



European Research Council (ERC)
Starting Grants ([ERC-2020-STG](#))
NUTSHELL NOTE

The 2020 call for ERC Starting Grants is now open. The **deadline** is **16th October 2019**. There will be a single step submission procedure with a two-step evaluation.

Scope and Objectives

ERC Starting Grants support excellent Principal Investigators (PI) at the career stage at which they are starting their own independent research team or programme. Applicant Principal Investigators must demonstrate the ground breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their scientific proposal. Typically the PI and team members are based at a single (Host) institution, but the composition of the team is flexible and team members may be located in another institution, including those located outside the EU, if duly justified. However, traditional network or research consortium proposals should not be submitted to the ERC.

Eligible scientific fields

The ERC wants investigator-driven applications in any field of research. Research must be of a high-risk/high-gain nature and interdisciplinarity is encouraged.

Eligibility of applicant

- An ERC StG applicant may be of **any age or nationality**, and may reside in any country in the world at the time of application, providing he/she carries out the research project at a **Host institution in an EU Member State or associated country** (this does not exclude fieldwork/other research activities outside Europe necessary to conduct the project). Applications from PIs currently residing outside Europe are particularly encouraged.
- Starting Grants applicants must be more than **2** years and less than **7** years from the award of their PhD on 01 January 2020. PIs holding a **medical degree** (with or without a PhD) please get in touch to cross-check your eligibility and confirm the appropriate eligibility windows.
- Extensions are allowed for properly documented eligible career breaks: maternity; paternity; long term illness, national service, clinical training.
- Applicant PI must be able to commit **at least 50%** of their working time to the ERC project and to spend at least 50% of their total working time in Europe.
- A PI may submit only one proposal to the ERC for calls covered by the same Work Programme.
- PIs who have previously submitted eligible ERC proposals may be subject to resubmission restrictions and should check the rules carefully (Work Programme pg. 20).

Profile of applicant

ERC StG applicants are normally expected to have produced at least one important publication as main author or without the participation of their PhD supervisor. They should demonstrate a **promising track-record of early achievements appropriate to their research field and career stage**: significant publications (as main author) in international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary scientific journals or in leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective field; invited presentations in well-established international conferences, granted patents, awards, prizes etc.

Funding

Grants will be awarded up to a maximum of **€1.5million¹** for a period of **up to 5 years**. An additional €1,000,000 may be requested for relocation, the purchase of major equipment and/or for access to large facilities. The reimbursement rates are 100% for direct costs plus a flat rate of 25% of direct costs (excluding subcontracting and some third party contributions) towards indirect costs.

¹ If ERC Stg Grant award is made, the opportunity to apply for Proof of Concept grant becomes available to you to further develop your research, once the Stg Grant project has concluded.



Proposal structure (page limits are strictly applied)

Part B1: Cover page, Extended synopsis of the scientific proposal (5 pages), CV (2 pages), Funding ID² (no page limits), Early achievements track-record (2 pages).

Part B2: The scientific proposal (15 pages).

Other documents: **Host Institution Letter of Support** (mandatory, prepared by Grants and Contracts, date for signature **07 Oct 2019**), **PhD Certificate** (mandatory), Evidence of Extensions (if applicable), Ethics review self-assessment (if applicable) and the supporting documentation.

Evaluation criteria

1. Research project – ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility

Ground-breaking nature and potential impact of the research project:

- To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges?
- To what extent are the objectives ambitious and beyond the state of the art (e.g. novel concepts and approaches or development between or across disciplines)?
- To what extent is the proposed research high risk/high gain?

Scientific approach:

- To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible bearing in mind the extent that the proposed project is high risk/high gain (based on the Extended Synopsis)
- To what extent is the proposed research methodology appropriate to achieve the goals of the project (based on the full Scientific Proposal)
- To what extent does the proposal involve the development of novel methodology (based on the full Scientific Proposal)
- To what extent are the proposed timescales and resources necessary and properly justified (based on the full Scientific Proposal)

2. Principal Investigator - Intellectual capacity, creativity and commitment

- To what extent has the PI demonstrated the ability to propose and conduct ground-breaking research?
- To what extent does the PI provide evidence of creative independent thinking?
- To what extent have the achievements of the PI typically gone beyond the state of the art?
- To what extent does the PI demonstrate the level of commitment to the project necessary for its execution and the willingness to devote a significant amount of time to the project (minimum 50% of the total working time on it)? (based on the full Scientific Proposal)

If you have a particularly low score, you *may be prohibited from submitting ERC bids for up to two years*.

Further information

- The call documentation is available on the EU Research Participant Portal: [ERC-2020-STG](#)
- Success rates in previous rounds:

ERC-2015-StG	ERC-2016-StG	ERC-2017-StG	ERC-2018-StG
10%	13% (UK rate 13.9%)	13%	12.7%

- Budget in 2020: €677m (€580m in 2019; €605m in 2018)
- It is expected that the PIs will be able to start their projects within 6 months of receiving an invitation letter from ERC.
- **Process at Newcastle:** Applicants are advised to have an early conversation with their Head of Academic Unit and ensure that they have their support before proceeding with an application.
- **Further information:** Please contact Dajana Dzanovic (Dajana.Dzanovic@ncl.ac.uk; ext: 85373) or Victoria Bainbridge (Victoria.Bainbridge@ncl.ac.uk ext: 84588).

² Ongoing and submitted grants and funding