

**Resilience of the UK food system in a global context third call:
Transforming the food system for health, sustainability and resilience across
production and demand**

Sandpit for Early-Career Researchers at lecturer level or equivalent

Q&A

1. Why have you restricted eligibility for this sandpit to people working at lecturer level or equivalent?

We analysed the existing portfolio and found that the first two calls had a high proportion of projects (both funded and unfunded) led by people who had progressed beyond 'senior lecturer' in their career paths. We felt it was important to address this imbalance, and that this would be best achieved by creating a funding opportunity solely for people working at lecturer level, rather than by more passive promotion to a specific group of people. Further to this, we are expecting proposals which are disruptive in nature, and as with all activities funded through the programme, are interdisciplinary. We saw value in encouraging people along this interdisciplinary, disruptive way of thinking, at an earlier point in their careers.

2. I am a postdoctoral researcher. Am I eligible?

Generally, people working at postdoctoral research assistant level are **not** eligible. However, as per section 3 of the [BBSRC grants guide](#), recipients of postdoctoral fellowships which were secured through **open competition** are eligible.

3. What do you mean by 'lecturer level or equivalent'?

We have been working under the expectation that academic career paths can be as follows:



We expect that at the 'postdoctoral research post' part of the career path, people are working on pre-defined research projects for which another academic was given funding. Sometimes people working at this level may have significant input into the project design, but ultimately the accountability rests with the academic who secured the funding. People working at this level **would not** be eligible for this sandpit. Instead, we are expecting people who are working at the level where they have been able to secure funding to conduct their own research, through open competition – indicating that they hold accountability for the research outputs of their own projects. Where people have followed a teaching-only career path, we expect that the equivalent to this level of responsibility would be holding a permanent teaching position at a university. By 'or equivalent' we mean that applicants must be able to demonstrate that they are carrying out the full range of

staff academic duties as well as any laboratory research activities and that they are carrying a level of responsibility and a range of duties appropriate to a person with substantial research experience.

4. Is my research institution eligible?

Institutional eligibility is in line with that stated in section 3 of the BBSRC grants guide. More information can be found at <https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/>

5. Do I need to attend both parts of the Sandpit?

Yes, attendance at all parts of the Sandpit is required – the breaking of the Sandpit does not indicate that it is a two-stage process, we have broken it into two halves to reduce some of the strains caused by needing to spend 5 days away from home. Participation in all parts is necessary as the peer review happens during the Sandpit.

6. I have taken career breaks so it has been a long time since my PhD, am I eligible?

Yes. Unlike some new investigator schemes, there is no limit on the time since completing a PhD for this call.