

**Eligibility of Team Members on Externally Funded Research Project Grants**

Those named as Project Leads (PLs) or Project Co-Leads (CoLs) (and equivalent) on research project grants must usually hold an academic contract with the University that specifies 'research' or 'teaching and research' (please note that this does not usually apply to fellowship grants).

Funder eligibility criteria now sometimes permit research associates, technicians, specialist professional services, clinicians, clinical trials managers, fellowship holders and those on teaching contracts to be named as PLs or CoLs on grants. Where this is the case, whether or not an individual is named should be determined using the below principles, in discussion with the leadership team within their academic unit and involving People Services.

UKRI also allows universities to determine whether those with a 'non-contract substantive relationship' are eligible to apply to hold grants at that University. What constitutes a 'non-contract substantive relationship' is determined by the University. Again, the principles below should be used to determine whether, in exceptional circumstances, this could proceed.

**Please discuss any questions with People Services colleagues at an early stage of planning your application. A contact for each Faculty is given below.**

Principles

With due care to fairness and equity, PL or CoL status on grants can be afforded to applicants who do not hold permanent 'teaching and/or research' academic contracts. This requires agreement from the Head of Unit and the candidate must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Be eligible in line with funder requirements for the funding call in question;
2. Be an existing employee of Newcastle University.

For colleagues on fixed-term contracts, the Head of Unit may give approval for them to apply if their contract will expire before the potential award would begin or if their contract has expired prior to application submission. This is provided in either case that they have worked at Newcastle University for at least 2 years directly preceding the application. Please note that this does not imply that any bridging funding will be available if there would be a gap in employment.

Or

Those who are not employed by the University must demonstrate their 'substantive relationship' with the University. In exceptional circumstances (for example, Emeritus status (that is, retired from Newcastle University and maintaining their relationship with their academic unit) or honorary appointment), those who are not employed by the University and who wish to be named in a research grant proposal as a PL or CoL must first consult the relevant Head of Unit (as early as possible), who should decide whether, in principle, this could proceed. This would usually be in the case of large and/or complex strategic proposals. If the Head of Unit wishes to proceed, they should prepare a short summary of the discussion that has taken place and their recommendations. This will be reviewed by a small working group (PVCR&I, Faculty Dean R&I, People Services representative, unit leadership team representative (Head of Unit, Director of Research, Unit Manager)). The working group will discuss whether the recommendation should proceed and reach a decision. Note that such applications will be exceptional and a strong case would need to be presented for consideration.

3. Have made a substantial contribution to the intellectual and/or practical formulation and development of the project and will contribute to delivery, if funded;
4. Will be employed on the project for an appropriate proportion of their time, as stated in and funded by the grant;

5. Have received appropriate training on research ethics and governance considerations of the research;
6. Have sufficient support available to enable them to deliver the research;
7. If appropriate, have intellectual ownership and will carry out grant management duties as appropriate in relation to the ensuing research;
8. If applicable, have confirmation from the relevant academic unit that any funder requirements for employment after the grant can be met (note that this is usually made 'in principle' and subject to performance and the financial landscape).

Research Support colleagues in the relevant academic unit and Faculty People Services colleagues should be made aware of these instances so that they can offer advice and support as early as possible in the application process.

Note that:

Fellowships usually have different eligibility rules and are therefore not included in these requirements.

These principles are intended to be used to determine eligibility for submitting research funding applications at Newcastle University. They are not intended for those who are leaving the University and who wish to retain grants with us. Those leaving the University should discuss their circumstances with their Unit and People Services.

Costings should be carried out at the current scale (or, in some circumstances (usually if required by the funder), at a new level commensurate with the applicant's skills and experience). There would be no implied automatic promotion reflected by the attainment of these awards, outside of usual process.

The term of the employment contract in relation to the award refers to the funded contract period, not the timeframe of a potentially open-ended contract.

If a post on the grant is a new role within the University, or, if the proposed responsibilities are outside the remit of the current duties of the potential named individual, the usual discussion with People Services will need to be conducted to determine whether the usual job evaluation, grading and recruitment process and policy will be followed.

<https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/hub/people-services/Pages/Pay%20Progression%20and%20benefits/Careers-Jobs-and-Grading.aspx>

## Contacts

Please contact the following colleagues with any questions or for further information/clarification:

People Services FMS: Claire McCormick, [claire.mccormick@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:claire.mccormick@ncl.ac.uk)

People Services SAgE: Claire Brunton, [claire.brunton@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:claire.brunton@ncl.ac.uk)

People Services HaSS: Linder Pott, [linder.pott@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:linder.pott@ncl.ac.uk)

General: Johanna Gascoigne-Owens, [Johanna.gascoigne-owens@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Johanna.gascoigne-owens@ncl.ac.uk)

**Johanna Gascoigne-Owens**

**Lorraine Vincent**

In consultation with a wide range of colleagues from across the University.

Approved by University Research and Innovation Committee December 2025.

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### Updates

Updated February 2026: to include reference to these principles being for making research funding applications only, not colleagues leaving the University and wishing to retain grants.

Updated February 2026: to clarify that the 2-year employment period would apply in all cases for those on fixed-term contracts (Principle 2).