

# ESRC New Investigator Guide for Researchers

AHSS Research Facilitation

University of Cambridge

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<b>Aims of the Scheme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Remember that the core goal of the scheme is for applicants to become independent researchers through gaining experience of <b>managing and leading research projects and teams</b>.</li><li>The projects are expected to include line management- unless you are able to evidence your existing experience in this area.</li><li>The project needs to include a professional development programme for you and your staff.</li></ul>
<b>Organization and formatting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>You can log in to the portal at any time by clicking “apply”. Test your access to the portal, look at various sections required.</li><li>Draft your application using the questions available on the call website. You will find detailed guidance pertaining to each question under the “How to apply” tab.</li><li>Remember to address all the bullet points, including, for example, risks.</li><li>References should be included in a separate section (1000 words).</li><li>Subheadings are a useful tool for organising the content of the proposal and leading the reviewers through the text. They enhance readability.</li><li>Consider using a Gantt chart or another visual model to represent the project timeline. It is very effective.</li></ul>
<b>Writing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Do not use too much space for the literature review. Focus on clearly setting out the project plan and implementation.</li><li>Use active language to help sell the project. Saying what you will do, rather than what you hope/would like to do, is an effective way of instilling confidence in the reviewer.</li><li>Show your excitement and passion for your project- do not be afraid to write in the first person.</li><li>Explain to the reviewer why it’s important, why you are the right person to lead this project and how you are going to do this.</li></ul>
<b>Notes on various sections</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Vision:</b> this is the “sales pitch”. Explain why the project is important and timely.</li><li><b>Approach:</b> This is the “how” of the project. Set out clear objectives, methods, outputs. Provide as many details as possible. For example:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If you are creating a project website - who is going to manage it, who is the intended user, how long is the website going to operate.</li><li>If you are doing archival research: What archives, what documents you expect to find there, how long will the visit last, what is the contingency plan if you don’t find what you expect?</li></ul></li><li><b>Applicant and team capability to deliver:</b> Use the template provided. Clearly link your past skills and experience to the current project. More resources can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li><li><b>Data management and sharing:</b> You can have your data management plan reviewed by the University <a href="#">DMP Support Service</a>.</li><li><b>Resources and cost justification:</b> do not try to make the project “cheap”. Ensure you have the resources needed to deliver the project. The reviewers are assessing feasibility.</li><li><b>Mentor support:</b> Instruct your mentor how to write a tailored statement. This is not a generic letter of support. A concrete support programme is expected.</li><li><b>Project Partners:</b> Discuss the difference between a “Project Partner” and a “Collaborator” with your RGA. Ensure you have enough time to obtain support letters from Project Partners.</li></ul>
<b>General Tips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Get as much feedback as possible on your application, from:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Your mentor, other senior colleagues in your field , colleagues with experience of the scheme, non-specialists – is anything unclear?</li><li>Give yourself at least two months to put together an application. Remember internal institutional deadlines.</li></ul></li></ul>

## Resources

- [Cambridge University Research Operations Office](#): Latest updates on internal deadlines
- [How to write a good ESRC application](#): guidance from the funder
- [Research Professional](#): Database of funding opportunities