**2023-2024 Future Flight Challenge Social Science Grant programme**

**Research Grants 2022-2023**

**Application Guidance**

The University of Birmingham, in collaboration with the ESRC and the UKRI’s Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) Future Flight Challenge, is offering a programme of seven research grants from the 1st April 2023. These grants will deliver social science research priorities relating to the technologies, systems, and infrastructures of the Future Flight Challenge programme.

**Research Project Grants**

* Number of Research Project Grants available: 7.
* Funds available per Grant: up to £150,000 FEC.
* Start date: 1st April 2023.
* Duration: up to 14 months.
* Awards announced: by 5th January 2023.

**Grants available:**

**Theme 1: Innovation by and for social and community need**.

**1a) Grant A:** Focus on disability and accessibility

**1b) Grant B:** Focus on marginalised groups access and experiences

**1c) Grant C:** Focus on digital exclusion from Future Flight transport

**1d) Grant D:** Focus on socio-economic exclusion/inclusion

**Theme 2: Grant E - Future Flight Ecosystems and Enterprises.**

**Theme 3: Grant F - Governance and Trustworthiness**.

**Theme 4: Grant H - Spatiality of Future Flight**:

**How to apply:**

**Please use the ‘Application Form’, ‘Project Timeline’ and Budget Template provided to apply for this grant. These can be found here:**

[**https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/futureflight**](https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/futureflight)

**Please note that applications that go over character counts specified for sections will be discounted.**

**Please submit your completed application form, project budget and project timeline along with the separate mandatory attachments in PDF document format to:**

ffcsocialscience@contacts.bham.ac.uk

## **Assessment process:**

**Outline assessment:** Applications will be reviewed based on eligibility to the grant call (please see section above). Feedback will not be provided on applications that are deemed ineligible by ESRC and UKRI criteria.

**Panel Assessment:** All applications that are eligible by ESRC and UKRI criteria will be assessed by a peer review panel of research, industry, public sector and/or regulatory experts.

## **Contacts:**

Any queries and final applications should be directed to: ffcsocialscience@contacts.bham.ac.uk

# **Introduction:**

This is a guidance document created to assist applicants to this call in the completion of their proposal. It is specific to this call and should be used in conjunction with the following information:

* [ESRC Research Funding Guide](https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/)
* ESRC guidance on [‘How to write a good research grant proposal’](https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/how-to-write-a-good-research-grant-proposal/)

**Important:** Where information and guidance issued in this document differs from the general guidance offered in these sources; you should adhere to the guidance in this document.

1. **Project Details**
* List your proposed ‘Project Title’ (maximum limit of 150 characters)
* List relevant detail for Principal Investigators and all Co-Investigators
* Your start date should be **01 April 2023**. Your grant will be no longer than 14 months.

We welcome PI’s and Co-Is at all career stages, including those currently working on fixed term contracts. Please note, there is an expectation that the PI’s post will be in place for the duration of a funded project.

If you or one of your Co-Is is on a fixed term contract, please provide an institutional letter of support the states you/they will be employed throughout the project at the specified % of FTE.

## UK co-investigators in business, civil society or government bodies

UK Co-Investigators in business, civil society or government bodies are not permitted for this call.

## International co-investigators

International Co-Investigators are not permitted for this call.

# Proposal classifications

Please list relevant disciplinary keywords for this proposed project (e.g. STS, Sociology, Law, Economics etc). It is an essential requirement that your **primary research area** is in the social sciences. We strongly encourage inter/multidisciplinary working both within and beyond the social sciences, as long the majority of the proposed programme of work is within ESRC remit. Please note this information is used to determine eligibility for ESRC funding and to assist in the allocation to appropriate reviewers serving on the peer review panel.

1. **Other Staff**

If your project requires staff other than the team of investigators, their details should be entered here. ‘Directly Allocated staff’ are those who will be working directly on the project, but whose involvement on the grant can only be based on an estimate of the time the work will take (e.g. investigators). ‘Directly Incurred staff’ are those whose time on the project is actual, auditable and verifiable (e.g. researchers and technicians).

For staff that are to be recruited please list as ‘to be recruited’ under name and indicate: role, grade, start date/end date and employment organisation.

1. **Project Summary** *(4000 character limit)*

Provide a plain English summary of the role and work you propose to carry out in language that could be publicised to a general, non-academic audience. Please note that this section will be made available on the Gateway to Research database, therefore applicants should ensure confidential information is not included in this section *(4000 character limit)*

1. **Project Objectives** *(4000 character limit)*

List the objectives of your work in order of priority.

1. **Project Outputs** *(2000 character limit)*

Please describe the project related outputs expected to be delivered or completed within the duration of the proposed project e.g. journal articles for submission, blog posts, policy or public facing reports, events or other project related activities.

1. **Academic beneficiaries** *(4000 character limit)*

Please summarise how your proposed work will contribute to knowledge, both within the UK and globally. This should include how your work will benefit other researchers in the field and identify whether there are any academic beneficiaries in other disciplines and, if so, how they will benefit and what will be done to ensure that they benefit.

Please list any academic beneficiaries from your work and give details of how they will benefit and how the outcomes of your work will be disseminated. Also describe the relevance of the research to beneficiaries.

Please note that this section may be published to demonstrate the impact of research council-funded research. Please ensure confidential information is not included in this section.

1. **Project Staff and Duties** *(2000 character limit)*

Summarise the duties of the staff members that will be involved in your project, including the applicants. Ensure that it is clear why it is necessary for this person to perform this role at the resource level you have requested.

1. **Ethical Information** *(4000 character limit)*

This section must be comprehensively addressed.

Applicants must ensure the proposed work will be carried out to a high ethical standard and must clearly state how any potential ethical and health and safety issues have been considered and will be addressed ensuring that all necessary ethical approval is in place before the project commences and all risks are minimised.

The [ESRC’s Framework for Research Ethics](https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/) contains a full explanation of our expected approach, with guidance for applicants.

1. **Project Partners**

If you have secured a commitment from another organisation or funding body to provide additional resources for this post, the details of that support should be entered here. **It is important that all organisations that are contributing either directly or indirectly to the intended research, are identified.** If not, their contributions to the project cannot be reflected in our assessment process or in the summary of the project published externally, if it is funded. A Project Partner letter of support from each partner organisation confirming the level of support specific to this proposal must be attached. Project partner letters of support can be accepted by email, and must be signed and dated within two months of the proposal submission date.

1. **User Involvement**

If ‘Users’ have been/will be engaged with your work, please specify the nature of their engagement. ‘Users’ are individuals, groups or organisations who have an interest in or may benefit from the project. Users may be from the public sector, private sector, civil society or the wider public in general. Engaging users in your work from its conception and development through to the dissemination stage is likely to increase the impacts achieved. Applicants should expand upon how the proposed work will be managed to engage users and beneficiaries in the Case for Support attachment.

1. **Project Budget and Timeline**

Please send us your project budget and your project timeline, using the templates provided on the website.

Please note all successful applicants and team members will be expected to attend two network development workshops which are due to run between April 2023 and March 2024. Funds for attendance at these events will be administered separately by the team at the University of Birmingham. Please do not include travel to these events in your proposed budget.

# **Attachments**

It is important that applicants **only submit the supporting attachments specified in this document**.

**We reserve the right to reject applications that do not include the required attachments or include attachments not specified in this guidance.** Attachments should be uploaded as PDF (rather than MS Word) format to ensure automated conversion does not cause problems with maximum length. Attachments should be in font size 11 with 2cm margins

## Case for support (maximum of six sides of A4)

The Case for Support should be a self-contained description of the proposed work with relevant background and references and should not depend on additional information such as the inclusion of external links. Assessors are advised to base their assessment on the information contained within the application and are under no obligation to access such links (so they should not be used to provide critical information).

This is the body of your research proposal. It must not exceed six sides A4 and must include the following sections:

**Introduction/Research questions or problems**

An introduction setting the aims and objectives of the proposed project in context. Any relevant policy or practical background should also be included. A clear link must be made between the aims and objectives and the scope and theme of the call. You should describe clearly the research questions, issues or problems that you intend to address. What are the issues that you will be exploring in the course of your research?

**Research context**

You should describe the research context for your project/programme of work. Why is it important that these questions or issues are explored?

What other research is being or has been conducted in this area? What contribution will your project make to improving, enhancing, or developing creativity, insights, knowledge or understanding in your chosen area of study? To whom will the outcomes of your research be of particular interest?

**Research methods and approach.**

What research methods will you be using to address the questions or issues that you have set yourself, or solve the problems you have identified, or to explore the matters you intend to investigate? Why have you chosen these methods? Why are they the best way to answer the research questions or problems you have identified? What will be your role? If there are other people involved, what will their roles be and why are they the appropriate people to be involved?

If the proposed work involves data collection or acquisition you must demonstrate that you have carried out a datasets review, and explicitly state why currently available datasets are inadequate for the proposed research.

The data, materials or information to be collected should be clearly stated, and the methods for achieving this explained. Where sampling is involved, the sampling frame, population and sample sizes, the sample design and arrangements for any pilot should be specified, and the reasons given for the procedures adopted. Where access to people or archives is needed, indicate clearly the records, population or samples to be consulted, and any permissions already obtained.

**Project Management**.

How will the project be managed? What will be the roles of the members of staff involved (including you and, if applicable, any Co-Investigator(s), any research assistant(s) or research fellows? What is the timetable for the project? Does it include appropriate milestones and is it realistic? When will the outputs of the project be completed? How will you ensure that they meet the needs of your audience? Can the costs be justified? How will you ensure good value for money?

If a postdoctoral researcher(s) are to be employed, you should state clearly the nature of the work they will be undertaking and describe clearly the working relationships that are envisaged between all the members of the research team. You should describe fully the arrangements for supervising, mentoring and managing the Research Assistants or Fellows, including their professional development. If the researcher is unknown you should state the skills and qualifications sought, as well as outline the professional development opportunities this project will offer them, and how you will adapt these development opportunities to their individual needs.

If any member of the research team (including PI or Co-Is) is a postdoctoral early-career researcher, please outline any institutional mentoring or additional support that will be available (to be indicated in the institutional letter of support).

Similarly, if the project involves a visit to or a secondment from a member of staff from another organisation, you must state clearly what work they will pursue and describe the working relationships envisaged with other members of the team.

In terms of supporting the research staff funded on the project, you should clearly outline the development opportunities which the project will make available. These should include opportunities both in relation to research expertise, and wider opportunities to acquire transferable skills, for example, in connection with proposed impact activities.

The project management section should also include the management of the digital and data management aspects of the projects, if applicable, and should be coordinated with the information in the Data Management Plan. It should be clear what the milestones for the completion of this element are and the work should be incorporated into the timetable for the whole project. The project management of the data management aspects of the project should include an assessment of risk in relation to the complexity and delivery of the project.

**Risk Management**

We are committed to funding excellent work which is also adventurous, speculative and innovative, and with the potential for scientific and/or user impact. Where there are risks associated with such work please outline any measures which will be taken to mitigate them.

**Non-Academic beneficiaries.**

It is vital that the economic and social impact of all projects funded is maximised. Consider potential beneficiaries and users involved in the development of the proposal and the delivery of the grant where appropriate. This should cover who will benefit from the proposed work, and the relevance of the work to these beneficiaries. Include details regarding the outcomes from the proposed project , what steps you will take to make economic and social science research more accessible to wider stakeholders and steps to ensure that your work has maximum economic and societal impact.

## Justification of resources (maximum of two sides of A4)

A two-side A4 statement justifying the resources requested. The justification of resources should explain why the resources requested are appropriate for the work proposed, taking into account the nature and complexity of the application. It should not be simply a list of the resources required, as this is already given in the budget template form. Where you do not provide explanation for an item that requires justification, it will be cut from any grant made.

**Estates, Indirect and Infrastructure Technician costs do not need to be justified within the Justification of Resources.**

All resources requested must be fully justified in the ‘Justification’ attachment.

**Travel and Subsistence** - Foreach item of Travel and Subsistence required for your project you should indicate the calculations upon which this figure is based.

**Conferences** - Predicted costs for conference attendance will be funded where the conference is named, justified and costed in the application. The justification should show how the conference will either directly benefit the work you will be undertaking or facilitate future impacts of your work. Justification must also be provided for the number of project members attending a conference. We encourage early career researcher conference attendance where it can be demonstrated to be a key development opportunity.

**Social surveys** – Social survey costs which are being sub-contracted should be included under this section and are eligible for FEC exception funding at 100% (for the amount sought from the funder). (See ‘other directly incurred costs’ section if surveys are to be done using in-house resources.)

Please note that national level surveys are being run by the FFC Social Science Research Director and team at the University of Birmingham. In order to avoid duplication and reduce overall costs please indicate why you would like to run a standalone survey or alternatively indicate that you would like to include items/questions in the larger survey detailing the expected number and length.

**Other directly incurred costs** - including justified; project specific consumables, consultancy fees, equipment costing less than £10,000, recruitment and advertising costs.

Costs for social survey work proposed to be done using in-house resources should also be included under this section and will be funded at the standard 80% FEC funding rate. Proposals including such costs will need to fully justify why the work should not be subject to external competition, and provide benchmarking or other data to support a case that best value for money is being achieved through using research organisation staff rather than external contractors.

**Other directly allocated costs** - including support staff salaries, a share of the costs of departmental support staff and the costs of access to major research facilities.

**Estates and indirect costs**

Estate and indirect costs are specific to each research organisation, and do not require justification in your Case for Support.

Research organisations that have implemented the TRAC costing methodology and have passed the Quality Assurance process should apply their own estate and indirect costs. Non-research organisations that are not required to implement TRAC must have a robust costing methodology in place that has been validated in order to apply their own estates and indirect cost rates. The standard default rates should be used where research organisations have not yet developed their own rates.

Your Research Office will be able to assist with this section.

## Data Management Plan (maximum of three sides of A4)

It is a requirement of the [ESRC Research Data Policy](https://esrc.ukri.org/funding/guidance-for-grant-holders/research-data-policy/) that all applicants planning to generate data as part of their grant must include a Data Management Plan. The Data Management Plan should be used as an opportunity to describe how the data, i.e. primary input into research and first-order results of that research, are going to be managed - starting from planning for research and through the life-cycle of the grant until data is accepted for archiving by the UK Data Service.

The ESRC recognises the importance of research data quality and provenance. Research data generated by this research must be well-managed by the grant holder during the grant period to enable their data to be exploited to the maximum potential for further research.

## CV (maximum of two sides of A4 per person)

A CV for the Principal Investigator, any Co-Investigator(s), any named research staff member(s) and consultant(s) must be included. This should include contact details, qualifications (including class and subject), academic and professional posts held since graduation, a list of the most relevant and recent publications, and a record of research funded by the UKRI and other bodies. This should not exceed two A4 sides for each person.

## Letter of support (maximum of one side of A4 per document)

Institutional letters of support MUST be submitted as part of this proposal. Letters of support can be accepted by email, and must be signed and dated within two months of the submission date by the relevant decision maker for your institution/school/faculty e.g. Head of School, Director of Research etc. General letters of support that are not essential for the successful conduct of the research or do not confirm any specific contribution to the project should not be included.

**Checklist of additional mandatory documents to include:**

Project Budget in template provided [ ]

Project Timeline in template provided [ ]

Case for Support (max 6 A4 sides) [ ]

Justification of Resources (max 2 A4 sides) [ ]

Institutional letter(s) of support [ ]

2-page Curriculum Vitae for all applicants/project staff [ ]

Data Management Plan (max 3 A4 sides)

– DMP only mandatory if planning to generate data [ ]

Partner letter(s) of support (where applicable) [ ]

Please note applications without mandatory additional documents will not be processed.