

UK 850 MHz Solid-State NMR Facility Time Allocation Procedure

1. General Principles

1. Time allocation on the Facility will be a “light touch” procedure.
2. The procedures adopted for time allocation will be transparent, fair and acceptable to EPSRC
3. The Time Allocation Panel (TAP) will operate independently from the National Management Committee (NMC) and the local management team.
4. A minimum of 80 % of the available time is to be allocated through the TAP, with the balance reserved for fast-track applications, measurements referred from the EPSRC solid-state NMR service, the Facility Manager’s designated research time and to compensate users who were unable to take up their allocated time because of instrument down-time etc. The NMC will determine the time allocated to each of these usages.

2. Panel Membership

1. The panel will be appointed by the NMC and comprise a member of the NMC and two UK academics. The Facility manager will be ex-officio in attendance. The range of expertise of the members will reflect that of the expected applicants.
2. The standard duration of service will be for two years.

3. Proposals for Time

1. There will be two time allocation rounds per year. Clear deadlines for receipt of proposals will be published. The allocated time will cover a six-month period starting in February or August, being two months after the respective call deadline.
2. Prospective users will fill out an application form via a web-based interface which will also provide clear instructions regarding the expected content of proposals.
3. Applicants must be UK academics who are eligible to apply for responsive-mode Research Council funding or researchers of similar standing based in industry.
4. Applications will contain sufficient background material to set the research in context, a description of the proposed measurements and a justification for the use of *high-field* solid-state NMR. The latter will normally include preliminary measurements made at lower field, for example on model compounds. This section will comprise no more than two pages.
5. In addition, users will be asked to list publications arising from previous allocations of time, to estimate how much instrument time they require, to give details of the personnel who will carry out the measurements and so on.
6. Information will also be gathered to allow the TAP to establish any requirements for training. It is not appropriate that time on the instrument would be used to train users without previous solid-state NMR experience, but an allowance will be made for experienced users of other brands of spectrometer/operating system.
7. There will be a maximum time allocation for any one applicant, but this can be distributed among more than one application. This will be set at 28 days initially, but its level will be reassessed once usage statistics are available.
8. Applications will *not* be accepted from users who have outstanding experimental reports from previous allocations of time. (see 6.2)

4. Panel Meetings

1. Before the time allocation meeting members of the TAP will independently grade the proposals according to their overall scientific merit and the quality of the case made for *high-field* solid-state NMR time.
2. During the meeting the TAP will categorise the proposals: “approved in full”, “approved with a reduced allocation” and “not approved at this time”. Where appropriate, this process will incorporate factors such as the quality of publications arising from previous allocations of time and whether the research is supported by peer reviewed grants or involves students funded by EPSRC or BBSRC. However, these factors will be subordinate to overall scientific merit.
3. Time will be allocated to as many applications as possible commensurate with their rankings and the available time.
4. The TAP will ensure that the balance of the allocated time broadly reflects the research objectives of the original grant.
5. The TAP will provide feedback for unsuccessful applicants.

5. Facility Manager's Role

1. Before the TAP meeting the Facility Manager will calculate the available time, taking account of factors such as scheduled maintenance, problems with previous measurement schedules and the items listed in 1.4 above.
2. During the TAP meeting the Facility Manager will advise the TAP on issues such as the feasibility of the proposed experiments and the accuracy of the applicants estimate of instrument time.
3. After the TAP meeting the Facility Manager will generate a measurement schedule after consultation with the successful applicants regarding their availability.

6. Conditions

1. It will be a condition that the Facility is mentioned in any publication arising wholly or partly from an allocation of time.
2. Furthermore, an experimental report must be produced by the original applicant no later than three months after the end of the specific six-month time-allocation period.
3. The code for all NMR pulse sequences implemented by users on the Facility's spectrometer must be deposited in a shared database. The code will be made available to other users once the pulse sequence has been published.

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