

STFC Public Engagement Nucleus Awards

The 2019 call for STFC Public Engagement Nucleus Awards is now open for applications to Stage One. The call closes at 16:00 on 8th November 2018.

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We Want To

- Encourage and support novel, high-quality public engagement activities that highlight STFC's science and technology
- Create a network of highly-skilled practitioners of public engagement with STFC science who inspire and involve colleagues, students, and the public, in their activities
- Highlight the achievements of STFC science and technology, demonstrating the excitement of research and the value of STEM to the UK

Our Expectations of Our Nucleus Award Holders

- Delivering high-quality public engagement activities during the lifetime of the award
- Raising the profile and standards of public engagement within their host organisation or professional community, including sharing best practice and developing new talent
- Championing STFC science and technology, including the impact of science and technology on society
- Regularly interacting with STFC's public engagement and communication teams, including participation in STFC networks, events, and advisory structures when requested

1.0 STFC Public Engagement Nucleus Award – Overview

1.1 Scheme Remit

STFC Nucleus Award holders undertake high quality programmes of novel public engagement that inspire and involve target audiences with stories of STFC science and technology. Award holders may also use Nucleus Awards to create and sustain public engagement networks that develop communities of practice.

1.1.1 Engagement Programmes

Proposed engagement programmes must clearly focus around the remit of the STFC science programme (astronomy, solar and planetary science, particle physics, particle astrophysics, cosmology, nuclear physics and accelerator science) or clearly and demonstrably align to the science and technology work of STFC's national and international laboratories and facilities.

Nucleus Awards will not be awarded unless there is a strong and demonstrable link between the proposed activities and STFC science and technology.

1.1.2 Network and Capacity Building Programmes

Nucleus Awards may also be used for activities that are dedicated to developing community networks or capacity building in public engagement. This may be the sole purpose of a Nucleus Award, or an application may combine engagement activities and networking into a coherent package.

1.1.3 General Points

Applicants should use their proposal to clearly explain how their Nucleus Award will further the aims of the [STFC Public Engagement Strategy](#).

Applications that highlight the social, ethical, and economic benefits of research are welcomed.

Applicants are encouraged to propose novel or innovative approaches towards engagement as part of their Nucleus Award, as long as these are demonstrably well-planned.

STFC focuses heavily on evaluation and applicants must provide a clear evaluation plan showing details of how the outputs, outcomes and impacts of the Nucleus Award will be captured and evaluated. As outlined in section 1.7.2, we require applicants to report on the outcomes of their Nucleus Award in line with the [STFC Public Engagement Evaluation Framework](#), which describes our approach towards effective engagement. We suggest that applicants should familiarise themselves with the STFC Public Engagement Evaluation Framework and consider how the Framework could be used to evaluate their engagement programme.

We encourage applications that propose engagement with audiences considered to have low 'science capital'. Applicants may choose which audiences to engage with, and the methods of engagement. These must be outlined in the proposal.

Nucleus Awards will not be awarded for the sole purpose of authorship and publication of books and novels, though proposals in which the production of a book is an output of a wider programme will be considered.

1.1.4 What the Scheme Will Not Fund:

The following costs are ineligible for support via Nucleus Awards:

- Projects where the target audiences are not primarily UK residents
- Fees or honoraria to people already in paid employment to visit or give talks at schools, societies etc. where such activities would reasonably be undertaken as part of their normal duties
- Costs for hardware or equipment over the individual value of £10,000
- Infrastructure funding or costs for building construction and maintenance
- Projects where it is clear that the whole project would go ahead irrespective of STFC support
- Retrospective funding, including those projects with a start date after the closing date but before the funding decisions are announced
- Contingency funds

For applicants from or for schools, note the following ineligible costs:

- Programmes of formal education
- School trips to CERN and trips to other laboratories, observatories & science venues unless they are intrinsic to a wider public engagement project

1.1.5 Nucleus Awards for New Digital Content

We will only consider funding digital content (e.g. websites, videos etc.) as an intrinsic part of a wider engagement programme. Any application for digital content needs to include:

- A demonstration of the 'evidence of need' for any proposed content, and/or gaps in current provision of such material
- Evidence that the target audience for any content will be involved in the design and production of such content
- A plan (and budget) for keeping the content sustainable in the future
- Information on licensing in order to promote sharing and re-use of the digital content
- Acknowledgement of web accessibility rules and regulations

1.2 Host Institution

Organisations that apply must be based in the UK.

STFC can only fund organisations that have audited accounts. If this does not describe your organisation, you must work in partnership with an organisation that can receive the funding on your behalf.

1.3 Applicant Eligibility

Almost anyone can apply for a Nucleus Award, including grant funded researchers, STFC scientists and engineers, facility users, schools, museums, science communicators, universities, colleges etc.

The Principal Applicant must be eligible to apply on behalf of the organisation that would hold the award.

Every application must include a researcher in an STFC-funded area of science or technology. While these researchers often play an active role in delivering the engagement activities, this is not mandatory – they may act as an advisor on the scientific content.

If applicants have any questions about applicant eligibility, please contact the [Public Engagement Team](#) and we will advise on how you may proceed.

1.3.1 Previous Applications

Applicants may apply for a Nucleus Award for any new idea, or to resubmit a previous application that can demonstrate it has addressed feedback received during the peer review process.

Applicants seeking funding for the continuation or evolution of a programme previously funded by STFC should apply for a Legacy Award.

1.4 Scheme Value & Costings

The scheme comes under the Full Economic Costs (fEC) framework. The maximum value that may be sought by organisations covered by fEC is £125K, and the maximum payable by STFC is £100K. For non-fEC organisations, the maximum that can be applied for (and awarded) is £100K.

1.4.1 Fund Headings

The Public Engagement Nucleus Award scheme falls under the Full Economic Costs (fEC) framework. Therefore, all costs that contribute to the FEC of the proposal should be included under the cost headings as shown in the [‘Applying for a grant’](#) section of the STFC Research Grants Handbook. As the Nucleus Award scheme has no capital budget, applicants cannot request funds under the Equipment heading (as outlined in section 1.1.4).

1.4.2 Use of Funds

Other than restrictions described in 1.1.4, there are no set restrictions on the type of costs that may be applied for. For example, contributions to salaries, cost of materials, and travel & subsistence are eligible.

1.5 Duration and Award Start Dates

Applications can vary in duration but would normally be expected to be for up to 36 months in duration. The earliest start date for an application submitted to Stage 1 of the scheme would be 1 April in the following calendar year.

1.5.1 Nucleus Award Process Timetable

Call Activity	Indicative Timetable
Stage One call announced	10 September 2018

Stage One call closes	8 November 2018 at 16.00
Stage One panel short-lists applicants for interview	Mid-December 2018
Stage Two call announced	20 December 2018
Stage Two call closes	24 January 2019 at 16:00
Stage Two independent reviewer comments requested	February 2019
PI responses to reviewer comments	February 2019
Stage Three Interview panel	March 2019
Awards Announcements	March 2019
Nucleus Awards start	From 1 April 2019 onwards

1.6 Scheme Flexibility

STFC intends this scheme to be flexible and reserves the right to deal, as it thinks fit, with application of unusual character and to waive any rule at its absolute discretion.

1.7 Scheme Conditions & Features

STFC Public Engagement Nucleus Awards are governed by the grant conditions as set out in the [Research Grants Handbook](#), unless otherwise stated. Applications are accepted and awards are made on the understanding that research organisations and Nucleus Award holders agree to observe the terms and conditions and the scheme requirements set out in this document and any amendments issued.

1.7.1 Movement between Institutions

Applicants must take up the award at the host institution identified in the application. STFC will not allow a Public Engagement Nucleus Award holder to change their host institution prior to taking up an award. Consideration will be given to requests during the course of an award to relocate the grant to a different institution for scientific or domestic reasons. The agreement of the institutions concerned will be required before seeking approval from STFC.

1.7.2 Reporting & Liaison with STFC

Public Engagement Nucleus Award holders will be required to provide reports of activities to the [STFC Public Engagement Team](#) when requested. STFC reserves the right to request periodic information or to visit the Public Engagement Nucleus Award holder. Nucleus Award holders will be expected to meet with the STFC Public Engagement grants mentor a minimum of twice a year.

The Nucleus Award holder may also be asked to attend meetings to exchange information and ideas with others undertaking STFC Public Engagement activities. The Public Engagement Nucleus Award holder must make all reasonable efforts, if so invited, to respond to requests for information or to attend events or activities organised by the Research Council concerning the research undertaken. Such events may be held after a grant has finished.

Public Engagement Nucleus Award holders will be expected to attend an annual meeting of all STFC Public Engagement Award holders.

Public Engagement Nucleus Award holders are expected to regularly update the record of their grant using the Research Council reporting tool, ResearchFish, in line with the [STFC Public Engagement](#)

[Evaluation Framework](#). This enables STFC to easily extract data regarding the impact of the work of our Nucleus Award Holders whenever required, and serves as a database of outcomes and impacts for an award holder's own reference.

1.7.3 Publication, Resources & Acknowledgement of Support

Publications and other forms of media communication, including media appearances, press releases and conferences, must acknowledge the support received from STFC, quoting the grant reference number if appropriate.

Resources produced as a result of any grants should acknowledge STFC as the funding source using the standard format agreed by funders and publishers and detailed in the additional information accompanying this grant.

In order to ensure appropriate coordination and opportunities to increase the impact of engagement, external media activity produced as a result of this award must be signed off by the STFC Media team before the activity takes place, or is published. This includes press releases, online videos and media briefings. Award holders are responsible for giving STFC sufficient notice in advance of activities such that STFC can advise on content, and/or build the activities of grant holders into our own communications and engagement programmes.

It is the responsibility of the research organisation, and all engaged in the research, to make every reasonable effort to ensure that the intellectual assets obtained in the course of the research, whether protected by intellectual property rights or not, are used to the benefit of society and the economy. Outcomes and resources should be disseminated and/or made available to both research and more widespread audiences - for example to inform potential users and beneficiaries of the research.

Unless stated otherwise, the ownership of all intellectual assets, including intellectual property, and responsibility for their application, rests with the organisation that generates them.

STFC may, in individual cases, reserve the right to retain ownership of intellectual assets, including intellectual property (or assign it to a third party under an exploitation agreement) and to arrange for it to be exploited for the national benefit and that of the research organisation involved. This right, if exercised, will be clearly set out in an additional grant condition.

There should be suitable recognition and reward to researchers who undertake activities that deliver benefit through the application of research outcomes. The research organisation must ensure that all those associated with the research are aware of, and accept these arrangements.

1.7.4 Liability

It is a condition of every grant that STFC accepts no liability for the manner in which the work in connection with the grant is undertaken, and the research organisation and Nucleus Award holder will be responsible in all respects for the work and the consequences of it.

1.7.5 Termination of Awards

A grant may be terminated, or its conditions varied, at any time at the absolute discretion of STFC. Should the Nucleus Award holder leave their institution for another research organisation or an alternative type of employment, they must notify the [Public Engagement Team](#) immediately. If it is not possible to transfer the grant then STFC will terminate payments from the day immediately after the Nucleus Award holder leaves the host institution. Failure to submit reports will result in termination of the award unless there are mitigating reasons.

2.0 How to Apply

2.1 Submitting an Application *via* Je-S

Applications for Public Engagement Nucleus Awards are submitted *via* the Research Councils' Joint [Electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#). If your organisation is not currently Je-S registered you can self-register *via* the [Je-S system](#). This will allow your organisation to apply to the call without going through the full registration process. If your application is successful, RCUK will contact you in order to help you with the full registration process.

The full Je-S registration process can take up to four weeks so if you do want to fully register please leave yourself plenty of time before the deadline. Please contact the Je-S helpdesk on (01793) 44 4164 or *via* [e-mail](#) to get registered. You will need to give the name and contact details of the organisation together with details of the scheme/call you are applying for.

Applicants from HEIs are advised to contact their host organisation's Research Administration as soon as possible; they will be able to give advice about costing your proposal and internal procedures relating to submitting an application through Je-S. Your Public Engagement Nucleus Award application must be costed and submitted by the host organisation.

Emailed or hard copy applications will not be accepted and the page limits outlined below will be strictly enforced by STFC. If any of the supporting documents exceed the specified limits, only the pages within the limits will be considered. The documents must be submitted as .pdf attachments and should conform to the font and margin guidelines in the [Je-S Helptext](#).

2.2 Process Overview

Public Engagement Nucleus Award applications are submitted via Je-S.

Nucleus Awards are assessed by a four-stage peer review process:

- **Stage One: Outline proposal submission.** Applications are discussed by a peer review panel, who invite a number of proposals to Stage Two of the process.
- **Stage Two: Full proposal submission.** Invited applicants produce expanded proposal documentation that is assessed via written peer review commentary.
- **Stage 3: Panel interview.** All Stage Two applicants attend a panel interview that will explore their proposal in more detail.
- **Stage 4: Funding Decisions.** Final funding decisions are taken on by STFC on the basis of peer review evidence from Stages Two and Three of the process.

2.3 Documents Required

2.3.1 Stage One – Outline Proposal

Together with the relevant Je-S application form, you will need to provide the following attachments:

- **Outline Proposal** – maximum of two sides of A4. The Outline Proposal should conform to the font and margin guidelines in the [Je-S Helptext](#) and must include the following:
 - A short overview of the proposed Nucleus Award.
 - The rationale for the Nucleus Award, showing how activities will contribute to meeting the stated aims of the [STFC Public Engagement Strategy](#).
 - A description of the key personnel involved in the project with details of who is responsible for delivering the different aspects of the Nucleus Award.
 - A high level justification of resources that allows reviewers to make an informed judgement on whether the resources requested are appropriate for the proposed programme.
 - Details of the target audiences and how they will be reached through the proposed activities.
 - An outline of the evaluation approach.

- **Letters of support** from any project partners (see section 2.4).

To create the document in Je-S you will need to select the following options:

- Council: STFC
- Document Type: Standard Proposal
- Scheme: Public Engagement Awards
- Call: Nucleus Awards (Stage 1) 2019

At this stage we only require minimal information for this call and request that you complete the following sections:

- Project Details
- Applicants
- Resource Summary
- Objectives
- Summary
- Classifications
- Previous Support

However, you will note that there are other sections which are also mandatory on the scheme e.g. Aims and Project Personnel, so to pass validation please enter "n/a" or "see case for support" in these text boxes.

2.3.2 Stage Two – Full Proposal

Together with the relevant Je-S application form, you will need to provide the following attachments:

- **Case for Support** – maximum of eight sides of A4. The Case for Support should conform to the font and margin guidelines in the [Je-S Helptext](#) and must include the following:
 - A short overview of the applicant's **track record** in public engagement with science and technology. This track record should focus on areas relevant to the application;
 - A **rationale** for the Nucleus Award, showing the overall aims, anticipated outcomes and how activities will contribute to meeting the stated aims of the [STFC Public Engagement Strategy](#);
 - A clear plan for **engagement activities** the applicant intends to undertake during the Nucleus Award. Applicants should provide details of their plans to deliver these activities, including how they will effectively engage their target audiences, identification of potential risks and appropriate mitigation strategies;
 - A plan for the delivery of appropriate **network & capacity building** activities the applicant intends to undertake during the Nucleus Award. Where reasonably possible, applicants should provide details of their plans to deliver these activities, including potential risks and mitigation strategies;
 - An **evaluation plan** showing details of how the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the activities will be captured and evaluated;
 - A **dissemination plan** detailing how resources, learning outcomes, outputs, etc. will be made available to wider audiences.
 - **Justification of Resources** – a maximum of two sides of A4. This justifies the requested funds applied for in an application.
 - Should allow reviewers to make an informed judgement on whether the resources requested are appropriate for the proposed programme;
 - Should explain why the resources requested are appropriate for the programme proposed taking into account the nature and complexity of the proposal. It should not be simply a list of the resources required as this is already given in the Je-S form.
 - All items requested in the Je-S form must be justified.
 - Any proposals requesting items that would ordinarily be found in a department, for example non-specialist computers, should include justification both for why they are required for the project and why they cannot be provided from the research organisation's own resources (including funding from indirect costs from grants).
 - Further details of how costs should be justified can be found in the 'Supporting Information' section of the STFC Research Grants Handbook.
- **Letter(s) of support** from any Project Partners (see section 2.4). These must be resubmitted from Stage One, and can be supplemented with any additional statements of support gathered in the intervening time.
- Names of two reviewers, independent of the applicant's organisation – one or both of whom will be asked for reviewer comments if the applicant is called for interview.

2.4 Project Partners and Letters of Support

STFC public engagement awards are often partnerships between the grant holders (who apply for and receive financial support from STFC) and 'project partners'. Such partnerships are not a requirement of STFC support, but will strengthen a case for funding when they are deemed well-planned and important for delivery of an impactful programme.

Before an application is made, STFC requires that applicants create proposals that commit the involvement of all parties required to make the proposed programme a success. If an organisation wishes to receive funds from STFC, it must be a listed applicant on the grant. If an organisation will not receive funds from STFC but will have an integral role in the proposed programme, that organisation is a project partner. We encourage applicants to create these partnerships in advance of submitting an application for funding, and to include details of the partnership in the application. Well-constructed partnerships strengthen proposals by providing complementary skills and knowledge, additional staff time, and additional cash or 'in-kind' support.

As part of the application process, project partners are invited to provide a 'letter of support' alongside the main body of the application. This letter is read alongside the proposal's Case for Support, and is considered as part of the peer review process. A well-written letter of support will confirm the organisation's commitment to the proposed project by articulating the benefits of the collaboration, its relevance to the partner and the potential impacts of the programme in the eyes of the partner. The letter of support should also identify the period of support, and detail the range of 'in-kind' and financial contributions offered by the partner.

Letters of support can be **up to two sides of A4 in length**. A letter must be dated clearly, within six months of the submission date of the application. To provide assurance that the project partner has authorised the proposed contribution or commitment, the letter should be signed by a named contact, stating the capacity in which they are providing the sign-off. Letters of support are submitted electronically alongside the grant application, *via* the Je-S system.

Letters of support must show meaningful contribution to the proposed public engagement programme – letters featuring supportive language but offering no contributions to the project are of little-to-no value, and should not be included.

Should an applicant state in their proposal that the involvement of a party or organisation is important to increase the chances of success of their proposed programme, these organisations must be included as either applicants or project partners. Applications received without these collaborations in place by the point of submission will not be supported.

2.4.1 STFC National Laboratories and Employees as Project Partners

STFC employs hundreds of scientific and technical staff, alongside our own team of public engagement professionals based at our laboratories across the UK. Applicants for public engagement funding are welcome to seek to include STFC as project partners on public engagement applications where relevant, subject to the guidance above. **Applicants must contact STFC staff at least four weeks in advance of the submission deadline** if they consider STFC involvement to be important in making their proposal a success.

Should applicants wish to discuss the ability of STFC to participate in their proposal; the following individuals are appropriate first points of contact for the major national laboratory sites:

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory	Daresbury Laboratory	UK Astronomy Technology Centre
Sophy Palmer Public Engagement Manager	Phill Day Public Engagement Manager	Olivia Johnson Public Engagement Manager
✉: sophy.palmer@stfc.ac.uk ☎: 01235 445 950	✉: phill.day@stfc.ac.uk ☎: 01925 603 231	✉: olivia.johnson@stfc.ac.uk ☎: 0131 668 8263

STFC reserves the right to choose not to participate in proposals at our own discretion. Please note that applications involving STFC as a project partner are treated no differently to other applications in the peer review and funding decision process.

2.5 Assessment Process Overview

2.5.1 Stage One – Outline Proposal: Sift Panel

All applications are initially discussed by an independent panel of peer reviewers. The peer review panel will have a range of expertise in outreach, engagement, education and communication of science and technology. The panel will also have knowledge of STFC facilities and grant funded research.

The panel selects a number of applicants to go forward to Stage Two of the scheme. The panel uses the **Stage One assessment criteria** as the basis for selection for interview:

- Has the applicant clearly described the different engagement/networking/capacity building activities planned as part of the Nucleus Award?
- Has the applicant clearly identified their rationale for the proposed programme, and provided suitable evidence of the need for such work?
- Does the applicant detail key personnel who are going to carry out the proposed programme of work and do they have the necessary expertise to do so effectively?
- Has the applicant provided a high level breakdown of the costs and are they appropriate for the proposed programme of work
- Has the applicant identified the target audience(s) for their activities and how they intend to reach them?
- Has the applicant provided a credible overview of their approach towards evaluating the activities proposed?
- Is the proposal accompanied by a strong Letter of Support from project partners?

We aim to advise all applicants of the outcome of their Stage One application within six weeks of the closing date. Applicants who are successful at Stage One will receive feedback on their application and will be invited to submit a second application, via the Je-S system, for consideration under the following peer review processes.

Applicants short-listed on the basis of their written application will be provided with feedback on any aspect of the application that the panel would like to explore further at the stage 3 interview. Feedback will also be provided to applicants who were unsuccessful *via* Je-S.

The decision(s) of STFC are final.

2.5.2 Stage Two – Full Proposal: Written Peer Review

Written peer review comments will be sought on applications that make it through to Stage Two. These peer reviewers are selected from those that the applicant has nominated, and those identified by the Public Engagement Team.

Applicants will be given the opportunity to respond to the comments made by reviewers, through the PI Response process.

Peer reviewers are required to comment on the **written assessment criteria**:

- Relevance How well the proposal matches the aims of the STFC Public Engagement programme.
- Impact Whether the proposed activities would make a significant impact in terms of the numbers reached and the effect on the audience.
- Planning & Delivery If the planned delivery of the project is likely to achieve the declared objectives.
- Cost Effectiveness The overall cost-effectiveness of the project, taking account of target audience numbers and likely impact
- Publicity & Marketing Whether there is a clear plan for publicising the project and marketing the proposed activities/resources to the target audience and does the proposal show how the outcomes of the project will be disseminated to other scientists and communicators
- Evaluation Whether there are appropriate stated criteria for the success of the Nucleus Award and quantitative and qualitative means of evaluating them.
- Overall Assessment What the overall quality of the proposal and whether the proposal is considered to be fundable.

2.5.3 Stage Three – Panel Interview

Applicants are required to attend a panel interview, during which they will have an opportunity to give a brief overview of their proposal, followed by detailed questioning from the panel members. Applicants are welcome to bring along up to two other members of the project team who may wish to contribute to the presentation and the question and answer session. Please note that STFC does not reimburse travel expenses for attendance at the panel interview.

The interviews will be held on a single day, usually in mid-to-late March. Interviews typically comprise of a ten minute presentation during which the applicant may give a brief overview of the project, but should focus their presentation on addressing matters raised by the written peer review comments thus far received. This presentation is followed by a question and answer session of around thirty minutes. Aspects of the application that have been raised in the earlier peer review stages, or feedback provided, can be addressed in either part of the interview.

The panel will assess the applicants on the day of the interviews, based on the **stage three assessment criteria**:

- Does the applicant have a suitable track record in public engagement or outreach?
- Does the application make clear how the proposed programme matches the aims of the [STFC Public Engagement Strategy](#)?
- Has the applicant clearly described the different engagement activities planned as part of the Nucleus Award?
- Has the applicant clearly described how they plan to play a prominent role in building networks and/or the capacity for public engagement within their community?
- Does the applicant have the necessary expertise to carry out the proposed programme of work effectively?
- Has the applicant clearly identified their rationale for the proposed programme, and provided suitable evidence of the need for such work?
- Has the applicant demonstrated the clear planning required to achieve the declared objectives of the Nucleus Award?
- Has the applicant proposed an effective and suitable plan for evaluating the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of all proposed activities?
- Has the applicant proposed a suitable plan for publicising the outcomes of the Nucleus Award, and disseminating any resources/activities produced to wider audiences?
- Is the proposal accompanied by a strong Letter of Support from project partners indicating strong buy-in to this application?

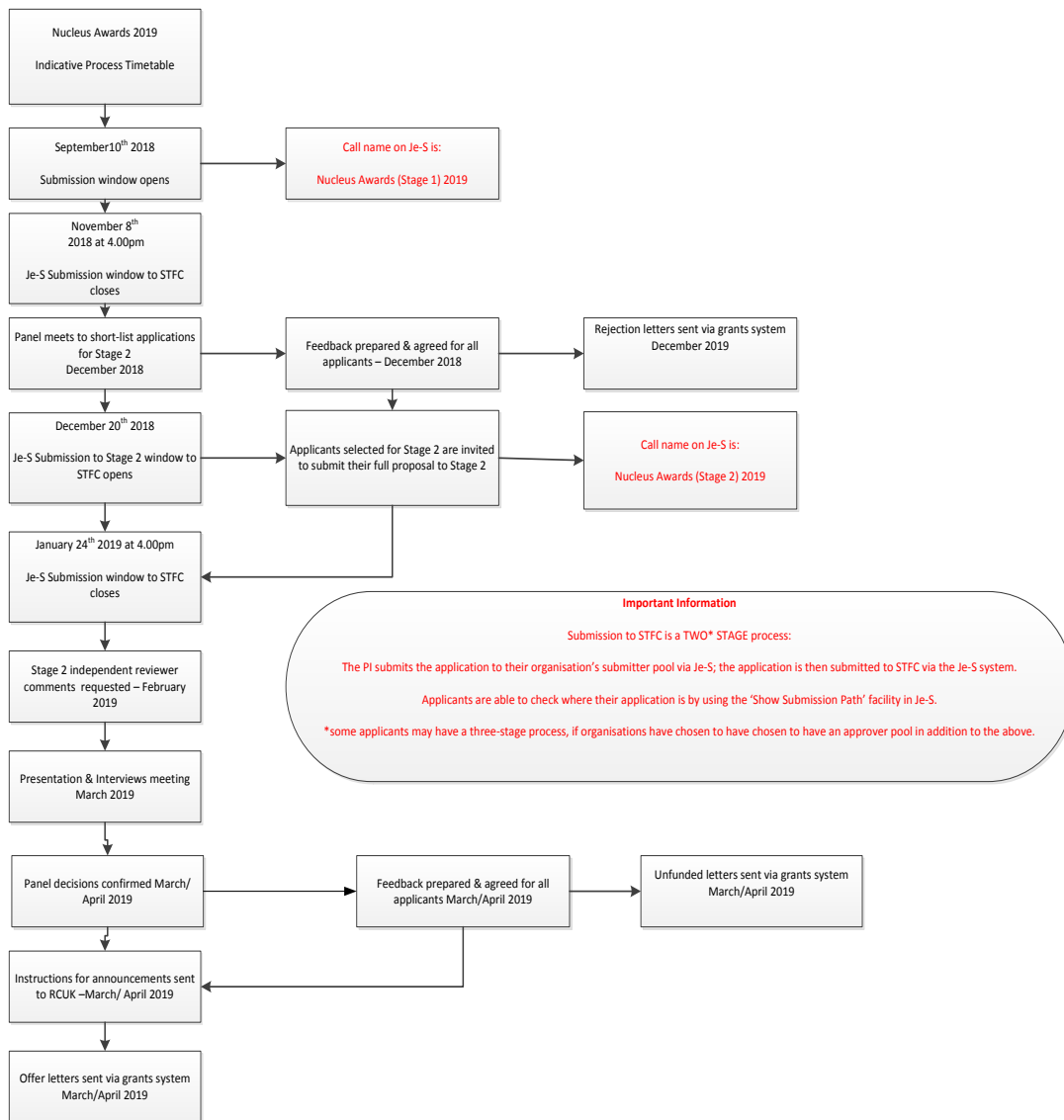
2.5.4 Stage Four – STFC Funding Decision

The panel will make final recommendations for funding on the day of the interviews, based on their assessment of the applicant's interview performance against the panel assessment criteria, and the written peer review.

Based on the recommendations from the interview panel, STFC will then take decisions regarding which applications are funded. The STFC Public Engagement Team will then prepare feedback for all applicants. Once this is approved by the panel Chair, it will be added to the Je-S system and applicants notified officially of the outcome of their application. It is the intention that this process is completed within two weeks of the stage three panel meeting.

The decision of STFC is final.

2.6 Process Flowchart



3.0 Contacts and Enquiries

Before submitting your application you are encouraged to contact the [Public Engagement Team](#) to discuss your ideas and eligibility for the scheme.