Industrial Collaboration Programme Round 5

Frequently Asked Questions

APPLICATION

How can I contact Royce about making an application for the ICP?

Initial enquiries should be directed to grants@royce.ac.uk. Our team of Research and Business Engagement Managers can advise on the scope of projects and application process.

Will information included in our submission be kept confidential?

The information provided will be processed for the application, review and award of the Industrial Collaboration Programme (ICP) Round 5 funding.

If successful, this data will also be used for communication and reporting. Any personal data will be managed and retained in accordance with The University of Manchester's Collaborator/Partner Privacy Notice, Records Retention Schedule, Flexi-grant's GDPR guidance. EPSRC funded projects are also managed in accordance with UKRI Standard Terms and Conditions of Funding, and Innovate UK awarded project data will be retained for 10 years.

Can a Post-Doctoral Research Assistant (PDRA) or a Royce Application Scientist be a Principal Investigator (PI)? Are PDRA costs eligible?

PDRA costs are eligible as part of the staff time element of a project, however, only the following people are eligible to be a PI:

- An appropriate senior manager from industry
- An academic with an academic position (e.g. lecturer or equivalent)
- Holders of early career fellowships whereby the university grants you the same stature as a permanent academic staff member
- University or research and technology organisation technical professional services staff (e.g. Technical facility experimental leads and technical specialists or equivalent)
- Application Scientists are unable to be a `Project Lead or Principal Investigator however a senior application scientist is eligible to be a Co Investigator on proposals and application scientists are eligible to be Researcher Co Investigators if either has significant input to the research.

Can a PhD student be costed in to undertake work on the project?

Yes, PhD students can be costed into the project.

Can a Principle Investigator or Project Lead be on multiple applications?

A PI can be the lead on only one application, and a Co-Investigator on one other application. For applications across multiple partners one lead PI must be chosen for the overall application.

Are there any limits on the number of applications a single business or a single academic institution can lead or collaborate on?

There are no limits on organisations but principal investigators can only lead on one application and collaborate on one additional proposal.

Can the industrial collaborator be from outside the UK?

Yes, international companies can collaborate on the project but they are ineligible to receive funding.

Can we collaborate with an industry partner that we have worked with in the past (including on a previous Royce ICP/MCAP project)?

Yes, as long as you are working on a new project.

Can there be more than one collaborator (e.g a University, a company and a national laboratory)?

Yes, as long as there is at least one company and one academic or RTO or charity are involved. A maximum of 3 organisations can collaborate on a project.

Can the industry partner be a spin out of the University partner?

Yes, as long as they are a UK registered company.

Can a business lead the project?

Yes, a business can lead a project.

Can the Royce application scientists count as a collaborative partner?

No, Royce application scientists can be costed into projects but cannot lead them or act as the main collaborator. They can be a Co-investigator as stated above.

If we partner with the Royce, do we also need a University/RTO partner?

Royce partners will constitute an academic organisation.

Can two companies or two Universities collaborate?

All projects must include at least one business and at least one university or RTO.

Can a company take part if they are only providing guidance and no financial support?

Yes, companies can take part in the project and provide in-kind contributions in the form of staff time or access to facilities.

If a project partner does not wish to claim grant funding or wishes to provide in-kind contributions, it should outline this on a company letterhead document signed by a senior company official. These additional in-kind or cash costs do not count towards the total £130,000 project costs limit and will be required to be included in the contractual collaboration agreement, which must be signed between project partners.

Is there are any criteria that need to be met for the industry partner? (e.g turnover, employees). Are start-ups eligible?

Business of any size can take part in the scheme but they must be a UK registered company to receive funding. Definitions of company sizes can be found in Appendix A of the guidance document. Due diligence checks are also carried before confirming funding. High risk companies cannot lead.

How would an NHS collaborator be classed?

NHS applicants will be classed as not-for-profit organisations. They may partner with a university but will also require a for-profit business partner on their project.

Can I find out more about the scope areas?

All information is provided in the guidance document.

Can projects that have passed the proof of concept stage apply?

Yes if the proposal includes a new activity and/or widens the scope of the concept.

Can innovation and commercialisation departments at universities be a partner for proof of concept projects?

We are looking for evidence of an effective collaboration contributing to the project achieving its research development and innovation outcomes. If this can be achieved then yes, it is possible. Although it would be seen more favourable if there is e.g. a spinout or a partner company leading the specific activity.

How will any IP generated by these projects be handled?

IP arrangements will need to be confirmed in the collaboration agreement, bearing in mind the type of collaboration for which funding is being sought. Although this will need to be agreed between the project partners, our expectation is that each party will own IP developed within its respective work packages. Deviation from this clause may result in delay or withdrawal of your grant.

Is there a template for a collaboration agreement?

No, however a collaboration agreement between the project partners could be based on a Lambert template for university and company collaborations. The project partners are responsible for negotiating this after the award, preferably to be agreed before a project commences (NB no project funds will be released until a collaboration agreement is in place).

Can a contract template be circulated to proposed partners at the project development stage?

Yes. The project partners are responsible for negotiating this.

What are the reporting requirements at the end of the project?

A publicly available case study will be required to show the public benefit arising from EPSRC and Innovate UK funding. There will also be the requirement for a short summary report of outputs against the project objectives along with a financial summary on project costs. Industry partners will also be required to submit an independent accountant's report for claims over £50,000. Any claims under £50,000 require a signed Director's statement.

Reporting timelines:

- Cost log: one month after project end
- Final report/case study: one month after project end
- Independent accountant's report/Director's Statement: one month after project end
- Impact of funding: information regularly provided upon request within 5 years of funding

Further information can be found in the claims guidance document on our website.

Who should complete the final report?

The final report should be completed by the lead PI.

Can a subcontractor be used?

Subcontractors must be approved by Royce prior to submitting your application. Please complete the Request for Subcontractor and/or Application Scientists Support Form to discuss your requirements. Subcontractors must be based in the UK.

Will feasibility studies (TRL2-3) be considered?

The competition does not have a specific limit on the technology readiness level of the projects.

Where can I find case studies of previous projects?

Case studies are published on our Impact Pages.

FUNDING

Why do all Royce funds need to be spent by the project end date? Can any 3rd party contributions be spent after this date?

This is a stipulation of the funding from EPSRC and Innovate UK due to the need to close off accounts for the end of their internal financial year. However, the contribution from other sources (if applicable) can be spent after this deadline to extend the project.

What does the funding cover?

Industry costs including overheads are allowed. No element of profit or bonus can be included. A full list of eligible costs is given in the guidance document. Applicants are required to give a breakdown of the total projects costs applied for.

If a project involves more than one company then an award letter will be issued to each enterprise detailing their individual award amount.

Do we need to submit timesheets? What are the reporting requirements?

Royce does not require evidence to be formally submitted to it beyond the required Statement of Expenditure (for industry grants under £50,000) or the independent accountants report (for industry grants over £50,000) which does include tracking of labour. However, evidence must be retained by the company in the event of an audit by EPSRC or Innovate UK.

What type of State Aid does this funding fall under?

This competition provides funding in line with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. Further information about the Subsidy requirements can be found within the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

If you are unsure about your obligations under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 or the State aid rules, you should take independent legal advice. We are unable to advise on individual eligibility or legal obligations. You must always make sure that the funding awarded to you is compliant with all current Subsidy Control legislation applicable in the United Kingdom.

The Royce is unable to fund high risk organisations and applications will be subject to financial and due diligence checks.

The limits on aid intensity are:

	Feasibility study	Industrial research	Experimental development
Small Enterprise	70%	70%	45%

Medium Enterprise	60%	60%	35%
Large enterprise	25%	25%	25%

If the grant does not cover total project costs, where will the rest of the funding come from?

For universities, the 20% balance of full economic costs will need to be covered by a department/university contribution, similar to EPSRC proposals. Companies will need to pay the proportion of project costs not covered by the grant through their own resources.

How will the industry in-kind contributions be demonstrated?

If a project partner does not wish to claim grant funding or wishes to provide in-kind or cash contribution towards the total project costs, it should outline this on a company letterhead document signed by a senior company official. These additional in-kind or cash costs do not count towards the total £130,000 project costs limit and will be required to be included in the contractual collaboration agreement, which must be signed between project partners. The industry element of the project can continue beyond the project end date for grant expenditure.

What should be the requested ratio between academic and industry partners?

There is no set ratio, this will be for the project partners to determine.

For PDRA costs, can they be a recently graduated student, rather than a post doc currently in post?

Yes, but they will need to have an employment contract in place prior to the start of the project. Applicants are encouraged to seek further advice from their organisations regarding the terms of the contract and feasibility given the short duration of the projects.

Can the academic institution cost non research staff to the project (e.g PhD students, technicians, knowledge transfer specialists)?

Yes, please refer to the guidance document for full details of what we will fund.

Will overhead costs be covered or is there a cost sharing arrangement?

For industry, RTOs and not for profits, Royce funds a flat 15% rate for labour for overheads only.

Can the 30% of an SME contribution to a project be in-kind support?

No, if a company is claiming costs then this will need to be a cash contribution.

What if the contract is not signed before the work starts but the collaborating partners agree to work together?

A project may start without a collaboration agreement but we are unable to release project funds until the agreement is in place.

What % will be covered for access to the National Graphene Institute (NGI) facilities?

These will be covered at 80% as they form part of the Royce facilities.

Can training, as part of a wider technology/methodology/measurement development project be included in project costs? Up to what fraction would that be deemed reasonable?

Training and development costs are eligible up to £5k as per the guidance document. If you are unsure whether your training is eligible, please contact grants@royce.ac.uk

FACILITIES

How can I find out what facilities are available at Royce?

Our facilities and equipment page contains an online catalogue:
https://www.royce.ac.uk/equipment-and-facilities/

Can Royce facilities guarantee required access need to complete work by the end of the project and what happens if there are delays or overruns?

The application should be made in consultation with the relevant Royce partner facility/ies managers and should account for likely risks to the project.

Partner Facilities Contacts:

Cranfield University royce@cranfield.ac.uk

Imperial College London royce@imperial.ac.uk

National Nuclear Laboratory royce@uknnl.com

The University of Sheffield royce@sheffield.ac.uk

UK Atomic Energy Authority royce@mrf.ukaea.uk

University of Cambridge royce@maxwell.cam.ac.uk

University of Leeds royce@leeds.ac.uk

University of Liverpool mifinfo@liverpool.ac.uk

University of Oxford royce.access@materials.ox.ac.uk

The University of Manchester royce@manchester.ac.uk

To use Royce equipment, what type of documentation do we need to provide for the application form?

To access Royce facilities, applicants will need to contact the relevant facilities manager prior to applying and confirm with them that the appropriate equipment is available and accurate costings for the application. The following details will be required on the application form: name of the Facilities Manager, equipment, number of days, and proposed/agreed work plan, as detailed in the ICP guidance. For example, for facilities please use: AFM Microscope, https://www.royce.ac.uk/equipment-and-facilities/atomic-force-microscope-situ-analysis/, 5 days over 5 months.

Please contact the relevant partner facilities contacts listed above.

Can company staff use Royce facilities?

Facilities can be accessed by companies, but work is typically conducted by full time Royce employees. Access to Royce facilities by company staff may be possible on a case-by-case basis and with prior agreement.

Will an application be marked down for not including Royce partners or facilities?

No, while we encourage applicants to use Royce facilities, we will not penalise projects that do not.

Can a UK company complete the work in an overseas (e.g. US) site?

No, work must be completed in the UK.