

Research & Innovation

Working in partnership to support success

Research Grants: Roles in Research



Principal Investigator (PI)

The PI takes responsibility for the intellectual leadership of the research project and for the overall management of the research.

Lead Institution

The Lead Institution employs the PI. The Funder will issue a grant agreement to the Lead Institution if the grant application is successful.

Co-Investigator (Co-I)

A Co-I assists the PI in the management and leadership of the research project and may be an employee of the Lead or of any Co-Applicant Institution(s).

Co-Applicant Institution

The Co-Applicant Institution(s) are the institution(s) which employ the Co-I(s), if any, and would normally receive funding. **It is the Lead Institution's responsibility to put in place an academic collaboration agreement between itself and all of the Co-Applicant Institution(s)** shortly after the grant agreement has been signed with the Funder. The default arrangement is that the Lead and each Co-Applicant Institution will own their own results and that jointly created results will be co-owned. This is called a "split IP ownership regime".

Researcher Co-Investigator (RCo-I)

A post-doctoral research assistant who merits appropriate recognition for making a significant contribution to the preparation of the proposal and the ensuing research. An RCo-I would be an employee of the Lead or of any Co-Applicant Institution. RCo-I is a role recognised by UKRI (except AHRC and ESRC).

Informal Collaborator

An Informal Collaborator is a person or an organisation **who is informally involved with the project via the Lead or a Co-Applicant Institution**. Informal Collaborator(s) should not be named as part of the project team. An Informal Collaborator **may provide data, materials and / or intellectual input** (for example, by reviewing a proposed publication) to the project. If an Informal Collaborator provides data or materials, the institution who will receive the data or materials should put in place a data licence or material transfer agreement before the data or materials are used. For the avoidance of doubt, this agreement would normally be between two organisations rather than between an institution and an individual, and should set out that the institution owns the project results.

Project Partner

A Project Partner is **an organisation which is interested in the research, may provide input or a steer to the project, will generally attend the project review meetings, but will not receive any funding**. Some Funders require Project Partners to provide a cash or in-kind contribution (usually staff time, equipment time, or space). A Project Partner agreement will need to be put in place between the Lead Institution and each Project Partner shortly after the grant agreement with the Funder has been signed. The Project Partner agreement will usually include an obligation of confidentiality and may include a time-limited option to the Project Partner(s) to negotiate a licence to use the project results which are owned by the Lead and/or Co-Application Institution(s) for commercial purposes.

Subcontractor

The role of a Subcontractor is distinct from a Co-applicant Institution, an Informal Collaborator or a Project Partner. Subcontractors should not be named as part of the project team. They **carry out a specific piece of work on behalf of or provide advice to an institution on a fee-for-service basis**. As Subcontractors provide a service, VAT needs to be added. It is the responsibility of the institution who commissions the work or advice to put in place a subcontract between itself and each of its Subcontractors before the work and/or advice is carried out. The default arrangement is that the institution issuing the subcontract owns the results created by the Subcontractor. For the avoidance of doubt, the subcontract should normally be between two organisations rather than between an institution and an individual.

Visiting Researcher

An academic of acknowledged standing, from within the UK or abroad, **visiting an investigator's organisation usually for a period between one to twelve months**. It is the responsibility of the institution who hosts the visiting researcher to put in place a short term employment contract or a visiting researcher agreement with the visiting researcher before they start to work on the project. The default arrangement is that the institution who hosts the visiting researcher owns the results created by the visiting researcher and share any licence income based on the results, if any, with the visiting researcher as if the visiting researcher were an employee.