Case for Support

The Case for Support should describe the proposed research, its context, importance and the methodology and all the associated work and activities you propose to carry out that will make this a high-quality research programme.

This document is the principle opportunity to explain to reviewers why this proposal should be financially supported.

This must be attached, as a single document of 8 A4 pages, using the ‘Case for Support’ attachment type in Joint electronic submission (Je-S). For further information on writing this document please see How to prepare a proposal

Expertise and track record of the team

This section should comprise a maximum of 2 pages of A4.

Use this section to demonstrate to the reviewers that the proposed team has the appropriate expertise and experience to conduct the research. Non-academic partners or collaborators should be considered part of the team.

You should:

- Summarise the results and advances of the team’s recent work in the technological and scientific areas related to this research proposal. This could include reference to the demonstrable contribution the work has made to society and the economy.
  - This may include reference to both EPSRC and non-EPSRC funded research.
- Specify the expertise and capabilities of the team at the host organisation and of project partners and collaborating beneficiaries explaining how and why they are appropriate for the proposed research undertaking.
  - For multi-disciplinary proposals it is particularly important to clarify the breadth of disciplinary expertise that will comprise the team.
  - For partnerships with beneficiaries, such as industry, explain their importance to the proposed research activities and how the partnerships could benefit the research or increase the likelihood of impacts. Where appropriate detail any relevant past collaborative work with these partners.
  - Explain any collaborations with visiting researchers, what they will contribute to the project, and why they are the most appropriate person for this.

Description of proposed research and its context

This section should comprise a maximum of 6 pages of A4.

Use this section to describe the proposed research and its context. You should demonstrate to those reviewing your proposal what you intend achieve, why it is timely and important and your detailed plan for how you will achieve your objectives.

The following information may help to guide you through how to structure your application:

Background

- Introduce the proposal topic and explain its academic, industrial, policy, societal, or other relevant context. Indicate who might benefit from the research, and how.
• Explain where this work fits in the current portfolio of EPSRC funded research and how it relates to past and current work in the UK and abroad.

Contribution to knowledge

• Describe how your research would benefit national and international researchers in the field and related disciplines.
• Detail what will be done to ensure that they can benefit, including any opportunities to engage with researchers in other disciplines to broaden the reach of the new knowledge.

National Importance

The purpose of the National Importance criterion is to encourage applicants to articulate why it's important for their research to be supported by the UK taxpayer so that the UK remains internationally competitive. The National Importance criterion has a number of strands and so applicants should consider why the research might benefit the UK economy; why it may lead to advances in a different academic discipline; or why it's important that an internationally leading group continues to be supported.

Explain how the long-term effects of the proposed research may:

• Contribute to the health of other research disciplines; to current or future UK economic success; to future development of key emerging industries; or addresses key UK societal challenges.
• Meet national strategic needs by establishing or maintaining unique world leading research activities, including areas of niche capability.
• Fit with and complement other research in the UK portfolio, and EPSRC's portfolio and strategy.

Applicants will be able to address these bullet points to different levels depending on their proposed research. However, all applicants should indicate how their research relates to EPSRC's research areas and strategies, and complements the current portfolio. Details of the portfolio are available through EPSRC's Grants on the Web (GoW).

The definition of National Importance and further details can be found at preparing new proposals to include national importance.

Research hypothesis and objectives

• Set out your research idea or hypothesis.
• Explain why the proposed project is novel and timely, e.g. emphasising the scientific ambition, or any potential transformative outcomes.
• Identify the overall aims of the project and the measurable objectives against which the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the work will be assessed.

Programme and methodology

• Detail and justify the research methodology.
• Describe the work programme including research and impact related activities to be undertaken.
• Identify the contribution of each member of the research team including any project partners and stakeholders.
• Provide objectives and milestones that will be used to monitor progress and explain how the project will be managed.

Integrating impact in the Case for Support

The revised assessment criteria for research applications allow applicants to be creative and integrate impact related activities throughout the Case for Support. EPSRC strongly encourage the full costing and request for resources for any such activities. **These costs should be justified within the Justification of Resources.** Examples include:

• Travel costs to support engagement with existing partners
• New partnership development, e.g. meetings to understand the needs of users
• People exchange, e.g. secondment between industry/university/government
• Training for researchers, e.g. public engagement, entrepreneurship, media
• Engage expert staff, e.g. knowledge exchange professionals, consultants, business planning support, commercialisation professionals, research software engineers
• Development or design input for e.g. Proof of Concept, prototype or demonstrators
• Marketing design, video, web content
• Engagement activities, e.g. workshops, seminars, networking events, exhibitions
• Data management, e.g. sharing of datasets
• Sharing of novel tools and techniques, e.g. where these could be applied in other disciplines

EPSRC does not expect applicants to predict the impact of their research, nor are reviewers expected to make assumptions about the probability of the benefits being fully delivered. There is no expectation for impacts to be realised within the lifetime of the research project.

Responsible innovation

• Responsible Innovation is a process that seeks to promote creativity and opportunities for science and innovation that are socially desirable and undertaken in the public interest. Innovation is a collective responsibility where funders, researchers, and interested and affected parties, including the public, all have an important role to play.
• Applicants are expected to consider responsible innovation during planning and throughout the duration of their project and to work within the [EPSRC Framework for Responsible Innovation](https://www.epsrc.ac.uk) given on the EPSRC website.

Public engagement

• Public engagement is more than just meeting an audience and telling them about your research - effective public engagement (PE) is about two-way communication, with the researchers listening to and learning from participants.
• Well planned PE activities related to the research within the grant are encouraged where appropriate. Relevant costs for PE activities can be requested if justified.
• If you are proposing PE activities, which group(s) will you target, how will they benefit, and how will you evaluate the activities?
• [Further guidance](https://www.epsrc.ac.uk) can be found on the EPSRC website.
Tips for Writing a good Case for Support

- The Case for Support is your opportunity to convince peers your research should be funded. Write it in a clear, concise and jargon free style.
- Explain what is exciting about the research to your audience, reviewers in particular. You need to satisfy these experts in your own research field of the value of your project.
- Convince reviewers your proposal is original and describe objectives clearly and succinctly. Proposals are not rejected just because others are doing similar work, but if you don't describe the novelty of your approach or the likelihood of success, the value of your proposal is uncertain.
- Proposals where key stakeholders are included in plans to define research problems, shape the course of the research programme, or realise impacts are viewed especially favourably.
- Activities that support impact creation are an integral part of high-quality research programmes. Consider what impacts, for example on society, economy, people or knowledge are appropriate for the research programme.
- Requesting appropriate resources to facilitate impact within applications is encouraged. It is much better to include appropriate costs that will support the realisation of the potential outcomes than to try and save money.
- Partnerships, and co-creation of research are important mechanisms to enable knowledge exchange. Identify relevant end users, partners or potential partners who would benefit from your research outputs.
- Invite external partners to contribute to and review your proposal and build them into your plans. Industry partners, or those involved in policy development, have experience of creating impact, they can help bring this to life.
- All activities whether research or impact focused must be well thought through. Each should have appropriately allocated and justified resources, as well as designated responsibility for delivery, to demonstrate clearly how they will be achieved.
- Show that you have clearly thought the proposal through and explain how it will succeed.
- Be realistic when considering the length of your project. You may wish to apply for a project of longer duration in order to allow appropriate timescales to achieve engagement, dissemination, or impact related activities.

Journal-based metrics

As part of our commitment to support the recommendations and principles set out by the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), UKRI reviewers and panel members are advised not to use journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an investigator's contributions, or to make funding decisions.

The content of a paper is more important than publication metrics, or the identity of the journal, in which it was published, especially for early-stage researchers. Peer review and panel members are encouraged to consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets, software, inventions, patents, preprints, other commercial activities, etc.) in addition to research publications. We advise our peer reviewers and panel members to consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.
Note: Lists of references and illustrations should be included in the six A4 page limit, and not be submitted as additional attachments or as an annex.