

Manufacturing the Future: Highlight Notice for Investigator- led Research Projects

Call type: invitation for proposals

Closing date: See Below

**Related themes: Engineering, Digital Economy, Energy, ICT,
Manufacturing the future, Mathematical Sciences, Physical
Sciences,**

Summary

The EPSRC Manufacturing the Future theme invites investigator-led proposals for consideration at a manufacturing-focussed prioritisation panel. A standard Manufacturing Panel will be held in each quarter of 2018, (subject to sufficient demand). Proposals for any panel should address key research challenges facing manufacturing in the UK today and in the future. This activity is intended to highlight the theme's long term ambition to increase the number of investigator- led research ideas we support.

The next batching dates are:

16:00 20th April 2018

16:00 6th July 2018 (Subject to Change) 16:00

5th October 2018 (Subject to Change)

It is strongly recommended that proposals are submitted before the batching dates to ensure there is enough time for the peer-review process to be completed. Proposals submitted after this date, or those that do not have sufficient reviews in time for the panel, will be assessed by the most appropriate capability theme panel at a later date (i.e. Engineering, ICT, Physical Sciences or Mathematics). The Manufacturing the Future theme has prioritised funding to support investigator-led research projects in manufacturing, with up to £3.2M per panel available (dependent on demand and quality of proposals). Should there be insufficient demand we reserve the right for proposals to be considered at the most appropriate capability theme panel meeting.

Background

[delivery-plan-2016-17-2019-20/](#)) highlights our commitment to maintaining a programme of long-term, excellent research where the emphasis is on 'bottom-up' investigator-led ideas, including community-generated challenges. We aim for this to comprise around 60% of our total research portfolio, with strategic programmes making up the remaining 40%.

Investigator-led proposals are crucial in maintaining a healthy flow of new ideas and forming a vibrant research community. As such, there is considerable value in achieving a portfolio of research including both strategically-focused programmes and investigator-led projects. However, the volume of investigator-led proposals addressing fundamental manufacturing research questions has not matched the demand elsewhere in the Theme and across EPSRC as a whole.

This activity is intended to highlight the theme's long term aim to increase the number of investigator-led research ideas we support, as well as stimulating demand in the short term.

EPSRC defines Manufacturing research as the design and development of new and existing manufacturing processes, systems and networks. This call is aimed at people working in these areas or in underpinning research areas.

The vision for the Manufacturing the Future theme is for the research we sponsor to help solve some of the most serious challenges facing the UK today and in the future. Manufacturing makes a major contribution to the UK economy but further investment is required, particularly in high-value and specialist manufacturing, underpinned by the research base. The goal of the theme is to take research from our science and engineering base that addresses the research issues of scaling-up processes and products required for manufacturing impacts.

Research Visions

The Manufacturing the Future challenge theme draws on capabilities from across the whole engineering and physical sciences research portfolio. We are seeking a balanced portfolio of long-term, speculative research, as well as research where the benefits and manufacturing outcomes are clearly evident.

We would like to encourage investigator-led research proposals from the breadth of the engineering and physical sciences research community that are focused on addressing key challenges in UK manufacturing. These could lead to the following research visions identified by the Manufacturing the Future theme:

21st Century Products – Century defining products might be 'smart', multi-functional or might enable or enhance our well-being. Unimaginable today, these products may be enabled by new technologies or have advanced materials incorporated into components. Research efforts will generate a suite of flexible tools, enabling the manufacturing process to be integrated in the discovery, design and development of these new products, allowing for rapid prototyping with scale-up capability embedded.

Digital Manufacturing - Digital manufacturing optimises the design process, allows for simulation and visualisation of processes and enables fast and responsive control and connectivity of manufacturing systems and supply chains. Intelligent factories and industries will be categorised by automation, personalisation of products and services (including development of the digital technologies and user-interfaces that enable this); transformation of the cyber-physical production system driven, for example, by data from IoT and increased

interconnectivity; and cyber security risks to manufacturing.

Sustainable Industries - Manufacturing industries will be able to meet the needs of present sectors/customers without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own manufacturing needs. This depicts a future where resource usage, resilience and security are transformed and where business models, manufacturing processes and product value/ownership are redefined.

New Industrial Systems – Industrial systems may evolve from being predominantly centralised towards a portfolio that becomes more effective at creating and capturing value at a variety of scales. This vision could be interpreted at different levels. At a tangible level; introduction of alternative machine tools, cellular manufacturing, self-healing tools, systems that self-build. Different models of operation may be alternative supply chains and business models. Finally, mass customisation in consumer products and personalisation of healthcare.

Funding available

Standard Grants are very flexible; applicants may apply for projects ranging from small value, short term grants (e.g. feasibility studies) to longer-term, larger awards (e.g. a multi-institution project), including new investigator awards, networks or workshop funding.

We can accept awards of up to £2M through this route. If you have an idea for a project of higher value, please speak to one of the EPSRC contacts who will be happy to provide advice on possible funding mechanisms.

The applicant can request funding for anything that is eligible as detailed in the EPSRC funding guide (<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance/fundingguide/Pages/fundingguide.aspx>).

High-risk/high-return research proposals relating to new concepts or techniques are particularly encouraged.

The proposal must clearly articulate how the research contributes towards the manufacturing visions set out above, including the novelty and innovation of the approach.

We encourage research collaborations with business and the public sector, particularly where they can help research advances and the take-up of results. However a project partner of this nature is not an obligation for this call.

If you want to work with another university, we are happy to receive proposals from two or more organisations that, when taken together, form a coherent project.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The long term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent and the Research Councils have together developed the ambitious RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/diversity/>)

In line with the RCUK Diversity Principles, EPSRC expects that equality and diversity

is embedded at all levels and in all aspects of research practice. We are committed to supporting the research community in the diverse ways a research career can be built with our investments. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcome applications from academics who job share, have a part-time contract, need flexible working arrangements or those currently committed to other longer, large existing grants. Please see our Equality and Diversity webpages <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/equalitydiversity/> for further information.

Equipment

For information on support for equipment on research grants please see the EPSRC website

(<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/facilities/equipment/process/researchgrants/>) Eligibility

For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, see

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/eligibility/>

How to apply

Submitting application

You should prepare and submit your proposal using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>).

When adding a new proposal, you should select:

Council 'EPSRC'

Document type 'Standard research'

Scheme 'Standard' (or 'New Investigator Awards' if it is to be assessed under the New Investigator Awards scheme)

Call: Select 'None' and click 'create document'

under 'Disciplines' please select 'Manufacturing'.

Guidance on the types of support that may be sought and advice on the completion of the research proposal forms are given on the EPSRC website (<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance/Pages/guidance.aspx>) which should be consulted when preparing all proposals.

Guidance on writing application

For advice on writing proposals see:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/preparing/>

Assessment

Assessment process

Proposals will be considered by the standard process as outlined on the EPSRC website (see <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/assessmentprocess/> for more details).

Proposals which do not fit with manufacturing theme will be processed as a standard research proposal by the most appropriate capability theme.

Proposals will be considered at a manufacturing-focused Prioritisation Panel in accordance with EPSRC assessment procedure for standard research grants. Should there be insufficient demand we reserve the right for proposals to be considered at the most appropriate capability theme panel meeting. Please note that this assessment procedure takes into account the EPSRC's balancing capability strategy for its research areas. More information on this strategy can be found at <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/researchareas/>

Assessment criteria

Proposals will be considered against the standard research grant assessment criteria as outlined in the reviewer form on the EPSRC website here:

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/files/funding/forms/standard-grant-peer-review-form/>

Guidance for reviewers

Information about the EPSRC peer review process and guidance for reviewers can be found at: <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/assessmentprocess/review/>

Guidance for reviewing standard grants can be found here:

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/assessmentprocess/review/formsandguidancenotes/standardgrants/>

Moving forward

Submissions to this call will count towards the Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants Policy. Further information about the policy can be found at:

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/basics/resubpol/rua/>

Contacts

We recommend that potential applicants discuss their ideas with EPSRC. If you have any questions about the call, please contact a member of the theme:

For Proposals related to New Industrial Systems, please contact:

Dr Rebecca Williams

Portfolio Manager – Manufacturing the Future

01793 44 4106; rebecca.williams@epsrc.ac.uk

For Proposals related to Digital Manufacturing:

Dr Tracy Hanlon

Senior Portfolio Manager – Manufacturing the Future

01793 44 4514; tracy.hanlon@epsrc.ac.uk

For Proposals related to Sustainable Industries, please contact:

Dr Shyeni Paul

Portfolio Manager – Manufacturing the Future

01793 44 4051; shyeni.paul@epsrc.ac.uk

For Proposals related to 21st Century Products, please contact:

Mr Gerard Davies

Portfolio Manager – Manufacturing the Future

01793 44 4233; gerard.davies@epsrc.ac.uk

If you have any questions about preparing and submitting your proposal using Je-S, please contact the Je-S helpdesk (JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk, 01793 444164). Your Research Administration should also be able to offer advice about costing and writing your proposal and the Je-S system.

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Dr Rebecca Williams	21/09/2016	1	
Dr Rebecca Williams	12/10/2016	1.2	Changed incorrect phone number for Gerard Davies
Ms Rhia Visavadia	10/05/2017	1.3	Change of batching dates and contacts update
Dr Shyeni Paul	26/10/2017	1.4	Change of batching dates and contacts update

Dr Shyeni Paul	04/12/2017	1.5	Updated to new format
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Je-S attachments Check List

[Mandatory section: If your call uses Je-S, please update the table below so applicants and ROs have a quick check list of what is expected. The tables show the default in Je-S for the standard scheme and the outline scheme (please delete whichever table is unnecessary and update the remaining table with your call requirements). If your call requires anything different to the defaults below it must have been agreed with the Systems Change Manager in advance of the call being published. If your call is set up under a different scheme, please check with the Systems Change Manager what attachment types are available.]

Standard:

Attachment Type	Maximum Page length	Mandatory/Optional	Extra Guidance
Case for Support	8 pages	M	Comprising up to two A4 sides for a track record, and six A4 sides describing proposed research and its context.
Pathways to Impact	2 pages	M	
Workplan	1 page	M	
Justification for Resources	2 pages	M	
CVs	2 pages each	As Required by EPSRC	For named and visiting researchers, and researcher co-investigators only.
Project Partner Letters of Support	No page limits	As Required by EPSRC	Must be included from all named project partners. Must be on headed paper, and be signed and dated within six months of the proposal submission date.
Letters of Support	No page limits	As Required by EPSRC	In exceptional circumstances a maximum of three letters can be submitted.

Equipment Quotes	No page limits	As required by EPSRC	
Equipment Business Case	2 pages each	As required by EPSRC	Required for any items or combined assets with a value above the OJEU limit.
Technical assessment	No page limit	As required by EPSRC	
Proposal Cover Letter	No page limit	Optional	The cover letter can be used to highlight any important information to EPSRC. This attachment type is not seen by reviewers or panel members.
Other attachment	No page limit	As required, at EPSRC request only	This can be used for a document that does not fit under any of the headings above. This attachment type is not seen by reviewers or panel members.