NERC Standard and New Investigator Competition

Royal Holloway is currently subject to a cap on the number of standard grant applications we can lead for each NERC funding round (including New Investigator route). For this round the College is limited to ONE application. We therefore will need to run an internal process to select the most competitive application to go forward.

Please note that we have amended the process as we are now limited to one application. We have two internal deadlines per year based on NERC’s submission deadlines – January and July.

Note: This process is for applications where RHUL is the lead. There is no limit to the number of applications where RHUL is a co-applicant (in these cases RHUL cannot have a separate Je-S form. If RHUL were a co-applicant with a separate Je-S form this would count towards the RHUL quota, therefore would need to be included on Je-S form of the lead applicant. Please see the following link for further clarification: https://nerc.ukri.org/funding/available/researchgrants/demand/).

RHUL Internal Selection Process

Expression of Interest deadline → Panel reviews EoIs and provide feedback → PI responds to reviewers’ comments and sends to the panel → Panel selects and invites one applicant to submit full proposal → PI submits final version for feedback → Panel Chair confirms and approves final submission

Timetable for Next Internal Round- July 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rounds for 2019-2020</th>
<th>Round 2 (2020)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for Expression of interest (EOI)</td>
<td>16th March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicants receive feedback to EOI</td>
<td>30th March</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applicants send response to reviewers’ comments</td>
<td>6th April</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal Selection meeting (one application only)</td>
<td>22nd April</td>
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<tr>
<td>RHUL selected applicant submits full draft proposal</td>
<td>5th June</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviewers’ feedback to full proposal</td>
<td>15th June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final application</td>
<td>29th June</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panel Chair confirms final submission</td>
<td>6th July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funder submission deadline (tbc)</td>
<td>Mid-July</td>
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</table>

Note: June and July dates may be subject to change. We will inform applicants the final dates as soon as we know when the funder’s deadline will be. If required, this timetable will be updated accordingly.

If you have any further questions please contact researchservices@rhul.ac.uk
Applying to Round 2 (July 2020)

Expression of Interest (EOI) by 16th March

- PIs planning to submit an application to NERC are requested to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) to researchservices@rhul.ac.uk by 16th March 2020. The format of the EOI can be found in Annex I.
- EOIs received are sent to the review panel for their comments.

Applicants receive reviewer’s feedback on 30th March 2020

- EOIs will be reviewed by an internal College review panel by 30th March 2020.
- Applications will be assessed using both the NERC assessment criteria (Annex II) and the evaluation form presented in Annex III.
- Before final decisions are made, PIs will receive anonymous feedback soon after this date and will be invited to respond to any comments or questions raised by 6th April. Responses should be sent to researchservices@rhul.ac.uk

Selection meeting on 22nd April 2020

- The review panel will meet to review responses received, rank proposals and select the application to be developed further to full proposal stage. PIs will be informed their results shortly after the selection meeting.
- **ONE EOI** will be selected at this stage.

RHUL Full invited proposal by 5th June 2020

- The EOI selected at the previous stage should be developed as a draft proposal.
- The PI is requested to submit a complete draft to researchservices@rhul.ac.uk by 5th June 2020, including all sections of the Je-S form, attachments and a budget.
- The draft proposal will be sent to the review panel for their comments.

Review Panel provides feedback to full proposal on 15th June 2020

- The review panel will review and provide written feedback by 15th June 2020.
- PI is requested to incorporate reviewers’ comments and submit the final draft by 29th June 2020. The proposals should be ready to submit.
- The Chair will confirm by 6th July that the applicant has incorporated all comments and will give a final yes/no decision by email whether the application is of sufficient quality to be submitted.

Submission to NERC Mid-July 2020 (deadline tbc by the funder)

Please allow enough time for approvals before final submission.

If you have any further questions please contact researchservices@rhul.ac.uk

NOTES

Applicants should adhere to the deadlines and guidelines set out in this document. Proposals that are received out of these dates or that exceed the number of words/pages allowed will not be considered for evaluation.

We strongly recommend that applicants discuss their proposals with their Director of Research, Head of Department and/or Head of School, and have their proposal peer reviewed before they submit to the internal panel. This will increase their chances of success.

Applicants are required to incorporate the panel’s feedback or justify why this has not been taken into consideration.
ANNEX I

Format for NERC internal Expression of Interest

1. Scheme:
   Standard Grant or New Investigator Grant *

2. Title of the proposal

3. Name of RHUL PI and Co-I(s)
   Please also provide a short track record for the PI and Co-I (max 50 words each)

4. Research team and project partners (if applicable)
   Please also provide a short track record for the research team (max 150 words overall)

5. Type of proposal
   a. Is this a joint/ collaborative application? If so, with which other HEI/collaborator?
   b. Joint NSF/NERC proposal?

6. Objectives (max 200 words)
   List the main objectives of the proposed research in order of priority

7. Summary (max 200 words)
   Describe the proposed research in simple terms in a way that could be publicised to a general audience

8. Summary of the project (max 1,000 words)
   A brief version of the Case for Support

9. Resource summary (max 1 side of A4)
   Please give a ballpark summary of the resources to be requested and project budget. Please also consider the following:
   - Will any equipment >£10k be requested that requires match funding?
   - Are there any costs incurred that may not be eligible, e.g. refurbishment of existing equipment?
   - Please contact R&E researchservices@rhul.ac.uk for assistance with costing

* NIG Eligibility - If you are applying for New Investigator grant please confirm you are eligible to apply. Applicants must be within five years of first becoming eligible for NERC funding as a Principal Investigator (account will be taken of any career breaks) and must not have received competitive research funding from any source, as a Principal Investigator, that included post-doctoral research assistant staff support costs.
## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Proposals are assessed on their scientific excellence and considering NERC assessment criteria ([https://nerc.ukri.org/funding/application/howtoapply/forms/standardguidance/](https://nerc.ukri.org/funding/application/howtoapply/forms/standardguidance/)). Review comments should consider:

- the potential rewards of the project: the significance and quality of the work, and the scientific impact it will have in terms of enhancing or developing insights, developing the field and adding to knowledge or understanding in the area to be studied in a national or international context;
- the extent to which the research questions, issues or problems that will be addressed through the work are stated and their importance and appropriateness specified; and
- the appropriateness, effectiveness and feasibility of the proposed research methods and/or approach.

Overall Research Excellence will be assessed as per the scale below (NERC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Research Excellence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The proposed work meets outstanding standards in terms of originality, quality and significance and addresses extremely important scientific questions or will enable them to be addressed through technological development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The proposed work meets excellent standards in terms of originality, quality and significance and addresses highly important scientific questions or will enable them to be addressed through technological development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
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<tr>
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<td>The proposed work meets high standards of originality, quality and significance and addresses important scientific questions or will enable them to be addressed through technological development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The proposed work is of merit, meets satisfactory standards of originality, quality and significance and addresses reasonably important scientific questions or will enable them to be addressed through technological development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Not Competitive/ Modest</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The proposed work is potentially of some merit but overall is of inconsistent quality, significance and originality but could result in some useful knowledge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unfundable/ Poor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The proposed work is unsatisfactory in terms of originality, quality and significance and is unlikely to advance the field.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Non-Scoring</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For special cases e.g. flawed in scientific approach, subject to serious technical difficulties, sufficiently unclearly written that it cannot be properly assessed, success depends on the project student or is duplicative of other research.</td>
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</table>
NERC Standard-NIRG grants – Assessment Form

This form should be completed by the nominated reviewer(s) assigned to each proposal. Feedback provided will be anonymised and shared with applicants.

Please return the form to kathryn.morley@rhul.ac.uk

Name of Researcher (PI):  
Department / School:  

**Evaluation Criteria**

Please provide comments on the extent that the proposal meets the criteria assessed in each question.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Appropriateness and track record of the PI and the team to carry out and deliver the proposed work</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| 2. | Objectives  
*Please state if objectives of the proposal have been clearly formulated.* |
| 3. | Summary  
*Comment on the extent the summary has been written in plain English and whether it clearly explains the aims, objectives, the potential applications and benefits of the research.* |
| 4. | Summary of the project  
*Please comment on the research excellence of the proposal (use the assessment criteria provided). For example: quality and feasibility of the research proposal including research methods; significance and quality of the work; the scientific impact it will have in terms of enhancing or developing insights; developing the field and adding to knowledge or understanding in the area to be studied in a national or international context. Please also comment on whether the proposal is novel, ambitious, timely and transformative.* |
| 5. | Impact summary  
*Comment on whether the beneficiaries have been clearly identified and how they will benefit from this research.* |
| 6. | Resource summary  
*Please comment on the resources requested. Are all the costs requested required for the research proposed, and sufficiently justified?* |
| 7. | Please comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed research, the risks associated with the research, the resources requested and the value added by any project partners |

**Overall Assessment score for research excellence** (Tick just one option)

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Research & Innovation  
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