

NetDRIVE Second Call Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Please confirm if by “any single institution (i.e. any single legal entity)” you are referring to the whole organisation (e.g. University), rather than the individual departments/institutes/units within the organisation?

A: It refers to the University as a whole, rather than to individual departments. This means we can accept only one application per category from each University.

Q: What is the average cost and duration you’re expecting to see in each of Community projects, early career topics and Champions application?

A: We are expecting proposals up to £100k for open community projects, up to £50k for early career topics. For champions, we expect the main costs to be staff time, which should be 0.2FTE over 24 months. Reasonable travel and subsistence costs can be included (costs of attending annual general meetings will be covered by the core budget and should not be included in proposal budgets). Community projects should complete by end of September 2027, champion awards will run until the end of March 2028.

Q: I have noted the importance of the knowledge translation plans in the supporting guidance, but not seen a relevant space for this in the application form. Is this to be included separately?

A: The knowledge translation plans should be described within the "Social and economic impact" section.

Q: Am I eligible to apply? My first academic appointment began in October 2021. I am based at a UKRI-eligible institution.

A: For the purpose of this call, we adapt the 2014 REF guidance (<https://2014.ref.ac.uk/about/guidance/faq/all/index.html>) : "An individual is deemed to have started their research career from the point at which they held a contract of employment of 0.2 FTE or greater, which included a primary employment function of undertaking ‘research’ or ‘teaching and research’, with any HE or other organisation, whether in the UK or overseas, and they undertook independent research, leading or acting as principal investigator or equivalent on a research grant or significant piece of research work. Individuals qualify as early career for five years after the point at which these two conditions were first fulfilled, with extensions allowed for career gaps or part-time working."

Q: Regarding the restriction of just one application per university, does it apply to the PI only, or does it also apply to collaborators?

A: This applies to the PI only.

Q: Regarding the drop-in sessions: do you already have dates for this?

A: Drop-ins will be held on 11:00–12:00 on 12 and 17 September 2025

Q: Contracts are issued in January for successful projects. However, the template application form says starting "between April and June 2026". Would there be any way to start earlier e.g. in January/February?

A: Yes, earlier start is possible. The date of contract issue is not guaranteed, so if you wish to start early, please consider whether your institution has flexibility for working in advance of formal exchange of contracts.

Q: What is the maximum level of funding? The call just says applications below £50k are small?

A: We are expecting proposals up to £100k for open community projects.

Q: Is NetDRIVE open to applications from private sector consultancies OR not-for-profit companies - as well as Universities?

A: Yes, this funding call is open to independent consultants.