

MRC Board and Panel Observer Scheme 2025

Overview

Apply to become an MRC Board or Panel Observer

The Medical Research Council (MRC) is offering the opportunity to observe a board or panel funding meeting, providing valuable insight into the decision-making processes at the MRC.

The opportunity is aimed at early to mid-career researchers who are transitioning to independence as defined in [skills and experience to win support](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/mrc/skills-and-experience-needed-to-win-support/).

[<https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/mrc/skills-and-experience-needed-to-win-support/>](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/mrc/skills-and-experience-needed-to-win-support/)

This forms part of MRC's commitment to [the development of people and skills](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/mrc/) and will prioritise places for underrepresented groups.

Personal details

Thank you for taking the time to apply for the MRC Board and Panel Observer Scheme.

We encourage you to complete the form in full, although for some questions you can select 'prefer not to say'. Your answers will be treated confidentially and will be stored securely in accordance with UK law and UK Research and Innovation's [data protection privacy policy](https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/privacy-notice/). This information will not be used for any purpose other than prioritising places on, and analysis of, the MRC Board and Panel Observer Scheme.

Title

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Dr
- Mr
- Mrs
- Ms
- Mx
- Professor
- Other, please state:

Name

Forename *(Required)*

Surname *(Required)*

Contact details

Email Address *(Required)*

Phone Number *(Required)*

Organisation

Organisation Information

Affiliations with multiple organisations

If you are employed by or affiliated with multiple organisations, please provide the details of your most relevant current employer/ role.

Career breaks

If you are still affiliated with an organisation please provide their details or you can put that you are currently on a career break. If you are not affiliated with an organisation please provide geographical location under address.

Current employer *(Required)*

Current job title *(Required)*

Type of organisation *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- University
- Industry
- MRC Unit/Institute
- Other (please specify)

If other

Organisation Address, including Postcode *(Required)*

What region are you based? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- East Midlands
- East of England
- London
- North East
- North West
- Northern Ireland
- Scotland
- South East
- South West
- Wales
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire
- International

Link to your profile on your organisations website

Time Zone

In which time zone do you most frequently reside? *(Required)*

Eligibility

We welcome applications from researchers who are potential applicants to one of the [MRC funding opportunities](https://www.ukri.org/councils/mrc/guidance-for-applicants/application-timelines/) (or equivalent schemes from other funders).

To be eligible to apply, you must be based at an [eligible research organisation](https://www.ukri.org/publications/mrc-guidance-for-applicants/application-and-policy-guide-for-the-ukri-funding-service/#section-who-can-apply-and-how-to-apply->) and fulfil one of the following criteria:

- at a stage in your career where you are [transitioning to independence](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/mrc/skills-and-experience-needed-to-win-support/) (see 'Skills and experience' career stage 'Transition to independence')
or
- a research technical professional, if you are applying to the Equipment panel (see 'Equipment panel applications')

Equipment Panel applications

For the Equipment Panel, as well as those transitioning to independence, this opportunity encourages research technical professionals who are seeking to enhance their career development and/or are beginning to think about applying for grants.

Developmental Pathways Funding Scheme (DPFS) applications

We recognise that DPFS applications can start and finish at any stage on the developmental pathway. This includes stages from early development, through pre-clinical refinement and testing to early-phase clinical studies and trials (up to phase 2a), including research that is highly multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary.

Therefore, under the observer scheme we welcome applications from all relevant scientific disciplines working in clinical or preclinical translation within the MRC remit.

Eligibility

Are you based at an eligible research organisation? Please refer to the eligibility criteria above. *(Required)*

Please select only one item

Yes

No (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)

Ineligible

You are **not** eligible to apply if:

- you have already established your own research group
- you already hold a substantial grant as fellow or project lead (a substantial grant is typically defined as three or more years long and including salary support for one or more additional team members or comparable award from any organisation)
- you currently have an application for review by the requested board or panel, for example, as project lead, project co-lead, researcher co-lead, staff or project partner
- you have participated in an equivalent board or panel with another funder
- you have previously observed an MRC board or panel meeting

Have you established your own research group? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Yes (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- No

Do you hold a substantial grant as fellow or project lead? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Yes (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- No

Do you have an application for review by the requested board or panel as project lead, project co-lead, researcher co-lead, staff or project partner? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Yes (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- No

Have you participated in an equivalent board or panel from another funder? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Yes (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- No

Have you observed an MRC board or panel meeting? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Yes (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- No

How would you describe your career stage?

For more information on MRC's definitions of career stages please see: [biomedical research roles and career pathways](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/mrc/biomedical-research-roles-and-career-pathways/) <<https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/developing-people-and-skills/mrc/biomedical-research-roles-and-career-pathways/>> and our [interactive career framework](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20190401114243/https://mrc.ukri.org/skills-careers/interactive-career-framework/#/home) <<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20190401114243/https://mrc.ukri.org/skills-careers/interactive-career-framework/#/home>>

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Apprenticeship (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- BSc, an undergraduate degree (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- MSc, a postgraduate degree (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- PhD, a postgraduate research degree (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- Postdoc (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- Research technician/ officer (Equipment Panel only)
- Laboratory/Facility Manager (Equipment Panel only)
- Junior career fellowship
- Intermediate career fellowships
- Tenure track
- Lectureship
- Senior postdoc/ staff scientist
- Research/technology specialist (Equipment Panel only)
- Senior research/technology specialist (Equipment Panel only)
- Senior career fellowships
- Group leader (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- Associate professor (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- Principal research fellow (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- Professor (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- Director (unfortunately, you are not eligible to apply)
- Other please state:

If other

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion information

Why we're asking

Conducting diversity monitoring as part of our initiatives is one of the ways in which we seek to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion in all we do to ensure that the opportunities we provide embrace a diversity of people, backgrounds, geographical locations, and perspectives.

The confidential information obtained in this section will be used for monitoring purposes and will be stored securely in accordance with UK law and UK Research and Innovation's [Data protection policy](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/UKRI-31072023-Data-Protection-Policy-v2.4-072023.pdf) <<https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/UKRI-31072023-Data-Protection-Policy-v2.4-072023.pdf>> This information will not be used for any purpose other than to allocate places on, and analysis of, the MRC Board and Panel Observer Scheme.

Additionally, where there is evidenced need, MRC may take appropriate and proportionate interventions including in final application decisions. This is in accordance with our duty to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

While it is voluntary to share this information, doing so will also help us to:

Identify underrepresentation – where we need to do more to attract people from certain underrepresented groups to apply for the scheme.

Ensure fairness – by reviewing our processes to ensure they are fair and transparent, and do not have an adverse impact on any particular group.

Assess impact – and track progress, and the extent to which we are achieving our diversity and inclusion aims.

Respond to individual needs – of observers, such as through providing reasonable adjustments.

Meet our obligations – under the Equality Act 2010 and Northern Ireland equality legislation.

Your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence. We handle personal data in line with UK data protection legislation and manage it securely. For more information, including how to exercise your rights, read our [privacy notice](https://www.ukri.org/about-us/privacy-notice/) <<https://www.ukri.org/about-us/privacy-notice/>> .

To find out more about how we are advancing equality, diversity and inclusion, or for any queries about this questionnaire, please have a look at our [MRC](https://www.ukri.org/about-us/mrc/our-policies-and-standards/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-at-mrc/) <<https://www.ukri.org/about-us/mrc/our-policies-and-standards/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-at-mrc/>> and [UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/our-work/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/) <<https://www.ukri.org/our-work/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>> webpages or contact equalitymrc@ukri.org.

We recognise that some individuals may still regard this information as private and have therefore included the option of 'prefer not to say' in all categories.

Sex and gender

What is your legal sex? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

If other

How would you describe your gender identity? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Man
- Non-binary
- Questioning or unsure
- Woman
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe

If other

Sexual Orientation

How would you describe your sexual orientation? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Asexual
- Bisexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Heterosexual/straight
- Queer
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer to self-describe

If prefer to self-describe

Ethnicity

How would you describe your ethnicity or ethnic background? *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Arab or Arab British
- Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British – Chinese
- Asian or Asian British – Indian
- Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British – Other
- Black or Black British – African
- Black or Black British – Caribbean
- Black or Black British – Other
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – White or White British and Asian or Asian British
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – White or White British and Black African or Black African British
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – White or White British and Black Caribbean or Black Caribbean British
- Mixed or multiple ethnic groups – Other
- White – British
- White – Irish
- White – English
- White – Scottish
- White – Welsh
- White – Northern Irish
- White – Gypsy, Irish traveller, Traveller or Roma
- White – Other
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Disability

Definition of disability/long term condition

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is Disabled 'if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out day-to-day activities'. 'Substantial' is defined by the Act as 'more than minor or trivial'. An impairment is considered to have a long-term effect if:

- it has lasted for at least 12 months
- it is likely to last for at least 12 months, or
- it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person.

Day-to-day activities are not defined in the Act, but they could be things people do on a regular or daily basis; for example, eating, walking, reading, writing or having a conversation.

In Northern Ireland, Disability is defined in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability or long-term health condition? This could be a visible or non-visible health condition. *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

If yes, please select the following that apply to you or "Prefer not to say":

Please select only one item

- Blind or have a visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
- D/deaf or have a hearing impairment
- Development condition that you have had since childhood which affects motor, cognitive, social and emotional skills, and speech and language
- Learning difference such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D
- Long-term illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy
- Mental health condition, challenge or disorder, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety
- Physical impairment (a condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, lifting or carrying)
- Social/communication conditions such as a speech and language impairment or an autistic spectrum condition
- Prefer not to say
- An impairment, health condition or learning difference not listed above (specify, if you wish).

Further information about your disability or long-term condition and any reasonable adjustments required. We endeavour to support you to fully participate in the scheme, should you be successful.

Socio-economic background

What was the occupation of your main household earner when you were about aged 14?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Modern professional & traditional professional occupations such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer, accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer.
- Senior, middle or junior managers or administrators such as: finance manager, chief executive, large business owner, office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager.
- Clerical and intermediate occupations such as: secretary, personal assistant, call centre agent, clerical worker, nursery nurse.
- Technical and craft occupations such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver.
- Routine, semi-routine manual and service occupations such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant, HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff.
- Long-term unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year).
- Small business owners who employed less than 25 people such as: corner shop owners, small plumbing companies, retail shop owner, single restaurant or cafe owner, taxi owner, garage owner.
- Other such as: retired, this question does not apply to me, I don't know.
- Prefer not to say

If other

Expertise

Which boards or panels are you applying to and most align with your area of expertise?

Appreciating that potential observers expertise may span a number of boards and panels you can select a first and, if appropriate, a second option.

If your expertise aligns with only one MRC board or panel, select your first choice and choose 'I only want to observe my first choice' as the second choice.

If successful you will be assigned to observe one meeting in 2025. Refer to the recruitment webpage and [MRC's research portfolio and priorities](http://www.ukri.org/councils/mrc/remit-programmes-and-priorities/) <<http://www.ukri.org/councils/mrc/remit-programmes-and-priorities/>> for information on remit.

First choice *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Applied global health research board (May)
- Applied global health research board (November)
- Developmental pathway funding scheme panel (May)
- Developmental pathway funding scheme panel (September)
- Experimental medicine panel (June)
- Experimental medicine panel (December)
- Infections and immunity board (July)
- Infections and immunity board (November)
- Molecular and cellular medicine board (June)
- Molecular and cellular medicine board (November)
- Neurosciences and mental health board (June)
- Neurosciences and mental health board (November)
- Populations and systems medicine board (June)
- Populations and systems medicine board (November)
- MRC Equipment Panel (April/May)

Second choice *(Required)*

Please select only one item

- Applied global health research board (May)
- Applied global health research board (November)
- Developmental pathway funding scheme panel (May)
- Developmental pathway funding scheme panel (September)
- Experimental medicine panel (June)
- Experimental medicine panel (December)
- Infections and immunity board (July)
- Infections and immunity board (November)
- Molecular and cellular medicine board (June)
- Molecular and cellular medicine board (November)
- Neurosciences and mental health board (June)
- Neurosciences and mental health board (November)
- Populations and systems medicine board (June)
- Populations and systems medicine board (November)
- MRC Equipment Panel (April/May)
- I only want to observe my first choice

Our board and panel meetings can be held virtually, in person or a hybrid of both.

If you are selected to observe an MRC board or panel meeting please indicate how you would be able to attend. We will not always be able to offer your preferred option.

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Virtually (via Zoom)
- In person
- Either of the above (no preference)
- Either of the above (preference to attend virtually)
- Either of the above (preference to attend in person)

List your key areas of your expertise

List the key and broader areas of your expertise that align with the board or panel's [research portfolio and priorities](http://www.ukri.org/councils/mrc/remittance-programmes-and-priorities/) . Please ensure that your expertise is relevant to the board/panel you are applying to observe.

30-60 words **(Required)**

Consent

Your answers will be treated confidentially and will be stored securely in accordance with UK law and UK Research and Innovation's [Data protection policy](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/UKRI-31072023-Data-Protection-Policy-v2.4-072023.pdf) . This information will not be used for any purpose other than allocating places on, and analysis of, the MRC Board and Panel Observer Scheme.

We'll monitor and evaluate applicants' data at an aggregate level which will help ensure we meet our aims and develop future ways of working. We may:

- share anonymised, aggregated data with our executive leadership team
- share this with other funders or other sector bodies for the purpose of sector research and analysis
- publish anonymised, aggregated data on our website.

I give consent for the information collected in this form to be used as set out above.

(Required)

Please select only one item

- I consent to the use of the information I've provided in this form for the above purposes

How did you hear about this scheme?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Email from MRC
- MRC website
- MRC newsletter
- Word of mouth
- Professional body
- Research office/organisation
- Social media
- Event or conference
- Other, please state:

If other