

Additional Question

Q. We've been unable to find a clear definition of what NERC call an ERC. Do you have a definition you could share or a link?

Is it based on number of years since getting PhD, or since first permanent lectureship position?

Also if the PI is not an ECR it says that an ECR must be included as a Co-I --- how important is it to have that name now?

(e.g. have someone in mind but they might go elsewhere before project start / don't yet know of anyone to fill that role but would advertise for an PDRA)

A. For the **large project**, there are three ways you can meet the eligibility criteria:

1. **Independent Research Fellowship.** "Applicants for NERC IRFs must have a **maximum of eight years** of full-time postdoctoral experience from the PhD certificate date to the closing date of the fellowship competition to which they are applying. The eight-year window is based on full-time working. Where applicants have worked part-time or had career breaks, the window would be extended accordingly". Applicants should not have a permanent academic position. More details here:
<https://nerc.ukri.org/funding/available/fellowships/eligibility/>
2. **New Investigator.** "An applicant for the New Investigators' scheme must be eligible to apply as a Principal Investigator, but, in addition, eligibility is restricted to those investigators at the outset of their independent scientific career. Applicants must therefore be within **five years of first becoming eligible for NERC** funding as a Principal Investigator (account will be taken of any career breaks) and must not have received research funding from any source, as a Principal Investigator, that included post-doctoral research assistant staff support costs."
3. **PI + Research Co-Investigator:** "The Principal Investigator on the proposal must reside in the UK and be employed by an eligible UK research organisation Employment should be at lecturer (or equivalent) level or above."
Research Co-I: must be:
 - a named researcher on the project and seek his/her salary as a directly incurred cost
 - employed by the same research organisation as either the Principal or one of the Co-Investigators

For the **small projects** and **EDI ambassadors**, the project lead must meet the definition of Independent Research Fellow or be a PDRA at an eligible institution with a letter of support from their PI or line manager.

For the **Nexus project**, the applicant needs to be eligible as either:

- NERC Independent Research Fellow,
- Principal Investigator
- New Investigator
- Research Co Investigator. Research Co-Investigators must provide a formal letter of commitment from their current PI at their research organisation to confirm that, if the proposal is successful, they will be supported to deliver the project and that their contract will be extended (if required) beyond the end date of the proposed project

Link to documents you need: <https://nerc.ukri.org/funding/application/eligibility/> and <https://nerc.ukri.org/funding/available/fellowships/eligibility/>

With regards to your final question about having a named research co-I, we recognise the need to be flexible between ItS and full application. However, I recommend that you name the person in the ItS and we acknowledge that this could change depending on circumstances. Officially, “The purpose of the Intent to Submit (ItS) stage is to help the Programme coordinate the Open Call and the evaluation of the full proposals once submitted. The ItS requests specific information but is not evaluated. We would request that the information provided in the ItS is as accurate as possible, i.e. identifies the Theme(s) that the full proposal will address, but recognise that the scope of the proposal might develop between the submission of the ItS (31st August) and the full proposal (12th October)”.