

APEX Awards Frequently Asked Questions

For the purposes of this scheme interdisciplinary research is defined as:

"Interdisciplinary research is a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice."

"Successful IDR plans and supports research practices and outputs greater than the sum of their constituent disciplinary parts"

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1. FAQs for APEX Awards

1.1. The Applicant

1.1.1. I am an engineer who does research. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes, as long as you are based in either a UK University or not-for-profit research organisation for at least the duration of the project and you hold an established academic position, then you are eligible to apply.

If you are an engineer with specific questions regarding your eligibility or the remit of the scheme you can contact the Royal Academy of Engineering (research@raeng.org.uk) as well as the dedicated enquiries inbox apex@royalsociety.org

1.1.2. I work in the humanities and/or social sciences. Am I eligible to apply?

Yes, as long as you are based in either a UK University or not-for-profit research organisation for at least the duration of the project and you hold an established academic position, then you are eligible to apply.

If you work in the humanities and/or social sciences and have specific questions regarding your eligibility or the remit of the scheme you can contact the British Academy (grants@thebritishacademy.ac.uk) as well as the dedicated enquiries inbox apex@royalsociety.org

1.1.3. I see that the APEX Awards are for researchers who want to pursue genuine interdisciplinary and curiosity-driven research and that applicants must collaborate with relevant researchers from other disciplines. I am a social scientist and I want to collaborate with someone from humanities, would this be eligible?

No, applications should be within the remit of more than one of the Academies. As social science and humanities fall within the remit of the British Academy this would not be eligible.

1.1.4. Would medical humanities related projects be eligible as pertinent to BA?

Yes, as long as it relates directly to the subjects covered by the British Academy for the humanities and social sciences – this would be permitted. You can find additional information here: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/fellows/fellowship/sections/>

1.1.5. My application is a combination of two engineering fields, would this be eligible?

Yes, provided the application involved the remit of both the Royal Society (engineering sciences) and Royal Academy of Engineering (engineering in its broadest sense) then the application would be eligible. Applicants can find a summary of the remits in the scheme notes. They are encouraged to contact the relevant academy if they require more detailed information about the disciplines within their remit.

1.1.6. I am an established researcher, but I don't have a PhD. Am I eligible to apply for an APEX Award?

Yes. If you are able to make a case that your career experience is equivalent to that of holding a PhD (i.e. publication record etc.), and if you are in an established academic post at a UK institution, then you would be eligible to apply. You should make reference to this under the 'Personal Statement' part of the application form.

1.1.7. Do I have to have a minimum number of years of research experience to be eligible to apply?

No, the scheme is open to established researchers, but there is no minimum or maximum number of years' experience an applicant must have.

1.1.8. I am on a part-time contract. Can I apply, or is this scheme only open to researchers on a full-time contract?

Applications are accepted from researchers currently employed on both full and part-time contracts (i.e. anything less than 1.0 FTE). As the grant covers the cost of providing a teaching replacement, you can apply to cover the time that is specified on your contract.

1.1.9. I am employed by my institution on an hourly contract. Would I be eligible to apply?

If you are employed on an hourly contract you can still apply. You can apply for costs to provide a teaching replacement for the time you are employed to spend on teaching and administrative duties.

1.1.10. I am on a fixed-term contract. Would I be eligible to apply?

Yes. However, it is essential that the length of your contract covers the whole proposed period of the grant. The purpose of the scheme is to allow the successful applicant to obtain time freed from their normal teaching and administrative commitments. If your current contract ends during the proposed grant period, or before it starts, but there is a commitment from the University to renew the contract, then yes, you would be eligible to apply.

1.1.11. I am on a full-time contract but currently have other commitments (i.e. I am a Co-I on another project) outside of my time allocated to my own research. Am I able, for example, to apply for an 18-month grant and pro-rata this part-time over 36 months?

It would not be a high priority to support someone whose time was not being largely devoted to this grant. The aim of the scheme is to allow the successful applicant to be free to focus on their research by relieving them of their teaching and administrative duties. You would need to fully explain in your application those duties and commitments from which you cannot be released.

1.1.12. I am an honorary or visiting academic, can I be a primary applicant or co-applicant on an application?

Provided you are an established independent researcher and have teaching responsibilities at your host institution that could be bought out or funded by the APEX scheme then you would be eligible. Please do check with apex@royalsociety.org if you are unsure about your eligibility for the scheme.

1.2. The Co-Applicant

1.2.1. What is the difference between a co-applicant and a collaborator?

The co-applicant is an individual who is making a significant contribution to the research project and is essential for delivering the proposed work. They may or may not request teaching relief and/or research expenses. Collaborators are individuals whose contribution is important to the proposed research but do not play a major role in the project.

1.2.2. Is there a limit on the number of co-applicants on an application?

There can be up to three co-applicants on an application, but we expect their inclusion to be appropriately justified and for their work on the research project to be essential.

1.2.3. Is there a limit on the number of collaborators on an application?

There is not a limit on the number of named collaborators on a project, however their inclusion should be justified and must be reasonable. In addition, they must be providing an important contribution to the project.

1.2.4. I would like to write a proposal with a researcher who is based overseas, can they act as co-applicant?

No, both the applicant and co-applicant must be based at a UK University (or UK University overseas campus) or not-for-profit research organisation. There is no restriction on the location of collaborators, as they play a smaller role in the project.

1.2.5. I would like to write an application with a partner based in industry, can they act as a co-applicant or collaborator?

The co-applicant must be based at a UK University (or UK University overseas campus) or not-for-profit research organisation. However, there is no restriction for the collaborators, who can be based in Industry.

1.3. Resubmissions and Other applications

1.3.1 My previous application was unsuccessful, can I reapply?

Yes, resubmissions are eligible and will be treated separately. The outcome of applications from previous rounds will not be considered in the assessment process.

1.3.2 I see from the scheme guidance notes that applicants may only submit one application per round even though this award is to enable collaborative research. Could I apply in this round and my colleague with whom I am currently engaged with on an on-going project also apply in this round – and can we name each other as a co-applicant?

No. We would only expect to receive one application for an individual project. There is however, no limit on the number of applications received per host institution.

1.3.3 I am currently a PI on another grant that won't finish for at least another year. Is it possible to apply to this scheme if one already holds research funding for another project?

Yes, you may apply to the scheme if you currently hold research funding for another project. Please bear in mind the panel will be assessing the feasibility of the proposed project and therefore will consider the amount of time you can devote to the project. Please explain and justify the amount of time you will dedicate to the award as part of the application. Applicants are expected to devote at least 100% of the time which they have requested to be bought out, to the project.

1.3.4 I am interested in applying for one of these grants but am also submitting an application to another funding body. If I was successful in both applications, would I be able to hold both awards providing there is no duplication of costs?

Yes, it is possible to hold both awards provided there are no duplication of purpose for which funds were granted. Applications made to another funding body must be declared on the application form.

1.3.5. How many applications are awarded per round, and what is the success rate of applications?

There are 8 awards available per round. It is our current policy to not publish our success rates, but this policy is under review and we hope to be able to provide them in the future.

1.4. The Host Institution

1.4.1 I am not attached to an institution. Would I be eligible to apply?

No, all applicants must be attached to an eligible institution.

1.4.2 I am based at a UK University overseas campus (e.g. University of Nottingham's overseas campus in Malaysia, University of London Institute in Paris). Am I eligible to apply?

Yes. We can accept applications from members of staff who are contracted by a UK university and seconded to work at an overseas campus. We would accept them as eligible regardless of the length of the secondment. This would also apply to any member of staff in any UK-based research institution

who is “employed” in the UK (i.e. ordinarily resident here) but seconded to work overseas (temporarily).

1.4.3 I am about to move to another institution. If I am successful in my application to this scheme, are these grants transferrable?

Yes. If you were awarded one of these grants and were to move to another institution the grant can be taken with you subject to the changes being approved by the Academies.

1.5 The proposed research and costings

1.5.1 The scheme notes state that you are looking for applicants to develop a new direction for their research. I am already working on an idea and currently have an existing partnership. Am I eligible to apply or are you looking for a completely new idea?

Priority will be given to new thinking.

1.5.1 Can costs be requested to cover the costs for Post-docs or studentships?

The funding for the award is for the primary applicant and co-applicants to relieve themselves of their teaching and administrative duties. Post-docs can take part in the project and undertake some of the proposed research, however the costs for the APEX award cannot be used to employ a post-doc or support studentships, they would need to be funded from an alternative funding source.

1.5.2 I would like to apply for costs to support public engagement activities. Should I cost these into my proposal?

No. Successful applicants will be invited to apply for additional funds of up to £10,000 to support public engagement activities linked to their APEX awards. However, this will form part of a separate application process and the proposal, as well as costings, will be assessed independently by a Public Engagement Panel. You will be able to indicate whether you intend to apply for public engagement funds in the application form, however, please do not integrate these into your proposal or costings.

1.5.3 Can costs be requested to cover the teaching replacement for the co-applicant as well as the applicant?

Yes, applicants can apply for costs to provide a teaching replacement for either themselves and/or the co-applicant. It is between the applicant’s and co-applicant’s respective universities to decide how the award will be divided up between them (to cover their respective teaching replacements). This should be clearly stated in the need for teaching relief field within the proposal tab of the application.

Additionally, a supporting statement from the head of department of the co-applicant will need to be uploaded in the event that this is requested. If successful, it is recommended that the organisations involved have a collaboration agreement in place.

1.5.4 My institution feels that it would be more appropriate to appoint more than one part-time lecturer to cover my position if my application was successful. Are there any restrictions on this?

It would be hoped that a full-time appointment would be made, thus giving a better opportunity to a younger researcher and avoiding the need to ask the award-holder to fill in any gaps in the teaching arrangements. However, if your institution felt that was the more feasible option then that would be fine.

1.5.5 I do not have any teaching and administrative duties that I can be bought out of, can I still apply for an APEX Award to buy in my own time to work on the project or pay for a post doc?

No, if you do not have teaching and administrative duties then you are not eligible to apply for this scheme.

1.5.6 When I apply for funding for one of these awards, can I include in the application the cost of APCs (Article Processing Charges) to enable any articles that may arise from the research to be published in learned journals that offer a 'Gold' open access option?

No. Currently the position is that costs of publication are not eligible costs.

1.5.7 Do these grants require the outputs of the research funded to be made available in any Open Access format?

Recipients of APEX awards are encouraged to publish in open access journals. More information on our publication policy can be found [here](#).

1.5.8 I am a physical scientist writing a proposal with a co-applicant based in the humanities. We are finding it very difficult to write a methodology that combines both of our fields. Do you have any advice on how we might combine these, or examples of what you look for when assessing the methodology of a proposal from different disciplines?

When assessing applications from different disciplines, we are interested in how applicants plan to do the work they propose – collecting data, identifying requirements, analysing results, and collaborating with their partners. We understand that each discipline will have its own methodology, and as well as explaining how these might differ and how they operate, applicants should explore how the methodologies of different disciplines will be linked to achieve the projects proposed outcome. Applicants should think about these sorts of questions when completing this section of the form; How do the applicant, co-applicant and collaborators plan to work together? What contribution must each discipline make to achieve its role in the project? Are experiments going to be co-designed?

2 FAQs for APEX Public Engagement Grant

2.1. The Applicant

2.1.1 I work in public engagement, am I eligible to apply for an APEX Grant?

You can only apply for public engagement projects via the APEX Public Engagement Grant scheme once you have a successful APEX award. To apply for an APEX award, you must be based in either a UK University or not-for-profit research organisation for at least the duration of the project and hold an established academic position. Your application must also fall within the remit of more than one of the academies. Any public engagement projects funded by the APEX Public Engagement Grant must directly relate to the applicant's main APEX project. We do encourage APEX award holders to work with public engagement professionals when developing and delivering their engagement projects.

2.1.2 If I am awarded an APEX Grant, do I have to apply for an APEX Public Engagement Grant?

No, it is not mandatory for APEX awardees to apply for an APEX Public Engagement Grant. It is, however, strongly encouraged. An APEX Public Engagement Grant enables researchers to increase

their knowledge, skills, and confidence in undertaking public engagement projects and to share their enthusiasm for science and their APEX research with a wider, public audience.

2.2. The proposed research and costings

2.2.1 When do I need to apply for an APEX Public Engagement Grant if I am given an APEX award?

You can apply for the APEX Public Engagement Grant in the first round after you receive your APEX award. Successful APEX awardees who did not apply for the Public Engagement Grant in their first year may also apply in their second year. The APEX Public Engagement Grant covers activities over the two years of the APEX award. More information can be found on the APEX Public Engagement Grant webpage.

2.2.2 When should I start preparing my APEX Public Engagement Grant project?

You should start thinking about public engagement for your project as soon as you start preparing your main project. We would advise beginning detailed planning of any public engagement project as soon as your APEX proposal is shortlisted, if not before, as the APEX Public Engagement Grant round opens immediately after the APEX awards are awarded. It is advisable to consult your institution's public engagement team and the Royal Society Public Engagement Team for advice while planning your public engagement project.

For further information regarding the APEX Public Engagement Grant, please contact the Royal Society's Public Engagement Team at public.engagement@royalsociety.org