

STFC Opportunities Call 2019 Guidelines

Closing date 13 June 2019

Contents

1. Introduction and Call Aims	2
2. Key Dates, Timing, and Budgetary Considerations	2
3. Call Remit	2
4. Eligibility.....	2
5. Funding and Resources Available.....	3
6. Peer Review Process.....	3
7. Call Timetable	4
8. Application Guidance	4
9. Proposal Structure	4
Case for Support (maximum of four sides of A4)	4
Data Management Plan (maximum of two sides of A4)	5
Official Development Assistance Compliance Statement (maximum one side of A4).....	6
Letters of Support (maximum of two sides of A4)	6
Project Partner Letters of Support (maximum of two sides of A4).....	6
10. Submitting Applications	6
11. STFC Contacts.....	7
12. Useful Links.....	7

1. Introduction and Call Aims

The Opportunities Call is designed to support the STFC PPAN community by providing funding for 'pump-priming' activities. The call aims to allow the STFC community to do one or more of the following types of activity:

- Prepare for participation in multi-disciplinary science programmes that may be supported in the future by major UKRI or STFC funding schemes;
- Undertake exploratory or proof-of-concept studies that may have the potential to develop into new strategic PPAN programmes;
- Develop and strengthen multi-disciplinary research collaborations and networks.

The Opportunities Call will aid STFC's PPAN community by increasing their capacity for multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary working. Such increased capacity will both enable high-quality research, and position the PPAN community favourably to respond to future funding opportunities.

2. Key Dates, Timing, and Budgetary Considerations

This call opens on 29 April 2019 and closes on 13 June 2019.

All applications will be assessed by STFC's Projects Peer Review Panel (PPRP) in July 2019.

All successful applications will have a fixed start date of 1 October 2019.

The end date of an application must be no later than 30 September 2021.

As the results of the next Comprehensive Spending Review and its impact on STFC's budget are currently unknown, all proposed programmes must plan to be able to commit the majority of their funding within between 1 October 2019 and 31 March 2020. All applicants will be asked to include a statement to that effect within their Case for Support.

Applicants should note that receipt of funding from the Opportunities Call does not guarantee funding for any future project.

3. Call Remit

This call considers 'the PPAN community' to encompass the following broad areas of STFC's remit: particle physics, particle astrophysics, astronomy, nuclear physics, accelerator physics, solar and planetary science, and computing that underpins these areas.

The Opportunities Call supports pump-priming activities as opposed to substantive research programmes. Examples of pump-priming activities could include: networking; partnership building; workshop development and delivery; design studies; proofs of concept; or other pilot approaches.

In line with the call aims, pump-priming activities may be proposed for entirely new programmes of work, or to allow existing projects to move in new or interesting directions.

4. Eligibility

The lead Research Organisation (RO) must be eligible to hold UKRI grants; i.e. be an approved UK Higher Education Institution (HEI), Research Council Institute (RCI) or Independent Research Organisation (IRO) eligible for UKRI funding.

For more details, please see <https://stfc.ukri.org/research-grants-handbook/2-eligibility/2-2-eligibility-of-research-organisations/>.

Please note STFC's policy on the eligibility of applicants, which details who is eligible to operate as project Principal or Co-Investigators.¹

5. Funding and Resources Available

All applications will be subject to the appropriate level of Full Economic Cost (FEC).

Each application can bid for a maximum of £140K (FEC).

Applicants are directed to review the Research Grants Handbook (<https://stfc.ukri.org/research-grants-handbook/>) for a list of eligible costs under FEC.

The Opportunities Call does not have any associated capital funding. Thus, no equipment of a value equal to or greater than £10K can be requested.

6. Peer Review Process

All applications will be assessed by STFC's Projects Peer Review Panel (PPRP) in July 2019.

Proposals will not be subject to postal peer review, and thus applicants will not be contacted to provide a standard PI response to reviewers.

Each application will be initially assessed by two members of PPRP – the 'introducers', with decisions being made by the full panel at its July 2019 meeting. These introducers will review the proposal in advance of the PPRP meeting and will have the opportunity to submit any required 'clarification questions' to the applicants in advance of the meeting. These questions will be submitted to applicants by no later than 24 June 2019.

Applicants will not attend the July 2019 PPRP meeting. Instead, all applicants will be invited to submit their answers to any clarification questions, alongside a mandatory two-slide presentation, by no later than 3 July 2019.

PPRP will use the two-slide presentations, introducer reports, and any responses provided to the clarification questions, as the basis of the peer review discussion during the panel meeting.

All applications will be assessed against five peer review criteria, with a score of between 1-5 (5 being the highest) assigned for each criterion. After the introduction and discussion of all proposals, scores will be accumulated and a ranked-list created.

The assessment criteria for the Opportunities Call are:

- Quality and relevance of the proposed scientific research
- Strength of the proposed methodology
- Appropriateness of the resource requested
- Applicant's ability to deliver the project
- Potential for societal or economic impact

To enable the support of a portfolio of projects of varying scale, proposals to the Opportunities call will be aligned in two separate rank ordered lists: one for proposals of values up to £50k and another for proposals of value £51k-£140k

¹ See <https://stfc.ukri.org/research-grants-handbook/2-eligibility/2-3-eligibility-of-applicants/>

Subject to the advice of the assessment process, STFC anticipates supporting approximately 15 projects in total as a result of the Opportunities Call.

7. Call Timetable

The following indicative timetable will be followed for the Opportunities Call:

Call opening date	26 April 2019
Applicants notify STFC of their intention to submit	16.00, 1 June 2019
Call closing date for submissions	16:00, 13 June 2019
Introducers request clarification questions from applicants	24 June 2019
Deadline for applicants to provide two-slide presentations and responses to clarification questions	3 July 2019
Peer review meeting	9 July 2019
Call outcome announced	September 2019
Successful applications commence	1 October 2019

8. Application Guidance

Any applications that meet the criteria of Official Development Assistance (ODA) grants should note this within their proposal: funding may be available as part of the Global Challenges Research Fund for eligible proposals that meet the call quality threshold. Such proposals are also required to include an ODA compliance statement (see Section 9 for details).

In order to gauge potential demand for the call, applicants should notify Chris Carlton (christopher.carlton@stfc.ac.uk) or Roy Stephen (roy.stephen@stfc.ac.uk) or their intention to submit and a brief description of their proposal prior to 1 June 2019.

9. Proposal Structure

Guidance on writing proposals is available in [STFC's Grants Handbook](#).

The following documents are **required components** of all proposals in the Opportunities Call. Proposals that fail to include these components will be subject to rejection by STFC.

Case for Support (maximum of four sides of A4)

Proposals must identify how the proposed activities will help to position university groups or consortia to participate in multi-disciplinary science that aligns with major funding schemes. Where possible, proposals should identify how the proposed activities are anticipated to align with potential STFC and/or UKRI calls.

The Case for Support document should not exceed four pages including technical appendices; STFC specific page format and style guidance is available in the [Je-S Helptext](#).

The Case for Support should be clear and concise, with minimal technical jargon. The following areas must be addressed in the Case for Support:

- **Project Description & Objectives:** clearly outline the focus of the project and provide measurable objectives. Describe the desired project outcome(s), and indicate how this proposal will meet the aims of the Opportunities Call.

- **Scientific Justification:** clearly identify the scientific opportunities that this proposal will contribute to addressing in the future, and explain how this will potentially aid the STFC PPAN community.
- **Awareness & Context:** provide an overview of the relevant state-of-the-art in the UK and beyond. How does the capacity for this work in UK compare with that of our international partners? Where appropriate, provide evidence for the likely development of the field over the coming decade.
- **Research Methodology:** provide a description of the proposed scientific methods. This section should clearly state and describe both the framework and specific pump-priming methods proposed, explain the reasons for their choice and outline how they relate to the work of any potential future project.
- **Potential for Societal & Economic Impact:** outline a range of potential impacts that may arise from the proposed research field and are of interest to the applicants in exploring further. Provide an indication of first steps that could be taken to allow these potential impacts could be realised.
- **Applicant Track Record:** explain the track record of the applicants in this field. Why do you consider your group to be appropriate to carry out this programme? How should the introducers be confident that you would be able to deliver the project? What is the competency of your group to perform this work?
- **Project Management & Work Plan:** provide details of work to be undertaken in this project, and clearly describe the roles of the researchers and collaborators involved. Provide evidence of the assessment and planned mitigation of key risks.
- **Justification of Resources:** explain why the resources requested are appropriate, taking into account the nature and complexity of the research. It should not simply be a list of the resources required as this is already provided on the Je-S form. Please see STFC's Research Grants Handbook for more guidance on this (<https://stfc.ukri.org/research-grants-handbook/5-applying-for-a-grant/5-11-supporting-information/#5.11.1>)
- **Spend profile statement:** applicants must confirm that they are able to start on the 1 October and commit the majority of the requested resource within the period 1 October 2019 and 31 March 2020. STFC reserves the right to amend grant spend profiles where necessary.

Data Management Plan (maximum of two sides of A4)

Proposals for projects that would result in the production or collection of scientific data should include a data management plan as an attachment to the Je-S proforma. STFC expects that data resulting from the research it funds should be made openly available after any proprietary period. Data management plans should include an outline of how this will be achieved. Any reasons for not eventually sharing data should be explained (e.g. legislative, ethical, commercial, privacy and security issues).

If it is felt that a data management plan is not relevant to a proposal then an attachment explaining this should be uploaded to pass Je-S validation.

The Grants Research Handbook provides further guidance on data management plans. Please see <https://stfc.ukri.org/funding/research-grants/data-management-plan/>.

The following documents are **optional components** of all proposals in the Opportunities Call. These should be included in proposals only if necessary to their assessment. No attachments other than those below should be included. Inclusion of other attachments will result in a proposal being rejected.

Official Development Assistance Compliance Statement (maximum one side of A4)

For any proposals which potentially meet the eligibility of Official Development Assistance (ODA) grants, please include an ODA Compliance Statement. This should be uploaded as an 'other' attachment. ODA compliance statements should describe how the proposed project meets the Official Development Assistance requirements of this call by answering the following questions:

1. Which country/countries on the DAC list will directly benefit from this proposal?
2. How is your proposal directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of these countries?
3. How do you expect that the outcome of your proposed activities will promote the economic development and welfare of a country or countries on the DAC list?

Letters of Support (maximum of two sides of A4)

Guidance on Letters of Support is provided in STFC's Research Grants Handbook <https://stfc.ukri.org/research-grants-handbook/5-applying-for-a-grant/5-11-supporting-information/#5.11.1>

Project Partner Letters of Support (maximum of two sides of A4)

Where a proposal identifies a Project Partner (an organisation providing either cash or in-kind contributions to the project) within the Je-S form a Letter of Support will be required for each one included and will be prompted for when adding the partner details. These attachments do not count towards the three Letters of Support referred to above. Guidance on [Project Partners](#) (PP) and related PP [Letters of Support](#) can be found in the Research Grants Handbook.

10. Submitting Applications

Applicants should refer to the [Research Grants Handbook](#) and Je-S helptext (including [Case for Support and Attachments](#) guidance) for guidance on rules when preparing submissions including permissible font styles and size. You are advised to read the guidance carefully and to discuss with your institution's administration department.

All applications should be submitted online using the Je-S system via the Je-S [login screen](#).

Applicants must select the following options:

Council: STFC

Doc Type: Standard

Proposal Scheme: PPRP

Call: Opportunities Call 2019

Peer Review Reference: PPRP*

*within the form itself

If awarded, proposals must start on 1 October 2019.

Please note it is the responsibility of the PI to ensure that their institution's administration department submits the application before 16:00 on the closing date. Proposals submitted after the closing date will not be considered.

In the event of any query relating to your Je-S application, please email the Je-S helpdesk at JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org or telephone 01793 44 4164.

11. STFC Contacts

Roy Stephen (Programme Support Manager)

Email: roy.stephen@stfc.ac.uk

Phone: (01793) 44 2000

Chris Carlton (Projects Peer Review Panel Secretary)

Email: christopher.carlton@stfc.ac.uk

Phone: (01793) 44 2004

12. Useful Links

- [Peer review framework](#)
- [Researchfish](#)
- [Equality of opportunity](#)
- [Unconscious Bias](#)