters (or emails) of support

Upload a single PDF containing the letters or emails of support from each partner you named in the 'Project partners' section. These should be uploaded in English or Welsh only.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Enter the words 'attachment supplied' in the text box, or if you do not have any project partners enter N/A. Each letter or email you provide should:

- confirm the partner's commitment to the project
- clearly explain the value, relevance, and possible benefits of the work to them
- describe any additional value that they bring to the project

- the page limit is two sides of A4 per partner

The Funding Service will provide document upload details when you apply. If you do not have any project partners, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

Ensure you have prior agreement from project partners so that, if you are offered funding, they will support your project as indicated in the 'Project partners' section.

For audit purposes, UKRI requires formal collaboration agreements to be put in place if an award is made.

Do not provide letters of support from host, project co-leads' research organisations and other UK research organisations.

Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)

Word limit: 500

What are the ethical or RRI implications and issues relating to the proposed work? If you do not think that the proposed work raises any ethical or RRI issues, explain why.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Demonstrate that you have identified and evaluated:

- the relevant ethical or responsible research and innovation considerations
- how you will manage these considerations

If you are collecting or using data, identify:

- any legal and ethical considerations of collecting, releasing or storing the data including consent, confidentiality, anonymisation, security and other ethical considerations and strategies to not preclude further reuse of data
- formal information standards with which your study will comply

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Resources and cost justification

Word limit: 1,000

What will you need to deliver your proposed work and how much will it cost?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Justify the application's more costly resources, in particular:

- project staff
- significant travel for field work or collaboration (but not regular travel between collaborating organisations or to conferences)
- any consumables beyond typical requirements, or that are required in exceptional quantities
- all facilities and infrastructure costs
- all resources that have been costed as 'Exceptions'

Assessors are not looking for detailed costs or a line-by-line breakdown of all project resources. Overall, they want you to demonstrate how the resources you anticipate needing for your proposed work:

- are comprehensive, appropriate, and justified
- represent the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes
- maximise potential outcomes and impacts

Additionally, where relevant you should explain:

- support for any project partners organisations
- we do not provide funding for individual items of equipment over £10,000. Please see the **AHRC research funding guide** for further information

Trusted Research and Innovation

Word limit: 100

Does the proposed work involve international collaboration in a sensitive research or technology area?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Demonstrate how your proposed international collaboration relates to Trusted Research and Innovation, including:

- list the countries your international project co-leads, project partners and visiting researchers, or other collaborators are based in
- if international collaboration is involved, explain whether this project is relevant to one or more of the **17 areas** of the UK National Security and Investment (NSI) Act
- if one or more of the **17 areas** of the UK National Security and Investment (NSI) Act are involved list the areas

If your proposed work does not involve international collaboration, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

We may ask you to provide additional information about how your proposed project will comply with our approach and expectation towards TR&I, identifying

potential risks and the relevant controls you will put in place to help manage these risks.

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

Note that all elements of your application form will be shared with the assessors.

We will assess your application using the following process.

Peer review

There is no written peer review stage for the Curiosity awards funding opportunity.

Panel

Proposals will be assessed by an expert panel against the criteria, and each will be graded and ranked alongside other applications after which the panel will make a funding recommendation.

Find out more about **AHRC's assessment process**.

Timescale

We aim to issue outcomes within six months of receiving your application. The earliest grant start date for this round will be 1 November 2024.

Feedback

Written feedback will not be provided on individual applications. We may publish separate collated panel feedback, ensuring that you or your application cannot be identified.

Principles of assessment

We support the **San Francisco declaration on research assessment** and recognise the relationship between research assessment and research integrity.

Find out about the **UKRI principles of assessment and decision making**.

We reserve the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

Assessment areas

The assessment areas we will use are:

- Vision
- Approach
- Applicant and team capability to deliver
- Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)
- Resource and cost justification

Find details of assessment questions and criteria under the 'Application questions' heading in the 'How to apply' section.

Contact details

Get help with your application

If you have a question and the answers aren't provided on this page

Important note: The Helpdesk is committed to helping users of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service as effectively and as quickly as possible. In order to manage cases at peak volume times, the Helpdesk will triage and prioritise those queries with an imminent opportunity deadline or a technical issue. Enquiries raised where information is available on the Funding Finder opportunity page and should be understood early in the application process (for example, regarding eligibility or content/remit of an opportunity) will not constitute a priority case and will be addressed as soon as possible.

Contact details

For help and advice on costings and writing your proposal please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

For questions related to this specific funding opportunity please contact **enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org**

Any queries regarding the system or the submission of applications through the Funding Service should be directed to the helpdesk.

Email: **support@funding-service.ukri.org**
Phone: 01793 547490

Our phone lines are open:

- Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm
- Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm

To help us process queries quicker, we request that users highlight the council and opportunity name in the subject title of their email query, include the application reference number, and refrain from contacting more than one mailbox at a time.

See further information on **submitting an application**.

Sensitive information

If you or a core team member need to tell us something you wish to remain confidential, email **enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org**

Include in the subject line: [the funding opportunity title; sensitive information; your Funding Service application number].

Typical examples of confidential information include:

- individual is unavailable until a certain date (for example due to parental leave)
- declaration of interest
- additional information about eligibility to apply that would not be appropriately shared in the 'Applicant and team capability' section
- conflict of interest for UKRI to consider in reviewer or panel participant selection
- the application is an invited resubmission

For information about how UKRI handles personal data, read **UKRI's privacy notice**.

Additional info

Additional disability and accessibility adjustments

UKRI can offer **disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders** during the application and assessment process if required.

Webinars

The launch of the Curiosity and Catalyst Awards schemes were supported by a webinar for prospective applicants and professional research support staff that presented an overview of the schemes, followed by an opportunity to ask questions. The webinars were recorded, and a copy can be found below.

Watch **webinar recording** from 8 September 2023 (YouTube).

View a **transcript of the webinar** from 8 September 2023.

Note that this webinar is British Sign Language interpreted.

Research disruption due to COVID-19

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities. We are committed to ensuring that individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career, such as:

- breaks and delays
- disruptive working patterns and conditions
- the loss of ongoing work
- role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic

Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the capability to deliver and career development of those individuals included in the application. They will be asked to consider the capability of the applicant and their wider team to deliver the research they are proposing.

Where disruptions have occurred, you can highlight this within your application if you wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.

Guidance on good research

Good research resource hub

https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/ahrc-responsive-mode-curiosity-award-round-five