British Election Study 2018-19
Call specification

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Summary

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is pleased to invite applications for the continuation of the British Election Study. A maximum of £2 million (100% full economic cost) is available for this study of political behaviour and attitudes before, during, and after the next British general election, which is scheduled to take place on 5 May 2022 under the Fixed-term Parliament Act.

We recognise that the next general election may be called before May 2022. To alleviate the administrative burden on the next British Election Study and the ESRC office, and allow flexibility, we are utilising a funding model that allows funds allocated for fieldwork before, during, and after the general election to be moved if it's called at an earlier date.

We invite proposals from UK-based research organisations (ROs) eligible for UKRI funding from any area of the social sciences. We welcome interdisciplinary proposals that **must be** at least 50% social science in disciplinary focus. This includes the focus of the research, the principal investigator, and other personnel involved.

All applicants should consult the ESRC Research Funding Guide, available from our website: (https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/), which sets out the rules and regulations governing funding.

Proposals must be submitted by **16:00 on 13 November 2018** using the Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) system (https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/).

Background and scope

The British Election Study is the longest running social survey series. It has accumulated and analysed data since 1964. Over this period, the study has been managed by several different teams, and continuity has been combined with innovation. In order to maintain continuity between Election Studies, we ask that proposals provide detailed plans on how they would continue the address-based random probability sample survey conducted via face-to-face interviews, and the inter-election internet panel, including pre- and post-general election waves.

The Election Studies have received high public and academic recognition, and have made a major contribution to the understanding of political attitudes and behaviours at particular points in time, and change over time. Therefore, the studies constitute a major source of

information since 1964, and provide both a benchmark database and a major research resource.

The data from each successive study has been deposited with the UK Data Service and is widely used. They provide an important resource for researchers and offer access to information on political behaviour and attitudes. They also provide a database for international comparative analysis of political behaviour. This should be considered by applicants when designing the next British Election Study.

Call details

Funding and duration
The grant supported under this call will be funded for up to 60 months in duration and must start no later than 1 April 2019.

The value of the award shall not exceed £2 million. The ESRC will fund 80% of this cost, and the balance must be covered by the host research organisation. We also expect significant cash and/or in-kind support from the host RO. We expect to fund a maximum of one grant under this call. The final decision on which proposal to fund will depend primarily on the scientific quality of the proposal.

We expect applicants to plan the cost of fieldwork for the scheduled general election date of May 2022. However, we are aware that the next election may be called earlier. To help alleviate the administrative burden on the next British Election Study, and the ESRC office, we are utilising a funding model that allows funds allocated for fieldwork to be moved to the appropriate month and year for the general election, if it is called earlier.

We ask that proposals plan for the next general election to be called on 5 May 2022.

Key expectations
The overall aim of the British Election Study is to increase understanding of long-term trends in British voting behaviour. The data collected should enable a degree of continuity with previous Election Studies whilst embracing innovative developments to address the broader set of debates raised by our changing political landscape, and opportunities offered through technological developments.

We are seeking a scientific leadership team to:

- Carry out consultation with the Election Studies' community, relevant academic communities in political science and other disciplines, and with appropriate user communities about the form and content of the next study
- Design the form and content of the next British Election Study, taking into account the consultation
- Ensure consistency with the address-based random probability sample survey conducted via face-to-face interviews, and the inter-election internet panel, including pre- and post-general election waves
- Prepare an invitation to tender for survey organisations, to competitively bid for the collection of data to meet the agreed design

- Work with the successful survey organisation(s) to ensure high-quality data collection and maximised representation and response rates
- Deposit the data with the UK Data Service within six months of the date of the next general election
- Promote the potential wider impact of research using British Election Study data by raising awareness of the data availability, and research possibilities to encourage secondary analysis.

Innovation

We are committed to ensuring that data collected at the next general election will be consistent with data collected at previous general elections, to maintain the integrity of this long-running series.

However, we welcome innovations which balance the need for continuity with new approaches relevant to the changing political and technological landscapes. Innovations might include novel approaches to data collection and analysis which offer improved efficiency and/or value for money.

Data to be collected

Applications must demonstrate a clear commitment to maintain the high-quality benchmark of the British Election Study by maximising representation and response rates, generating impact and undertaking knowledge exchange activities.

To maintain consistency in the data series it is expected that data collected will comprise at least two core elements:

a) The address-based random probability sample survey conducted via face-to-face interviews
b) The inter-election internet panel, including pre- and post-General Election waves.

However, innovation is welcome and proposals can include additional elements.

The successful proposal will be expected to conform with the ESRC Research Data Policy (https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-grant-holders/research-data-policy/).

Address-based random probability sample survey

In order to ensure consistency with previous Election Studies, we ask that proposals include plans for an address-based random probability sample survey to take place post-election. The survey should be carried out using a sample of eligible voters and non-voters across a range of parliamentary constituencies. This survey should aim to maximise representation and response rates. It should be designed to ensure good continuity with previous surveys, and is, therefore, likely to involve continuation and development of a series of standard questions. We would also expect the survey to balance continuity with the inclusion of questions on areas of contemporary concern and importance, and a degree of innovation.

Inter-election internet panel

The inter-election internet panel should be designed to investigate the evolution of the election by supporting a rolling campaign cross-section of randomly drawn samples of

respondents of the pre-election survey. Previous waves of the inter-election internet panel were conducted during the campaign period of the general election, local elections, and post-general election. We would expect the internet panel to balance continuity with previous Election Studies and innovation.

Impact

Applicants are expected to identify pathways to impact for their work undertaken through this grant. Appropriate knowledge exchange and impact work will be eligible costs as part of the project. We expect at least 10% of the budget to be dedicated to knowledge exchange and impact activities.

We recommend applicants utilise the ESRC impact toolkit (https://esrc.ukri.org/research/impact-toolkit/) when planning knowledge exchange and impact activities. The toolkit embraces the diverse ways that research-related outcomes benefit individuals, organisations, and nations, and supports researchers to achieve the maximum impact for their work.

Restrictions around the pre-election period, where ESRC is required to avoid any activities which could call into question our political impartiality, or that could give rise to the criticism that public resources are being used for party-political purposes, will need to be carefully considered in the proposal.

Co-funding

We encourage applicants to explore the potential for co-funding the next British Election Study. Given the focus on partisan politics, it is recognised that these opportunities may be limited. Any proposed co-funding should not compromise the quality and usefulness of the data.

In previous studies, co-funding has been secured to provide:

- Oversampling of hard-to-reach communities or geographical regions
- Inclusion of specific question sets in the survey

A final decision on the appropriateness of co-funding will rest with the commissioning panel, and the ESRC office.

We also expect significant cash and/or in-kind support from the host RO.

Eligibility

All UK-based research organisations (ROs) that are eligible for UKRI funding will be eligible for this call. Proposals submitted to this call will count towards demand management statistics.

Resubmissions of unsuccessful proposals to this call is not allowed, unless you have been explicitly invited to resubmit. Please adhere to the ESRC resubmissions policy (https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/resubmissions-policy/).

Principal investigators and collaboration

The proposal must be led by one principal investigator (PI). There is no restriction on who can be a PI (see ESRC Research Funding Guide: https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-

applicants/research-funding-guide/), as long as they are based at an eligible research organisation. The research organisation must agree to support the applicants for at least the duration of the project. We welcome proposals from researchers at any stage of their career.

The PI is responsible for the drafting and submission of the proposal, and for leading the grant if it is funded. The PI should make every effort to be available to attend the interview the week commencing 14 January 2019, if their proposal is shortlisted following introducer assessment, in order to present and defend their proposal. If the PI is unable to attend the interview, this responsibility can be delegated to another member of the scientific leadership team.

Co-investigators (Co-Is) are also welcomed on proposals. Applicants are also invited to consider linkages with relevant policymakers and practitioners if appropriate to their proposed research activity.

International, business, government, and third sector co-investigators are eligible under this call. Please adhere to the ESRC international co-investigator policy (https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/inclusion-of-international-co-investigators-on-proposals/) and the ESRC business, third sector, and government co-investigator policy (https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/inclusion-of-uk-business-third-sector-or-government-body-co-investigators-on-proposals/).

How to apply

Applicants must be registered with Je-S to submit a proposal and should refer to the detailed guidance for submitting Je-S proposals.

Applicants accessing the Je-S system for the first time must check with their central administration on the status of their organisation's Je-S registration before creating an account through the Je-S system. Please note that it is essential to allow sufficient time for registration, as no extensions to the deadline will be permitted.

It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure that they are eligible to apply for ESRC funding. A list of independent research organisations (IROs) recognised by the ESRC as being eligible to receive funding can be found at: https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/

All applicants must comply with the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics, which can be found at: https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/

Proposals must be submitted by **16:00 on 13 November 2018** and must be made through the Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) system (https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/). Any proposal received after this deadline will not be considered.

Costing of proposals
Proposals will need to show 100% of full economic cost of the proposed research. The ESRC will meet 80% of the full economic costs on proposals submitted, and the host research organisation must cover the remaining 20%.

In addition to the principal investigator and co-investigator's time, applicants can also request justified costings, where required, for:

- Research assistant support
- Technical and clerical support
- Travel, fieldwork and necessary data collection equipment
- Indirect and estates costs
- Other items normally allowed on ESRC grants.

We recommend that a minimum of 10% of the overall budget should be dedicated to delivering the activities outlined in the impact summary. The development of a clear impact strategy will be important to ensuring research impact is achieved. When completing the impact summary section of the form, applicants may find it helpful to refer to ESRC guidance on developing an impact strategy (https://esrc.ukri.org/research/impact-toolkit/developing-a-communications-and-impact-strategy/).

It is expected for proposals to have significant cash and/or in-kind support from their host RO.

Associated studentships are not permitted on proposals submitted under this call.

Assessment of proposals
There are two phases to the assessment process:

Introducer assessment
Proposals will be assessed by introducers, who will provide a score out of 10, written comments which will be made available to applicants, and a recommendation on applicants' invitation to interview.

The interview will give applicants the opportunity to respond to introducers' comments and provide answers to any questions introducers' may have about the application.

Decisions on shortlisting for interview will be communicated to applicants the week commencing 17 December 2018.

Interview and commissioning panel
Shortlisted proposals will be called to interview in Swindon the week commencing 14 January 2019. Interviews will last approximately 45 minutes. We ask that the PI attend the interview along with one other member of the research team, or collaborator.

Following interviews, the interview panel will discuss the original proposals, and interview, and make a recommendation to the ESRC on which proposal should be funded.

Final decisions following interviews and the commissioning panel meeting will be communicated to applicants the week commencing 21 January 2019.

Assessment criteria
We ask both introducers and interview panel members to carefully consider the following criteria when assessing all proposals. Scientific excellence remains the primary assessment criterion.

Fit to social science remit
- Is the proposal at least 50% social science in disciplinary focus?

Originality, potential contribution to knowledge
- Is the proposed research likely to make an original and significant contribution to theory, methods, and/or knowledge?
- ESRC is keen to support research which is ambitious, and has potential for high scientific, policy and practitioner impact. As the risk of carrying out this research maybe higher than normal, are the risks justified, and are there realistic plans to mitigate that risk?

Design and methods
- Does the proposal have clear plans to continue the address-based random probability sample survey conducted via face-to-face interviews, and the inter-election internet panel, including pre- and post-general election waves?
- Does the proposal have clear conceptual and theoretical foundations, and are the research methods and framework for analysis suitable to the aims and objectives?
- Is the timescale and scheduling of proposed work appropriate and realistic? And have ethical issues been addressed?

Outputs and impact
- Have the applicants provided a clear impact summary?
- Have the applicants fully considered the potential policy and/or practitioner impacts of their research? Have they set out clear plans for achieving impact, and are these plans feasible?
- Are there appropriate plans to maximise the potential for scientific, economic, and societal impacts?
- Have the applicants identified the whole range of potential beneficiaries of the research and how they will be reached?

Value for money
- Is the proposed research overall good value for money for the total cost involved?
- Is the core potential of the research, its potential impact and the likely contribution to the advancement of knowledge, understanding, and/or methodology likely to be sufficient to justify the costs involved?

Timetable

- Call open in Je-S – 18 October 2018
- Call closes – **16.00 on 13 November 2018**
- Panel interview – week commencing 14 January 2019

- Communicate final decisions – week commencing 21 January 2019
- Grant begins – 1 April 2019

Further information

If you have any questions or would like further information about the call, please contact:

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