Materials for Digital Devices Webinar: Q&A

11 November 2024

Access the full call: https://prosquared.org/materials-for-digital-devices/

Can a research fellow be the Principal Investigator (PI) or Co-Investigator (Co-I)?

The PI must be an academic on a permanent contract, or a contract that will last longer than the duration of the project, at an institution eligible to receive UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funding. Requirements are the same for a Co-I with the exception of the need to hold a permanent post.

Can anyone eligible for Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) funding can apply to this call?

Funding must go to a UK institution eligible for UKRI/EPSRC funding. The PI must meet the eligibility requirements outlined in the call guidance.

Is it more important to have an industry partner than a Co-I?

It's fine to have a Co-I, an industry partner, or both; one is not more important than another. The key thing is to have the expertise needed to support the proposal and to ensure from a research perspective that there is collaboration taking place.

Is the call open to international collaborators?

Yes, but the funding must go to a UK institution eligible to receive UKRI funding.

For the budget, what can be costed and what cannot be costed? For example, are things like travel to conferences, equipment, and Researcher or Post-Doctoral Research Associate (PDRA) time eligible expenses?

All of those are eligible. Both Directly Incurred and Directly Allocated costs can be included.

As a company we're not eligible to receive funding directly. Can we be a subcontractor to an academic PI?

Yes, you can be a subcontractor, but the application cannot have only a PI and subcontractor. You'd need a Co-I or a partner at minimum in addition to a PI.

What's the expected research outcome?

There are many possible outcomes. The four challenges outlined in the call give an idea of what we're looking to see. Be sure to consider how you plan to disseminate the findings widely. There are a lot of papers out there on emerging materials, but these may be overlooked by non-academic audiences. We want to ensure that the wider community of people making digital devices can make use of any great new materials or novel applications of existing materials.

Can a PDRA be a Co-I?

Yes they can, but please ensure that funding from this call does not contravene any terms and conditions of existing funding they may already be on.

How can I attract an industry partner, given that they aren't eligible to receive funding? Can they be a subcontractor? Should they help fund the project?

In terms of what expenses an industry partner can claim, travel is eligible, but it's true that they don't get funded in the same way as academics. Typically, the draw for industry partners to engage with an academic is the opportunity to investigate something that would be risky for their organisation to research on their own. Participating in academic research is lower risk as it's already funded. This allows industry to help to create something that will be beneficial to their organisation without funding it themselves. Make sure the proposed work will be genuinely beneficial to your

partner in order to make it appealing. Another potential benefit to a partner is the possibility of funding a PDRA through the project who could be seconded to the partner's organisation.

When does the project start? As a PI, is it possible to take a career break (e.g. pausing the project and then starting up again)?

Projects will start in April 2025 and last 12 months. Some career breaks are eligible for pausing the project for a pre-agreed period of time, please contact us at admin@prosquared.org to confirm eligibility for the break you had in mind.

What's your dream for this project? At the end what are you hoping for?

It's hard to be specific, as there are a lot of interesting materials out there. In spaces like the arts and puppeteering for example, a lot of great materials are out of reach. We'd like to see some really cool materials being brought into making devices that are different and creative, but we don't want to bias any proposals by being too specific. The focus of the call is applying materials to devices; however, we're looking for new materials or new applications of existing materials that go beyond a single use case so that they can be replicated by the wider community. Ensure your proposal enables others to do what you can do with that material. To clarify further, we're not necessarily expecting brand new materials. You could also find a way to make an existing material more accessible to others (e.g. by creating tools to enable its wider use).

Is there any kind of networking group (e.g. a LinkedIn group) being set up for people who are interested in this call?

The members area of the pro^2 website is the best starting place to look for collaborators, as you can find contact details there for people and organisations open to networking. You can also filter the list of members by interest to help narrow your search. To access it, please register for free as a member of the network. Members also receive periodic newsletters with information about upcoming events and funding calls. Some matchmaking is possible for this call, please contact us at admin@prosquared.org for help with this.

How many projects will be funded?

A maximum of three projects will be funded for this call.

Is the maximum funding of £80,000 representative of 80% full Economic Cost (fEC) or 100%?

£100,000 is available at 100% fEC, so £80,000 represents 80% fEC (the amount which will be provided by the network to each successful project).

Do we also need letters of support from partners?

Yes, these are required alongside a completed application form.