

Lancaster  
University



Research Services

*How to write a Case for  
Support*

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## Introduction

The Case for Support is a central part of all Research Council applications. Research Councils have developed their own individual approach to this section (please see links below), which is why it is important to understand the following ten pieces of advice:

### 1. Refer to funder guidelines

Before writing your Case for Support ALWAYS refer to your funder, and specific guidance they offer on developing this section. This will include information on font size, word count, but may also give some useful indication of what your funder is looking for in this section. There is also guidance to be found on Je-S too. Read the guidance before you do anything!

### 2. Write clearly

A good case for support is written clearly and concisely. It is a good idea to use simple language and to keep technical terminology to a minimum. End each paragraph reiterating why this project is important and impactful.

### 3. Justify EVERYTHING

Remember, you are convincing your assessors to fund this project. To this end, you will need to justify everything you propose. Why have you selected this particular research method? Why do you believe it will be effective? How do you know? Cite literature if this helps to back up what you are proposing. Why have you selected this conference to present at? Who will be there? How do you know?

### 4. Explain how the research is exciting and original

You are convincing your assessors to fund your project. Take care to argue how novel your approach is and how well it will succeed.

### 5. Identify potential problems; pose solutions

Your assessors will in likeliness recognise potential pitfalls and risks. It is better that you address them in the proposal, resolved with workable solutions, than ignore them, and leave the assessor thinking that your proposal is too risky to be funded.

## 6. Introducing your research project

Your introduction should set the aims and objectives of your proposed research, briefly outlining the main work on which the research will draw, with references. Any relevant policy or practical background should be included. This section works best when you write it after you have written the rest of your case for support. Write this section last when you have refined and articulated what you are actually proposing to do. This is so you can capture your latest thinking, which may be modified as you develop your Case for Support.

## 7. Previous track record

You may be required to provide a summary of your recent work. Keep it relevant. Reference work that you have completed for the funder, and work outside of this remit. Highlight where your previous work has made a significant contribution. Remember to include any relevant collaborative work. It is also important here to outline the expertise available at Lancaster University, but also of associated/collaborating organisations.

## 8. Research questions, research hypotheses, research importance

This should be a detailed, clearly written section, where you are arguing how your research project is a crucial and unique solution to a significant problem. Again, this section is best written after you have described your project – what you are going to do and how you are going to do it. This is where you leave your assessor in no doubt as to what you are proposing, and why it is important, and what benefit and impact your research will have.

## 9. Research methods, resources, discoveries and dissemination

Your Case for Support should include a full and detailed description of the proposed research methods; what resources will be used; what the project will discover; and how discoveries will be disseminated: Although the Research Councils will have different headings, the information required by each will be similar (another reason to read the instructions first – make sure you know what your funder is looking for). In this section you will continue to convince your assessor even further that this research is important, you are the person to undertake the research, and that this research needs to be funded.

## 10. National importance

EPSRC include a national importance section, to justify why this proposal should be funded by the UK taxpayer. Although this requirement is not true of all funders, it is important to demonstrate how the research proposed relates to your funder's research areas and strategies, and how this complements existing research activity.

### Useful links

#### AHRC:

- [Case for Support guidance](#) (AHRC)
- [Funding Guide](#) (AHRC)

#### EPSRC:

- [Case for Support guidance](#) (EPSRC)
- [Funding guide](#) (EPSRC)

#### ESRC:

- [Case for Support guidance](#) (Je-S – ESRC)
- ESRC [guide to writing a good bid](#)
- [Funding Guide](#) (ESRC)

#### NERC:

- [Funding guide](#) (NERC)

#### MRC:

- [Case for support guidance](#) (MRC)
- [Funding Guide](#) (MRC)