

UKRI Early Career Researcher Forum Guidance Document

The UKRI Early Career Researcher Forum (ECR forum) aims to give researchers a voice in UKRI's strategy, policy development and decision making. UKRI is launching the forum following the publication of its [action plan](#) for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, which commits UKRI to giving a greater voice and representation to early career researchers.

The objectives of the UKRI ECR forum are to:

- give early career researchers a voice in UKRI strategy, policy development and decision making;
- enable teams from across UKRI and its partners to hear from and engage with early career researchers;
- pilot ways of connecting with UKRI's diverse communities;
- build a community for ECRs, enabling them to benefit from peer interactions, learning, support and other opportunities.

Eligibility

Who can join UKRI's ECR forum?

To be eligible to join the ECR forum, applicants must:

- Identify as an early career researcher and/or innovator;
- Have been employed in a research and/or innovation role within the last 12 months;
- Register with an institutional or an organisational email address.

The UKRI ECR forum aims to have broad and diverse representation of early career researchers and innovators, considering the full range of characteristics, disciplines and geography across the UK. We welcome applications from academia and other sectors including, for example, early career researchers working within industry or the public sector.

UKRI are keen to hear from groups who until now have had fewer routes to engage directly with UKRI such as postdoctoral researchers, research associates and other staff whose primary responsibility is to conduct research and are employed specifically for this purpose.

If you meet the eligibility criteria, you will be accepted onto the forum.

You do not need to be funded by UKRI to join the UKRI ECR forum.

I am not an Early Career Researcher, what opportunities are there for me to get my voice heard by UKRI?

UKRI's corporate plan outlines our mission to convene and catalyse activity across the research and innovation system by listening to and connecting diverse communities. We have piloted a new engagement hub already and will continue to expand opportunities for you to engage with us in 2021.

I am currently a PhD student, am I eligible to join the forum?

The focus of this forum will be on topics relevant to postdoctoral researchers, research associates and other staff whose primary responsibility is to conduct research. Therefore, PhD students are not eligible to join the forum unless they are employed to carry out research and/or innovation outside of their doctoral study.

UKRI will keep this position under review during the pilot.

Why do I need to provide my institutional or organisational email address?

In order to create a safe environment in which forum members can exchange their views and engage with each other and with UKRI, it is important that we are able to verify the identity of forum members. This will be done through ensuring that all members provide a valid institutional or organisational email address. If applicants are not able to provide this information, they should contact talent@ukri.org prior to submitting their application.

All personal data provided to UKRI in connection with the ECR forum will be used in accordance with current UK data protection legislation. UKRI processes personal data on a 'public task' lawful basis.

Further information on how we use personal data and how you can exercise your rights as a data subject are set out in [UKRI's Privacy Notice](#).

I'm currently not affiliated with an institution or an organisation, but I consider myself to be an early career researcher. Can I join the forum?

Yes. We understand that ECRs may be between roles and/or that they might be exploring careers outside of research and innovation. The focus of the forum is to engage with ECRs on topics relevant to those working in research and innovation; therefore, we would ask that forum members have held a research and/or innovation role within the last 12 months. If this cannot be evidenced through use of a valid organisational email address, applicants should contact talent@ukri.org prior to submitting their application.

Do I need the permission of my supervisor or manager to join the forum?

You are encouraged to discuss joining the forum with your supervisor or manager to enable them to take your participation in the forum into account as part of time spent on career development activities. Under the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, UKRI expects the research organisations (ROs) in which it invests to recognise and value their researchers and nurture them in reaching their full potential. This includes supporting their professional development as members of the research and innovation community. Participation in the UKRI ECR forum could form part of this career development activity.

Submitting an application

I'd like to join the forum. How do I submit an application?

You can complete and submit an application form here www.research.net/r/9YD2PLX

I missed the application deadline – can I still join the forum?

Yes. The forum will have a rolling recruitment, which means that applications can be submitted at any time.

To manage the recruitment process, applications will be batched and reviewed at regular intervals throughout the year. UKRI will organise induction events for new members at regular intervals throughout the year.

ECRs that wish to join the next intake of forum members should submit their application no later than 5pm on Friday 30 April 2021. We cannot guarantee that applications received after this date will be reviewed in time for the next induction event.

An indicative timescale of application reviews appears below. Note that these timings are indicative only and will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. Additional dates for application reviews beyond the times shown below will be added in due course.

1. Friday 30 April 2021
2. Friday 30 July 2021

What happens after I submit my application?

Forum applications will be reviewed internally by UKRI colleagues. Applications will be checked to ensure that applicants meet the eligibility criteria, as outlined above.

Eligible applicants will be invited to join the forum. In the first instance, forum members will receive communications via a mailing list. This mailing list will be used to share engagement opportunities such as workshops and surveys. It will also be used to share information on training opportunities and webinars hosted by UKRI.

How will UKRI process my information?

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UKRI is subject to the Freedom of Information Act and the Environmental Information Regulations, which give a public right of access to any information held by a public authority.

Forum membership

How much of a time commitment does forum membership entail?

The network/pool structure of the ECR forum enables a range of engagement opportunities. These will range from surveys, focus groups, and networking opportunities. Each engagement opportunity will require a different level of time commitment from forum members. As far as it is possible, we will give an indication of how much of a time commitment each engagement opportunity will require.

We do not anticipate or expect members to participate in every engagement opportunity made available; engagement will depend on their own interests (disciplinary and otherwise) and other commitments. By offering a range of engagement methods, ECR forum members should be able to find a suitable opportunity to engage with.

How will you ensure the diversity of ECR Forum members?

Monitoring data will be collected during recruitment and compared to available data sources, such as Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), to inform further recruitment effort for groups which are underrepresented in forum membership. This will consider a range of factors such as protected characteristics, research discipline, place and institution type.

UKRI will work with its partners to strongly encourage ECRs from under-represented groups to join the forum. Other ECRs will still be able to join the Forum.

HESA data is used to understand the diversity profile of the academic and student community in UK's higher education system. The links for HESA data we used as benchmarks in this analysis is provided [here](#).

This document was last updated on Thursday 18 February 2021.