ESRC Transformative Research call 2017-18
Frequently Asked Questions

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What does Transformative mean?

We are aware that there may be many different definitions and interpretations of what transformative is. After running three rounds of the Transformative Research call, we have taken into account feedback from applicants, grant holders and panel members, and reflected on what makes a research project transformative. We regard transformative research as that which involves pioneering theoretical and methodological innovation that engages unusual disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary perspectives, that has a high level of risk with the possibility of high reward (while remaining ethically sound) and that could lead to a paradigm shift in its field. Further details are given in the call document.

Can you advise if my proposal is “transformative”?

No, we are not able to discuss whether your research idea is appropriate for this call. Proposals have to make it clear how the methods, theoretical innovation, and project as a whole meet the characteristics of what is regarded as transformative research (as detailed within the call specification). We would also recommend that applicants speak with their institution in the first instance about the focus of any research proposal. Each institution is limited to a maximum of two submissions and will therefore have an internal selection process.

I have submitted a proposal to a previous Transformative Research call - can I resubmit this proposal to this round?

Resubmissions of unsuccessful proposals from previous round of the Transformative Research call are not permitted. However, in exception to normal ESRC rules, proposals that have previously been unsuccessful in other ESRC competitions can be resubmitted under this call providing they meet all of the call criteria.

Are co-investigators permitted on applications?

Yes, co-investigators are permitted on proposals, as consistent with the ESRC Research Funding Guide. The PI is responsible for the drafting of the proposal and for presenting and defending the proposal at the ‘Pitch to Peers’ workshop. It should also be noted that all applicants and co-investigators and their ROs must be Je-S registered.

Are international and UK business, civil society and government body co-investigators allowed to participate in this call?

The inclusion of international co-investigators (Co-Is), and UK business, civil society and government body Co-Is are permitted to participate in this call. The ESRC will fund 100% of justified costs, however, the project costs associated with these types of Co-Is must not exceed 30% of the overall cost of the proposal at 100% fEC.

Applicants should note that where a proposal includes both international co-investigators and UK business, third sector or government body co-investigators the combined costs of all co-investigators must not exceed the 30% maximum limit. Please see ESRC international
co-investigators policy for further detail: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/inclusion-of-international-co-investigators-on-proposals/

**Where do I submit my proposal?**

Proposals are to be submitted via Je-S, applicants should refer to the Je-S guidance for support in doing this: https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/pages/SystemRequirementsFormatsandSa/SystemRequirementsFormatsandSa.htm

**Why are ROs limited to submitting two applications?**

The Transformative Research call has very fast turnaround times. Therefore, we aim to attract a limited number of high-quality applications in order to process submissions in the most effective way and reduce the burden on panel members, on staff working in research organisations and on the ESRC. For more information on our approach to demand management please see: www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/performance-information/demand-management/

**Can I take part as Co-I in a proposal led by another RO, and will this count towards my organisation’s two applications limit?**

Teams can consist of applicants from different ROs. The two applications cap applies to the lead RO, which is the organisation where the PI is affiliated to.

**How do eligible ROs determine which application(s) to submit to this call?**

This is entirely a matter for the RO. ROs can submit two applications to this call, and therefore should apply self-regulation (including a filter process for defaulters) by ensuring that the highest quality and most transformative social science research idea is submitted. We would encourage ROs to ensure that the selection process is as open as possible. It is also important that the RO has confidence that the applicant can deliver the proposed research activity.

**How will applications be shortlisted?**

All eligible applications received will be assessed by the Commissioning Panel against the criteria detailed in the call specification. Shortlisted PIs will then be invited to attend the ‘Pitch to Peers’ assessment workshop. Only the anonymous cases for support will be considered at this stage. The Pathways to Impact, Justification of Resources, CVs and other attachments of those proposals that were recommended for funding, will be assessed by the Panel before making final funding decisions.
How will applications be assessed at the ‘Pitch to Peers’ assessment workshop and how will potential conflicts of interest be dealt with?

Applicants will be divided into two or three groups and each applicant will be asked to present their proposal. Other applicants in that group will then assess the proposal and final decisions on which applications to support will be made by the Commissioning Panel. Prior to the ‘Pitch to Peers’ workshop all applicants will be required to complete a declaration of interests.

In cases where there is a RO conflict (eg co-investigators from the same RO as another application that is being assessed), these will be identified in advance of the workshop and applicants will be told which proposals they will not be permitted to assess. Applicants will be required to declare any personal conflicts at the workshop.

What happens if the PI is unable to attend the ‘Pitch to Peers’ assessment workshop?

Unfortunately if the PI is unable to attend the ‘Pitch to Peers’ workshop in mid-April 2018 then the application cannot be considered. PIs are not able to delegate this responsibility to any other individual. Proposals where the PI is not able to attend will not be considered further and should not be submitted. ROs should therefore not submit applications where the PI knows in advance that they will not be able to attend this event.

When will I find out if my application has been successful at the ‘Pitch to Peers’ assessment workshop?

It is our intention to notify applicants who have been recommended for funding two days following the ‘Pitch to Peers’ workshop.

If successful, can I delay my grant start date beyond September 2018?

No. All grants need to start and end at the same time. Therefore all grants are required to begin no later than 30 of September 2018, unless there are exceptional circumstances, which shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If successful, is it possible to extend my grant beyond 24 months?

No, as above, because of the need for all grants to start and end on the same date, it will not be possible to apply for no-cost extensions for these grants that take them beyond 24 months, unless there are exceptional circumstances, which shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If my application is unsuccessful, can I re-submit under another ESRC scheme?
In exception to ESRC’s normal resubmission rules, unsuccessful proposals submitted through the Transformative Research Call can be eligible for funding in any other ESRC scheme, unless otherwise stated, providing they meet the call criteria.