Innovation Fellowships FAQs

Eligibility

Q. What are the eligibility requirements?
A. As per EPSRC fellowships, an Innovation Fellowship (https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/calls/epsrcukriinnovationfellowships/) must be held at a UK HEI or eligible IRO, can be held between 50-100% FTE, the research must fall into one (or more) of the call priority areas. You should identify as an Early Career researcher, either within industry or academia. There are no strict metrics for this (i.e. time since PhD, academic position), but you can use the EPSRC Fellowships person specification to assess whether you identify as ‘Early Career’ so this may also include experiences postdoctoral researchers (https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/peerreviewprocess/whocanapply/)

Q. Can I still apply for a new investigator award (NIA) if I am unsuccessful at the full proposal stage?
A. Yes, provided you fit with other eligibility requirements of the NIA scheme.

Q. Can I apply for a new investigator award at the same time as applying for an Innovation Fellowship?
A. Yes, although we would only expect you to accept only one if you were successful in both applications.

Q. Can I apply to this call if I have applied to the EPSRC fellowship scheme within the last 12 months?
No, it is standard EPSRC policy that we will only accept one full proposal to an EPSRC fellowship within 12 months. If you have only submitted an outline to an EPSRC fellowships call within the past 12 months then you can still apply to this call.

Q. Do I apply to the call or does my university?
A. Applicants apply to the Innovation Fellowships call through Je-S, but you must attach a supportive statement from your proposed Host organisation, confirming that they have identified you as a suitable candidate for the Innovation Fellowship call.

General Questions

Q. Why do I need a Host Organisation (HO) Statement letter with my outline application?
We have asked universities to indicate how many applications they intend to support and what the process is for choosing applicants as such, to confirm that you were indeed one of the applicants identified by your HO, we have asked to provide a letter detailing this. This HO statement should be attached to your
application on Je-S as ‘other attachment’ and will only be seen by EPSRC or another relevant Research Council.

**Q. When will I know if I am successful at outline stage? Will I get feedback?**

**A.** Early December. Unfortunately, due to the high volume of outline proposals that we expect to receive we will not be able to provide feedback to applicants.

**Q. Does my application have to fall into one of the EPSRC fellowship scheme priority areas?**

No, your proposed research should fall within at least one of the **call** priority areas as detailed in the call guidance document and annex.

**Q. What form should my industrial engagement take? And when should this occur in the fellowship?**

**A.** Industrial engagement can take a form that is appropriate to the proposal (i.e. placement, time/mentoring from industry etc.) we wish to encourage productive relationships between academia and industry and to promote mobility between the two. If this is in the form of developing routes to IP capture and/or commercialisation (spin-out, start-up) then we also welcome this. The engagement must happen during the fellowship but it can occur at the best time for your proposal.

**Q. Is there a minimum level of industrial engagement?**

**A.** There must be a genuine collaboration of some sorts; the minimum we would expect to see would be a few hours of time a month (this could offer advice, mentoring etc.) from a company.

**Q. Is there additional guidance for the project partner letters (at full proposal stage)?**

No, please follow the usual guidance provided by EPSRC with regards to project partner letters of support: [https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/lettersofsupport/](https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/lettersofsupport/)

**Q. What is the upper limit/cap for proposals?**

**A.** No strict cap although we expect to fund a minimum of 65 Innovation fellowships, which equates to a maximum of £600k per fellowship or £200k per year of the fellowship.

**Q. Is there a maximum number of PDRAs that I can apply for?**

**A.** You should apply for an appropriate number of PDRAs to help carry out the research project within you proposal, this number should align with the team leadership experience that you have i.e. if you have never managed a PDRA before we would not expect you to request more than one PDRA.
Q. How can I ensure I have the correct visa in time to start my fellowship?

A. The most appropriate visa route may be different for each applicant; as such we would like to provide guidance on a case-by-case basis, so please contact fellowtier1.info@rcuk.ac.uk for specific information about visa routes available to you for the EPSRC UKRI Innovation Fellowships call.

Generally there are three main visa routes that we would suggest:

Tier 1 visa – this has more flexibility regarding mobility during the fellowship so we would recommend this route if possible. Applicants can apply for individual endorsement.

For more information on the Tier 1 visa process please go to https://www.gov.uk/tier-1-exceptional-talent.

Tier 2 visa:

– applying outside the UK:

You may be eligible for sponsorship from your UK based host organisation under Tier 2 as a 'named researcher'; you must not have held a Tier 2 visa within 12 months of your new sponsorship. Please contact your UK based host organisation if you think this is the best route for you.

– applying inside the UK:

If you are currently in the UK on a tier 2 visa, your research organisation may be able to continue sponsorship under your Tier 2 visa through the ‘named research’ route to cover the duration of your fellowship, either through an update to your current visa or by extending your visa in accordance with the Tier 2 rules. Please contact your research office if you think this is the best route for you.

For further information on Tier 2 criteria please go to https://www.gov.uk/tier-2-general.

If you are currently on a Tier 2 visa and this partially covers the proposed duration of the Innovation fellowship then you may be eligible to transfer to a Tier 1 visa at a later date.

For further advice about the visa routes available to you for the EPSRC UKRI Innovation Fellowship call please contact fellowtier1info@rcuk.ac.uk.

To note, your visa costs are eligible as part of the ‘relocation costs’ within your fellowship application so please seek advice about the correct route for you and the costs associated with it.

Q. My university/Independent Research Organisation (IRO) is not on the list in Annex 1, can I still apply to hold a fellowship here?

A. Yes, as long as your university is a UK HEI or eligible IRO (http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/). Please get in contact with your university/IRO to find out if they are interested in supporting your
application and if so the university/IRO must contact the building leadership team (buildingleadership@epsrc.ac.uk) to agree this.