



## Funding opportunity

# AHRC large grants: outline stage

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Upcoming
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Award range:</b>	£2,000,000 - £3,000,000
<b>Publication date:</b>	2 June 2026
<b>Opening date:</b>	3 June 2026 9:00am UK time
<b>Closing date:</b>	16 September 2026 4:00pm UK time

Apply for Large Grants funding to deliver novel, ambitious and transformative arts and humanities research projects at scale.

You must be based at a UK research organisation eligible for Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) funding.

AHRC Large Grants will use team convening approaches to deliver world-leading excellent research that significantly advances knowledge and builds capability in their chosen area.

This is the outline stage of this funding opportunity.

The full economic cost (FEC) of your project can be up to £3 million. AHRC will fund 80% of the FEC.

Projects must be between three and five years in duration.

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## Who can apply

This opportunity is open to organisations with standard eligibility. [Check if your organisation is eligible](#).

Before applying for funding please [check that your proposal is suitable for AHRC funding](#).

If you are not sure your research falls within the remit of AHRC, please use the [Remit Form](#) to submit a pre-application enquiry. Note that we aim to respond to remit enquiries within two weeks. You should submit your enquiry as early as possible.

To ensure meaningful participation in project development, each individual applicant can only be a member of one applicant team and therefore can only participate in a maximum of one application to this funding opportunity.

## Administration of application

In order to facilitate administration of your application, your team will need to identify a nominated project lead and a lead research organisation for the application.

For the purposes of a Large Grant award, the project lead and lead research organisation are administrative role descriptors. These role descriptors do not reflect primary ownership of the project. All proposed projects for this funding opportunity must be organised using a team convening approach, as outlined below.

The nominated project lead and lead research organisation will act as the initial point of contact for AHRC on behalf of the project team throughout the application and assessment process and, where successful, the resulting award. They will be responsible for coordinating key administrative processes throughout the project lifecycle, such as submitting the application, establishing collaboration agreements and disbursing funds.

The nominated project lead will need to be eligible to receive UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding. [Check if you are eligible as an individual](#). This individual can be nominated from across the team and does not need to be an academic. They will need to be affiliated with the nominated lead research organisation for your project.

The nominated lead research organisation will need to have standard eligibility to receive UKRI funding. [Check if your organisation is eligible](#).

## Team convened research

Large Grant awards must be team convened to facilitate the breadth and depth of expertise necessary to enact ground-breaking change at scale through research. This means that we expect to see innovative and inclusive teams collaboratively designing research that integrates the following principles:

- identify appropriate expertise
- establish a collective leadership structure
- design inclusive governance
- identify ways to embed development for all
- engage in reflexive practice

For more information on the team convening principles, see the Additional information section.

AHRC actively encourages applicants to think imaginatively about team composition and meaningfully integrate appropriate expertise from across the research ecosystem. Depending on the nature and needs of your project, this could include establishing core team roles for technicians, professional service colleagues, or representatives from non-HEI organisations.

We welcome inclusion of people at different career stages across the applicant team.

We expect all team members' participation in the project to be informed by their individual skills, expertise, experience, and capacity. Development and support should be integrated into the project design as appropriate to facilitate the participation and growth of all team members.

For more information on how to include different individuals in your team composition, see the 'How to apply' section.

## **Project co-leads**

We expect that responsibilities should be distributed across the team according to individual skills, experience and capacity, with project co-leads collectively providing leadership and overall management of the project.

Project co-leads based at UK research organisations should meet the [individual eligibility requirements for UKRI funding](#).

Researchers based at international organisations are eligible to be included in applications using the project co-lead (international) role in alignment with [UKRI's project co-lead \(international\) policy](#).

To facilitate connectivity with potential research users, AHRC is extending project co-lead eligibility to individuals from business, third sector or government organisations. This is in alignment with [ESRC's policy on including project co-leads from business, third sector or government bodies](#).

## Other roles

Other roles that are supported by this funding opportunity are listed in the 'How to apply' section below, aligned with [UKRI's roles in funding applications](#).

## Who is not eligible to apply

Large Grant applications cannot include project studentships (funding PhD study).

Applications to AHRC Large Grants must be team convened with leadership and overall management of the project distributed across project co-leads, including the designated project lead. Any applications where these responsibilities are clearly not distributed between team members will not be considered under 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

UKRI can offer [disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders](#) during the application and assessment process.

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## What we're looking for

### Demand management

Demand management is not currently being applied to this funding opportunity. However, should the level of interest exceed what can be managed within the assessment process, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) may introduce limits on the number of applications that can be submitted. Further details will be clearly communicated where this is the case. UKRI encourages organisations to support applicants in preparing well-planned, high-quality applications that are competitive for funding relative to the funding opportunity.

### Scope

AHRC Large Grants support teams in delivering novel, ambitious and transformative arts and humanities research projects at scale. Large Grant award holders will use team convening approaches to deliver world-leading excellent research that significantly advances knowledge and builds capability in their chosen area. We expect Large Grants teams to underpin their planned research with a clear pathway to impact, with sustainable benefits beyond the funded period of the project.

This funding opportunity celebrates the full diversity of the arts and humanities. Applications are welcome from across AHRC's subject remit. See the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) for our remit coverage.

Projects can be single discipline, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, or transdisciplinary. Applicants may integrate research from outside of AHRC's subject remit where approaches, methods and knowledge from other disciplines can enrich the project's capacity to deliver transformative research. The majority of the project's disciplinary focus must fall within AHRC's subject remit.

This funding opportunity builds on the [AHRC Missions Awards Pilot](#) and the [Thrive project's work on team convening approaches](#).

For more information on the background of this funding opportunity, go to the Additional information section.

## Impact of research

Large Grants are expected to deliver tangible and impactful change at a scale commensurate with the amount of funding available. The nature of this change should be directed by the research priorities collectively set by each applicant team. Anticipated benefits should be clearly defined and, in addition to advancing knowledge, may encompass impacts across society, culture and the economy.

Each project should meaningfully and efficiently deliver change within its lifecycle, building in legacy planning to ensure sustainability of benefits beyond the funding period.

Teams invited to submit a full stage application will be expected to articulate their planned impact through a logic model. Although evidence of this is not a requirement of outline stage applications, you may wish to begin using this framework as you develop your ideas.

## Outline stage

This is an opportunity to submit an outline stage application for AHRC Large Grant awards. We have purposefully streamlined what we are asking applicant teams to submit in order to reduce administrative burden and manage demand during this initial stage.

You are not expected to provide a comprehensive work plan or costings at this stage. If your outline stage application is shortlisted for full stage, you will have the opportunity to provide this detail in your full stage application. However, please ensure that you have understood your research organisation's administrative requirements as early as possible in the process of developing your application. Internal organisational requirements may differ to the requirements of AHRC for the purpose of an outline stage application.

## Fit to scheme

Developing an ambitious research project at the scale of a AHRC Large Grant requires considerable time and effort. If you do not think that your idea and team are ready to apply for a Large Grant award within the timeframe of this funding opportunity, we would encourage you to consider whether one of the other funding opportunities offered by AHRC might be a better fit.

We have a suite of applicant-led mode opportunities which are continuously open and span different levels of readiness for researchers and their ideas alike. Additionally, we offer Targeted mode funding opportunities concentrated in specific research areas. Please use the [Funding Finder](#) to review open and upcoming funding opportunities from AHRC.

Through this funding opportunity, we are seeking to support novel, ambitious and transformative research which complements AHRC's overall portfolio of investment and could not have been supported through other AHRC routes to research funding. As such, applications which are duplicative of our other major investments will not be competitive within the context of this funding opportunity. For further information on our approach to portfolio balancing, see 'How we will assess your application'.

## Duration

The minimum duration of an AHRC Large Grant award is three years. The maximum duration is five years.

Successful projects will start on 1 November 2027.

## Funding available

The FEC of your project can be between £2 million and £3 million.

AHRC will fund 80% of the FEC.

AHRC does not require costings as part of an outline stage application to AHRC Large Grants. If your team is invited to submit a full stage application, you will be required to include costings and justification for the application's more costly resources at that stage.

By submitting your application to this outline stage, you confirm that your full stage submission will cost between £2 million and £3 million FEC.

Costs associated with project co-leads that are either employed by business, third sector or government bodies, or are based at international research institutions, will be funded at 100%. A combined total of up to 30% of the project's FEC can be committed to such costs. For guidance on eligibility for these roles, see linked content in the 'Who can apply' section.

If one or more project co-leads (international) are based in a country on the [OECD DAC list \(excepting India and China\)](#), the 30% cap can be lifted to facilitate their equitable inclusion in the research team. Such individuals are also eligible to claim overheads support.

## Supporting skills and talent

We strongly encourage you to follow the principles of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and the [Technician Commitment](#).

## 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.

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## 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 nominated 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.
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.

Please be aware that research office and finance teams undertake checks on hosting arrangements and financial eligibility. The ultimate responsibility for ensuring compliance with all opportunity requirements lies with the applicant.

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

When including images, you must:

- provide a descriptive caption or legend for each image immediately underneath it in the text box (this must be outside the image and counts towards your word limit)
- insert each new image on a new line
- use files smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Images should only be used to convey important visual information that cannot easily be put into words. The following are not permitted, and your application will be rejected if you include:

- sentences or paragraphs of text
- tables
- excessive quantities of images

A few words are permitted where the image would lack clarity without the contextual words, such as a diagram, where text labels are required for an axis or graph column.

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

References should be included within the word count of the appropriate question section. You should use your discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

Hyperlinks can be used in reference information. When including references, you should consider how your references will be viewed and used by the assessors, ensuring that:

- references are easily identifiable by the assessors
- references are formatted as appropriate to your research
- persistent identifiers are used where possible

## General use of hyperlinks

Applications should be self-contained. You should only use hyperlinks to link directly to reference information. You must not include links to web resources to extend your application. Assessors are not required to access links to conduct assessment or recommend a funding decision.

## Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Use of generative AI tools to prepare funding applications is permitted, however, caution should be applied.

For more information see our [policy on the use of generative AI in application and assessment](#).

## Deadline

AHRC must receive your application by 16 September 2026 at 4:00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply after this time.

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 submitted applications will not be amended. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected.

## 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](#).

## Sensitive information

If you or a core team member need to tell us something you wish to remain confidential, email [enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto: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 '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](#).

## Institutional matched funding

There is no requirement for matched funding from the institutions hosting the project lead, project co-leads or other staff employed on the application, beyond the standard 20% FEC. Expert reviewers and panels assessing UKRI funding applications must not consider levels of institutional matched funding as a factor on which to base recommendations. Direct and in-kind contributions from third party project partners are encouraged.

This policy does not remove the need for support from host organisations who must provide the necessary research environment and infrastructure for award-specific activities funded by UKRI. For example, research facilities, training and development of staff.

## Publication of outcomes

If your application is successful, we will publish some personal information on the [UKRI Gateway to Research](#).

## Summary

Word limit: 550

In plain English, provide a summary of your proposed project.

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

This section will not be assessed.

## 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.

Remember that for the purposes of a AHRC Large Grant award, 'project lead' is an administrative role descriptor. We expect that responsibilities should be distributed across the team according to individual skills, experience and

capacity, with project co-leads collaboratively offering intellectual leadership and overall management of the project.

As this is an outline stage, you are not expected to provide a complete or finalised team structure. We expect continuity between your core team at outline stage through to full stage. However, this does not mean your outline team composition has to remain fixed. If invited to submit a full stage application, you will be permitted to reposition roles and expand the team at this point.

This section is for administrative purposes and will not be assessed. Assessment of your team composition will focus on the Team capability to deliver section of your application.

UKRI has introduced a new addition to the 'Specialist' role type. Public contributors such as people with lived experience can now be added to an application.

Find out more about [UKRI's core team roles in funding applications](#).

## Application questions

### Outline Vision

Word limit: 550

What are you hoping to achieve with your proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Your outline vision will be assessed for how it is novel, ambitious and transformative at a scale proportionate to the available funding.

References may be included within this section.

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

### Outline Approach

Word limit:750

How are you going to deliver your proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how you will develop your approach to deliver your vision.

Your outline approach will be assessed for how it:

- plans to utilise team convening throughout your project as a framework to deliver excellent research
- will establish an effective pathway from output to impact, including through meaningful engagement with potential user communities

References may be included within this section.

Your answer should mainly focus on what you would do if you were successful in bidding for funding. As we expect there to be a level of development between outline and full stage applications, you may additionally include identified steps you would undertake to prepare a full stage application if appropriate.

If you are invited to submit a full stage application, you will be required to include a full work plan and a logic model. Neither are required at outline stage. However, to facilitate continuity between your outline and full stage applications, you may wish to begin considering these frameworks as you develop your outline application.

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

### **Outline Team capability to deliver**

Word limit: 1,000

Why is your team the right collective of people to deliver your proposed research programme?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Your outline team capability to deliver will be assessed for how it evidences that your team has convened the capability to deliver against the specific needs and nature of your proposed research.

Explain how each individual's contribution, skills, knowledge and experience will be meaningful and appropriate within the framework of your overall project. Consider how these individual contributions will be coordinated to produce a research team that is greater than the sum of its parts.

If you are invited to submit a full stage application, you will be permitted to further expand the team and include new collaborators at this stage. However, this must be done in a way that clearly builds on your team composition at outline stage. We expect that each outline stage application is collaboratively developed by a team with the core skills and expertise to deliver the proposed research.

The [roles in funding applications policy](#) has descriptions of the different project roles.

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

## **Outline costs**

What are the expected costs of the proposed work?

Provide the approximate total values in British pounds for the expected directly incurred, directly allocated, indirect costs and exceptions. View the guidance on the costs you can apply for.

## **Classification of your proposed project**

Word limit: 50

Which classifications best describe the research area of your proposed project?

Using the key words and codes provided in Classifications for AHRC Large Grants please provide up to five classifications for your proposed project. This document is linked under supporting documents in the Additional information section.

Please ensure that you use the precise codes and wording of the research areas as provided in the list (we suggest you use the copy and paste functions).

Note that your answer to this question will not be assessed.

The classifications you select will be used to match reviewers to your application through the distributed peer review (DPR) process, so please focus on the disciplines and expertise you expect to be most formative for your project. We cannot guarantee that your application will be assessed by reviewers with all of the classifications you have provided.

We understand that your project may include more disciplinary and methodological variety than you can fully capture with a maximum of five classifications. Your answer is not expected to be a comprehensive list of disciplines and expertise.

For more information on how DPR will be used to assess your application, please see DPR guidance for AHRC Large Grants in Additional information.

## **Your team's reviewer expertise**

Word limit: 200

As part of the DPR process, you are required to nominate between two and four members of your team who are equipped to act as reviewers.

For each reviewer, you must provide:

- their name

- their institution
- their email address. (Please ensure you use the same email address that this individual has used in the core team section of your application)
- between one and five classifications from Classifications for AHRC Large Grants in Additional information

Please ensure that you use the precise codes and wording of the research areas as provided in the list. We suggest you use the copy and paste functions.

This information will be used to assign your nominated reviewers to applications. We understand that an individual reviewer may have expertise in more than five classifications, so each nominee should prioritise those they feel most confident reviewing.

Note that your answer to this question will not be assessed. However, failure to provide at least two reviewers will result in your outline proposal being rejected.

Nominated reviewers do not need to have membership of AHRC's Peer Review College. The applicant team should only nominate individuals with the capacity, knowledge and confidence to provide constructive, comprehensive, quality reviews.

Please check that nominated reviewers have no planned leave (such as annual leave) which would prevent them from acting as a reviewer throughout October 2026. Reviewers will have three weeks to complete each assigned review.

We understand that individual circumstances can be unpredictable, and that there may be emergencies in a reviewer's personal life which may cause delays or prevent them from submitting their reviews. Please inform us as early as possible if there are exceptional circumstances impacting any of your nominated reviewers. You can do this by emailing [enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org)

For more information on reviewer responsibilities within the DPR process, please see Distributed Peer Review guidance for AHRC Large Grants in Additional information.

## **Trusted Research and Innovation**

Trusted Research and Innovation is the protection of the UK's intellectual property, sensitive research, people, and infrastructure from potential theft, misuse, and exploitation.

Organisations receiving UKRI funding are obliged to act in line with UK government legislation. They are also expected to undertake appropriate due diligence assessments of organisations involved in research partnerships, collaboration agreements, and commercial contracts.

You will be asked about:

- Which areas of the National Security and Investment (NSI) Act your project relates to
- Who you intend to collaborate with and how
- If your project requires an export control licence

Your answers will not be assessed, but may affect the T&Cs of your funding agreement if you are successful. We may use your answers to determine that our current T&Cs are sufficient or if additional T&Cs are required.

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## **How we will assess your application**

### **Assessment process**

We will assess your outline stage application using the following process.

#### **Eligibility criteria**

At the point of application submission, each will be assessed on the following criteria:

- all applicants and named staff must be eligible under the funding opportunity requirements
- the application must meet the aims and criteria of the funding opportunity

Applications which do not meet these criteria will be rejected with feedback on why it could not proceed.

#### **Distributed peer review**

This section is intended as an introductory overview for how distributed peer review (DPR) will be used in the assessment of applications for this funding opportunity.

Outline stage applications to AHRC Large Grants funding opportunity will be assessed through DPR. Applicants will review other proposals submitted to the same funding opportunity, contributing to the expert review assessment process.

#### **What is DPR?**

Traditional peer review places a considerable burden on researchers and funders, particularly when a funding opportunity is expected to attract a high level of interest. Distributing this burden among a larger set of people who are already deeply familiar with the opportunity's scope and criteria reduces an acute point of resourcing pressure for members of our Peer Review College.

DPR democratises funding and empowers researchers to shape their field beyond their own projects. The process allows us to gather a wider range of perspectives than either expert review or assessment panels. This range of perspectives can then be drawn together to form a robust evidence base and identify the most promising ideas which should be given the opportunity to develop a full stage proposal.

By participating in peer assessment, reviewers can also deepen and broaden their understanding of the funding opportunity, gain high-level insights into the funding landscape, and build their own expertise in developing competitive applications.

For more detailed information on the process, please refer to Distributed Peer Review guidance for AHRC Large Grants in the Additional Information section. It is important that you read this document carefully before applying.

### How we will use DPR to assess outline stage applications

AHRC's Large Grants funding opportunity asks researchers to use team convening to deliver world-leading excellent research. We expect applicant teams to be innovative and inclusive, distributing leadership and decision-making across people with the appropriate expertise. In trialling DPR as the assessment mechanism for outline stage applications, we aim to abide by these same principles.

Each applicant team will be asked to nominate between two and four of their team members who are equipped to act as reviewers. Nominated reviewers do not need to have membership of AHRC's Peer Review College. The applicant team should only nominate individuals with the capacity, knowledge and confidence to provide comprehensive, quality reviews.

Each nominated reviewer will be invited to assess no more than six other applications against the specified criteria for this funding opportunity. Each application can expect to receive up to eight reviews and reviewers will have three weeks to complete their assigned reviews.

Nominated reviewers should have no planned leave or other commitments which would prevent them from acting as a reviewer throughout October 2026. We recognise that working patterns and leave plans will vary between individuals, and we do not require reviewers to be available on every working day in October. However, each reviewer should be confident that they can complete a maximum of six reviews within three weeks of receiving their assignments.

We understand that individual circumstances can be unpredictable, and that there may be emergencies in a reviewer's personal life which may cause delays or prevent them from submitting their reviews. Please inform us as early as possible if there are exceptional circumstances impacting any of your nominated reviewers. You can do this by emailing [enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:enquiries@ahrc.ukri.org)

Unless AHRC is informed of exceptional circumstances, failing to provide the reviews by the deadline will lead to the automatic rejection of the application in which the given reviewer is involved.

## Safeguarding the use of DPR

There will not be an applicant response for this stage of the funding opportunity. However, you will receive many more reviews than you would through standard expert review. This will give you a broad range of feedback that will help you to understand why your application is or is not invited to full stage. This feedback may also be useful for your team in further developing your ideas, or in preparing future applications.

If there is insufficient expertise to assess your application across the pool of other applicants, expert reviewers who are not applicants may also be invited to review your application.

With support from the [UK Metascience Unit](#), AHRC will safeguard the use of DPR through various protections, including the moderation of reviews, use of different reviewer pools and an allocation method that ensures no reciprocal reviewing to assign applications to reviewers. These measures ensure that how a reviewer scores other applications cannot influence the ranking of their own application.

The DPR process and outcomes will be evaluated by the UK Metascience Unit. You will be approached for feedback following the process.

## Conditions for applying

Applicant teams note that each nominated reviewer agrees to participate in the DPR process during October 2026 through the following activities:

- receive a maximum of six applications to review
- carefully read all assigned applications and assess them against the criteria for this funding opportunity
- provide comprehensive and constructive feedback to the team who has prepared each assigned application

Attempts to 'game' the overall scoring system (for example, by giving consistently negative reviews and low scores without clear justification) may result in the rejection of the application in which the given reviewer is involved.

By submitting a proposal, you are agreeing to:

- take part in a pilot of DPR
- nominate reviewers from your team
- have your proposal reviewed by your peers

If you do not agree to comply with these conditions, please do not apply for this funding opportunity.

## Invitation to full stage

Reviews will be moderated to ensure that clear justification is given for scoring, and moderators will advise on whether any reviews should be excluded for the assessment process. After this process, applications will be assigned to the following tiers based on their average scores:

- Tier 1: the highest quality, prioritised for full stage invitation
- Tier 2: highly competitive, to be considered for full stage invitation
- Tier 3: not competitive enough to be invited to full stage

AHRC Large Grants seeks to support novel, ambitious and transformative research which compliments AHRC's overall portfolio of investment. As such, AHRC will use a portfolio balancing approach to the tiered applications to ensure that those shortlisted for full stage are:

- appropriate to the scope of this funding opportunity
- not duplicative of our other major investments
- not better suited for other AHRC routes to research funding
- distributed across a range of research areas and disciplines
- representative of our funding landscape, including UK geographies and spread of research organisation

We anticipate that up to 15 applicant teams will be invited to submit a full stage application.

## Full stage

Further information regarding the full stage assessment process will be published after the completion of the outline stage assessment process. A summary is provided here to help you plan ahead.

Assessment for full stage applications is expected to include three key mechanisms:

- independent expert review including applicant response (not DPR)
- portfolio balancing
- interview panel for shortlisted applications

We anticipate that expert review will take place from April to May 2027, with applicant response in early June 2027. The shortlisting panel and shortlisting outcomes are planned for early July 2027, with interviews taking place in late July 2027.

We anticipate funding up to five AHRC Large Grants applications.

## 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.

## Using generative artificial intelligence (AI) in expert review

Reviewers and panellists are not permitted to use generative AI tools to develop their assessment, including to correct language, spelling, grammar and formatting. Using these tools can potentially compromise the confidentiality of the ideas that applicants have entrusted to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to safeguard.

For more detail see our [policy on the use of generative AI](#).

## Assessment areas

The assessment areas we will use are:

- approach
- vision
- team capability to deliver

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

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## Contact details

### Get help with your application

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

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, content or remit of a funding 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 application 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 more efficiently, 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.

For further information on submitting an application read [How applicants use the Funding Service](#).

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## Additional info

### Background

In 2024, AHRC launched a pilot of its first Large Grants applicant-led funding opportunity. Mission was co-created with the Thrive project, which was funded by the Research England Development Fund and led by the University of Liverpool in partnership with Advance HE.

Informed by extensive sector engagement and drawing on a diverse range of experiences, skills and expertise, the Thrive project articulated a team convening approach for team-based working. AHRC's Mission pilot was a live funding opportunity in which to test this approach.

In so doing, the shared aim was to kick start the transformation of arts and humanities research, setting out an alternative approach to inform the way in which future research is conducted across the research and innovation sector.

Evidence from the [Mission pilot funding opportunity and successful project teams](#) suggests that team convening facilitates research teams to work in a way which:

- promotes a positive, inclusive and respectful research culture
- improves research design
- shares the opportunities and responsibilities of research leadership
- capitalises on the individual talents of all team members
- supports appropriate recognition of involvement in and contribution to research development

We encourage applicant teams to consider how they can most effectively apply the team convening principles within their specific research context. Your use of team convening principles should be appropriately tailored to the needs and nature of your project. Whilst you should integrate all of the principles in your research design, the degree to which you apply each principle may vary across work packages and milestones.

### **Identify appropriate expertise**

Project teams should comprise team members who collectively have the appropriate capabilities to deliver the project, including the necessary knowledge, skills and ability to manage other elements of a large project. The definition of expertise here is broad and includes expertise beyond the academic. Teams should be able to demonstrate their capability to co-develop and co-deliver the project in the round, carefully considering team composition and domain-leadership opportunities for a diverse range of team members.

### **Establish a collective leadership structure**

No individual should lead every aspect of a project. Instead, expertise should be recognised, and leadership roles allocated to reflect this. Leadership should be undertaken as matrix leadership, that is shared and distributed across multiple people. Leaders should be empowered to lead decision-making in their domain and to contribute to decision-making across the team as appropriate.

Teams should be able to set out and explain their project's leadership structure and describe how it utilises diverse team members' experience and expertise, whilst delivering maximum benefit to the project.

### **Design inclusive governance**

The organisational structure of the project should facilitate inclusive and transparent decision-making. Project teams should ensure accountability within a matrix leadership. Teams should determine a decision-making structure and processes that will enable the right team members to feel empowered to make decisions relevant to their area(s) of expertise.

Teams should be able to demonstrate how their decision-making structure will work to facilitate effective and inclusive ways of working in day-to-day practice across the project.

### **Identify ways to embed 'development for all'**

Team development should be an intrinsic part of the delivery of the project. All members of the applicant team, irrespective of role or career stage, should identify at least one individual development goal which can be realised via the delivery of the project itself. This could be through peer development mechanisms such as collective learning, role-sharing, mentoring and secondments or internships.

Teams should also be able to set out their collective development ambitions, explaining how these will benefit the project as a whole. Time should be built into project plans for individual and collective goals to be realised, bringing about shared commitment to development and making intentional space for it to take place.

## **Engage in reflexive practice**

Project teams should embed reflexive practice and encourage continuous learning. Teams should regularly consider evolving their ways of working, adapting their approach where necessary. This should enable challenges to be identified early and afford opportunities for adjustments to be made throughout the research project. Teams should be able to demonstrate how they have built reflexive practice into their planned activities, work packages and timelines.

Read more about the [Thrive project](#).

## **Distributed peer review (DPR)**

The UK Metascience Unit began piloting the use of DPR in 2025. See further detail on the [initial UKRI pilot of DPR to assess applications to the AI Metascience Fellowship programme](#).

## **Research and innovation impact**

Impact can be defined as the long-term intended or unintended effect research and innovation has on society, economy and the environment; to individuals, organisations, and the wider global population.

## **Webinar for potential applicants**

We will hold a **webinar** on 10 June 2026 at 9:30am UK time. This will provide more information about the funding opportunity and a chance to ask questions.

[Register for the \*\*webinar\*\*](#)

## **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.

## Supporting documents

[Classifications for AHRC Large Grants \(PDF, 116KB\)](#)

[Distributed Peer Review guidance for AHRC Large Grants \(PDF, 239KB\)](#)

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## Timeline

- **3 June 2026 9:00am**  
Opening date
- **10 June 2026 9:30am**  
**Webinar**
- **16 September 2026 4:00pm**  
Closing date
- **October 2026**  
Distributed peer review
- **December 2026**  
Outline stage decisions
- **January 2027**

Full stage opening

# Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)

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<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/ahrc-large-grants-outline-stage>