

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who can apply for this funding opportunity?

A: This is a carefully designed call intended to support exceptional individuals who show strong leadership skills and wish to develop their career in scientific software engineering in an academic environment. The combination of scientific expertise and computational science of the RSE is best described at the following link: <http://www.rse.ac.uk/who.html>

Q: Do I need to be a researcher or have a current academic post to apply for this call?

A: No, but you must be able to move into the academic environment as an employee by the start of your RSE Fellowship. That is, you must be employed by an eligible institution at the start and for the duration of the Fellowship.

Q: What's the earliest start date for my RSE Fellowship?

A: You may start the RSE Fellowship from 1 January 2018.

Q: Can I make this a part-time post?

A: Yes, you can spend anything over 50% FTE on the RSE Fellowship. However, the term must not exceed 5 years.

Q: Does the RSE Fellow have to work on one project or in a single department?

A: The RSE Fellow should have a flexible framework to permit working on multiple projects across disciplines, departments or more widely. They should involve challenging issues and provide innovative solutions. However, where there is capacity to do so, the RSE may wish to focus efforts on a single project that offers a number of complex or interdisciplinary challenges across various interfaces with a foundation in software development for science

Q: What should the Host Institution provide?

A: The Host Institution must be fully committed to supporting the RSE Fellow for the term of the award, and ensure a strong foundation for future career development. The Host Institution Statement should be prepared by a suitably senior figure in the university who has a strategic overview and relevant interests in the development of the RSE role. Some wider guidance is at: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/hostorganisationobligations/>

Q: Can I transfer the RSE Fellowship to another institution?

A: Yes, but you must have the full support of both the involved institutions. The Fellowship must have more than 6 months to run. Please contact us to consider your options as there are a number of conditions that must be met.

Q: What can the funding be used for?

A: The normal criteria apply. However, note that there is a restriction on staff to 1 FTE over the period of the Fellowship. This may include administrative support. Further information may be found in the funding section of the EPSRC website and on the Fellowships guidance pages.

Q: Can I apply for other funding as a PI or Co-I while I have an RSE Fellowship?

A: Fellows at 100% FTE are eligible to be a PI / Co-I on a research grant, assuming you meet all the other requirements. However the required resource cannot be duplicated – salary should not be costed to the new proposal for any overlapping period of time, with the fellowship, estates and indirect costs would need to be reduced accordingly.

However, you would need to be able to convince peer review that this would not adversely impact the delivery of your fellowship and the research grant project is feasible whilst having a 0% time commitment. This is usually the case where the research grant project is heavily related to the fellowship, so the administrative time needed on the grant is able to be covered by the time on the fellowship.

Q: Can I have Co-Investigators on the application?

A: No, the RSE Fellowship does not permit Co-Investigators. This call is based on the credibility and quality of the individual.

Q: Can I split my time between HEIs?

A: Yes, this is possible. Both institutions must be fully signed up to supporting the RSE Fellow, and one 'lead' institution must be identified to hold the award and this will be your employer. There will be considerable additional challenge in defining a clear programme between two centres and you must be aware to fully justify all costs and administrative overheads. You may create other ways of working closely with other institutions.

Q: Can I involve industrial or business in the Fellowship?

A: Yes, as contributors to the Fellowship, such involvement is encouraged. However, these project partners may not draw funds from the Fellowship, including for travel costs. Named project partners should supply a letter of support describing their contribution, support and commitment to the Fellowship.

Q: When will I get a decision?

A: We will endeavour to keep you informed at every stage of the process. Please be aware that the period shortly after a peer review meeting is exceptionally busy and we may not be able to offer immediate responses. Email correspondence is preferred for non-urgent enquiries.

Q: If I am invited to interview, what do I need to prepare?

A: We will let you know the requirements and structure of the interview in good time. There will be no additional assessment criteria. In general, the panel meeting will consider the strength of the case and the interview will focus on the quality of the candidate.

Q: What is the 'mid-term review' mentioned in the call document?

A: Over the period of 5 years, we would like to assess the success and impact of this scheme. EPSRC may require you to provide evidence of achievements and report on progress. This may be examined by external peer review who will be asked to offer opinion and feedback. This review is not conditional on continuation of funding.

Q: How much is required from the Justification of Resources and the Resource Summary at the outline stage and it is possible to alter these e.g. increase/decrease the budget total between outline and full stages?

A: The JoR consists of 2 pages of A4. You don't need to give a full justification and accurate costings; just an estimation of costs at the outline stage. You can alter these costs between the outline and full stages. The costs can be altered by + or - 10%.

Q: Is the Alan Turing Institute eligible to apply?

A: No, Research Council Institutes are not eligible to apply to this call, although a partnership proposal from a university and the ATI is encouraged.

Q: The eligibility criteria exclude applicants from institutes and national laboratories, why can't they apply?

A: One of the aims of this call is to drive the recognition of the RSE role in the university academic pathway. We have targeted universities because this is where RSEs often lack a formal place in the academic setting. You would be eligible to apply if the fellowship was to be held at a university for the duration of the grant.

Q: If an applicant already has a permanent position (Senior Lecturer) at an institution would exclude someone from applying for an RSE fellowship?

A: There are no restrictions in place regarding eligibility of applicants to apply to the RSE call except that they are expected to hold a PhD by the start date of the fellowship or have equivalent experience. There are no eligibility rules based on years of post-doctoral experience or whether the applicant holds a permanent academic position, therefore this researcher would be eligible to apply.

However, please bear in mind that one area the panel will be assessing applications on is whether they meet the aims of this call, one of which is to provide a formal, recognised place in the academic system and long-term contract for an RSE.

Q: In the section "Funding available", on the call the list of activities that can be supported includes both "Their salary" and "Staff of one FTE equivalent for the period of the Fellowship". Does that "staff of one" refer to the fellow themselves, or does it mean an additional person (say, a postdoc) to work alongside the fellow for the period of the fellowship?

A: The 1 FTE refers to an additional person and is intended to be research staff to support the Fellow, such as a Post-doctoral Research Assistant.

Q: Is the Justification of Resources needed at the outline stage?

A: No, the JoR is not a mandatory attachment at the outline stage.