



UKRI Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF)

Healthy Ageing Catalyst Awards 2020 Outline Stage - Call specification

Summary

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), via the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), is inviting outline proposals for research grants of up to £62,500 (at 100% fEC) for a period of up to 12 months.

The Healthy Ageing Catalyst Awards are part of the Healthy Ageing Challenge portfolio of activities, and are offered in collaboration with the US National Academy of Medicine (NAM) [Healthy Longevity Global Grand Challenge](#), in order to catalyse transformative innovation and inform policies and priorities to advance healthy ageing and longevity globally.

Proposals must be led by an academic who is based at an eligible UK research organisation and should be submitted via UKRI's Joint electronic Submissions (Je-S) system by **16:00 (GMT) on 13th February 2020**.

It is expected successful projects will start in September 2020

Background and scope

In 2017, the Prime Minister announced the government's [Industrial Strategy](#) which set out [four Grand Challenges](#) and an [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund \(ISCF\)](#) to enable the delivery of activity addressing the identified Challenges. One of the Grand Challenges in the Industrial Strategy is Ageing Society, which seeks to harness the power of innovation to help meet the needs of an ageing society. The UK government's mission for the Ageing Society Grand Challenge is to "ensure that people can enjoy at least five extra healthy, independent years of life by 2035, while narrowing the gap between the experience of the richest and poorest".

Through the ISCF, UKRI has secured an investment of up to £98 million for the [Healthy Ageing Challenge](#), which will enable businesses, including social enterprises, to develop and deliver products, services and business models that will be adopted at scale which support people as they age. The aim is to allow people to remain active, productive, independent and socially connected across generations for longer. A portfolio of activities will be delivered under the Healthy Ageing Challenge, with academic research playing a crucial role in understanding the key issues facing the older population and ways in which support and care can be delivered effectively.

Call details

The UKRI Healthy Ageing Catalysts Awards will provide £50,000 at 80% fEC for academics based at UK Research Organisations to explore new, innovative, ideas with the potential to transform the physical, mental or social well-being of people as they age. Awards will have a duration of one year. UKRI expects to make 20 awards a year in each of three consecutive annual funding calls. These Awards are part of the US National Academy of Medicine's (NAM) [Healthy Longevity Global Grand Challenge](#) and award holders will be eligible for the later stages of that competition, including accelerator awards of up to \$0.5m USD and the \$5m USD Grand Prize.

Successful proposals will be expected to be:

- **Innovative**, that is, they should challenge existing paradigms, employ new ways of doing, or thinking about, common problems of healthy ageing (e.g. markets, products, methodologies, or concepts);
- **Ambitious and impactful**, that is, they should offer substantial potential future benefits to the physical, mental, or social, well-being of people as they age;
- **Scalable and have broad scope**, that is, the benefits of the proposed work should not be limited to certain groups, communities or areas, and should have the potential to transform the entire field of healthy ageing;
- **Sustainable**, that is, there is a plan to develop the proposed work beyond the timeframe of the funding;
- **Difficult to fund** through existing routes. This may be due to the high-risk nature of the proposed innovation, or a lack of financial support for scaling or commercialising innovations in this area, or at the applicants' institution.

Proposals will be expected to fit with the priority areas of the ISCF Healthy Ageing Challenge:

- Sustaining physical activity;
- Maintaining health at work;
- Design for age-friendly homes;
- Creating healthy active places;
- Supporting social connections;
- Living well with cognitive impairment;
- Managing common complaints of ageing.

Examples may include, but are not limited to:

- **Developing a new innovation** that will benefit the public;
- **Challenging age-stereotyping** and shifting understandings of ageing to encourage changes in social norms, and the development of appropriate and aspirational products and services;
- Developing and scaling **low-cost products and services** in order to address inequality and inequity in healthy ageing;
- Innovative use of existing **data to provide insight** for industry, innovators and academia;

- Developing patient capital, or **alternative funding models**, to enable higher-impact, slower return, ventures to scale and achieve viability.

Clinical research, including drug testing and development, is **not** eligible for funding.

The Awards can be used to fund:

- Additional research to assess the feasibility of a proposed innovation or scale-up;
- Market testing and research to bring an innovation to market;
- Market testing and research to scale an innovative idea which has been successfully trialled or implemented on a local level.

Please note, that, for the purposes of this call, a market is broadly conceived, including charity and social enterprise models, as well as commercial enterprises. Scale, meanwhile, refers to ideas that can be readily adapted to function in multiple areas, or for many groups of users.

It is expected that an additional package of support will be available to grant holders. Details will be provided to successful applicants during the issuing of their award.

Eligibility

Applicants must be based at a UK Research Organisation eligible for ESRC funding for the duration of the award. For further details please see the eligibility requirements in the [Research Funding Guide](#).

Proposals are welcome from all discipline areas, but those covering areas normally associated with social science and the humanities are encouraged, as innovations in these areas are currently under-represented in the healthy ageing field.

Assessment of proposals

Proposals will be anonymous and will be assessed by a Panel consisting of UKRI and external representatives, including both subject specialists and those with expertise in innovation. Proposals at the **outline stage** will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Does the proposal **fit** with the Healthy Ageing priority areas (listed in the Research Details section)?
- Is it **clear** what the proposal is seeking to achieve?
- Is the proposal **innovative**?
- Does the proposal show **ambition and impact**?
- Is the proposed innovation **scalable** and does it have broad **scope**? Or will the proposed research evidence whether the proposed innovation is scalable?
- Does the proposal include **realistic goals** for the timescale of the project?
- Is the proposal scientifically **feasible** and/or based on a plausible commercial model?

Those invited to submit **full proposals** will be given 4 – 6 weeks to provide additional information in support of their proposal. Full proposals will not be anonymous. They will be assessed by a Panel of both subject specialists and innovation experts against the following criteria:

- Is the proposed scheme of work of the highest **quality**?
- Does the proposal evidence the **innovation** opportunity?
- Does the proposal evidence the **knowledge of the lead applicant**, and any additional support required?
- Does the proposal convincingly demonstrate why **funding would be difficult to obtain** for this project through existing routes? This should be outlined in the Letters of Support from the applicant's Research Organisation;
- Does the proposal have **institutional support**? This should be demonstrated through Letters of Support from both the Head of Department (or equivalent), and a Knowledge Exchange Officer, or Technology Transfer Officer (or equivalent);
- Does the project represent good **value for money**? Demonstrated by the Justification of Resources document (including whether the assigned resources, including staffing, allow the proposal to be successful).
- Does the proposal include a **sustainable** vision? That is, a realistic plan to continue (the development of) the innovation beyond the funding period.
- Does the proposal demonstrate **compelling and well-defined milestones**?

UKRI reserves the right to take a portfolio approach to funding these Awards.

How to apply

Outline stage proposals will be accepted via UKRI's Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system, which is available at <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx>. Je-S is the electronic submission system, which is used by UKRI to provide a common electronic system that supports research administration. More detailed information can be found at <https://jes.rcuk.ac.uk/>. **In particular applicants should note the registration requirements for making a Je-S submission.**

Only those proposals submitted through the Je-S system will be accepted for processing. The proposal submitted through Je-S will be taken to be the final version, and will be the version used for external peer assessment.

The principal investigator must be from a Research Organisation [eligible for UKRI funding](#).

The call for proposals closes at 16:00 (GMT) on 13th February 2020.

Proposals should address the aims of the call as listed in the call details and should include:

- An outline of the proposed innovation, including reference to any potential to transform the field of healthy ageing;
- An outline of any additional research needed to test the feasibility of the innovation;
- An outline plan of work, including any key milestones;
- Evidence that funding would be difficult to obtain through existing routes (this will need to be indicated in Letters of Support at the full proposal stage)*;

- A named Head of Department (or equivalent) and Knowledge Exchange Officer/Technology Transfer Officer (or equivalent) who would be willing to support the proposal at the full proposal stage if required*.

* This information will not be shared with reviewers at the anonymous outline stage.

Following the outline stage assessment, shortlisted proposals will be invited to submit **full proposals** and will need to evidence the following (please note, this information is not required for the outline stage of proposals):

- A full project proposal, including a sustainable plan to continue the innovation beyond the funding period.
- Justification of Resources;
- Pathways to Impact;
- Letters of Support (including a statement that funds are not otherwise available for this research) from Head of Department (or equivalent) *and* a Technology Transfer Officer, or Knowledge Transfer Officer (or equivalent), stating institutional support would be available to assist with market testing, research and commercialisation activities if required;
- Milestones by which progress can be measured during the life of the funding.

All proposals will be subject to ESRC review to ensure compliance with the call specification and objectives, following peer review by academic and industry-based subject specialists and submission to a selection panel (see timetable below).

The Je-S guidance for the call will provide details on the information that you will be required to submit as part of your proposal. All applicants are strongly advised to consult ESRC's research funding guide (<https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-forapplicants/research-funding-guide/>), which sets out the rules and regulations governing its funding

What we will do with your information

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the personal information that you provide within the outline proposal will specifically be used for the purpose of administering the call. The information will be viewed by ESRC staff only and will not be used for any other purpose without your specific consent.

For further information on how your information is used, how we maintain the security of your information, and your rights to access information we hold on you, please contact the Joint Information Services Unit (jis@epsrc.ukri.org).

Commissioning timetable

- Outline call opens – 6th January 2020
- Outline call closes – 16.00 (GMT) 13th February 2020
- Sift panel meeting – March 2020
- Decisions from sift panel announced – April 2020
- Full proposals (Invite Only) call opens – 14th April 2020
- Full proposals (Invite Only) calls closes – 28th May 2020

- Full panel meeting – June 2020
- Funding decisions announced – August 2020
- Expected grant start date – September 2020

Contacts

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

- Huw Vasey or Claire Dyball
Telephone: 01793 413104 or 01793 413003
Email: ISCFHACatalystAwards@esrc.ukri.org

Enquiries relating to technical aspects of the Je-S form should be addressed to:

- Je-S helpdesk
Telephone: 01793 444164
Email: jeshelp@rcuk.ac.uk