Yellow Research

Writing a Competitive ERC Grant Proposal

Are you considering applying for an ERC Starting or Consolidator Grant in 2026 or 2027? Then it is time to attend this master class and understand what ERC panels are looking for and how the latest ERC revisions acknowledge the different types of 1) research proposals addressing important research questions and 2) track records of Principal Investigators (**PIs**). We will focus on how to use the ERC writing instructions to provide relevant information to the ERC panel members and invited remote referees. The information provided will enable you to develop an excellent conceptual idea and scientific approach and to enhance the likelihood of funding. Now is the right moment to prepare yourself.

The ERC selection criteria questions applied by the panels use terms which have become familiar jargon, such as important research challenge/question, novel concept, proposed research, methodology, and feasibility. Most of these terms are also used by other funding agencies but they are interpreted and applied differently. We will explain in detail not only what these terms mean and imply in the context of ERC, but also how the various ERC panel members use these terms to discuss, assess and select project proposals. We will also discuss how to balance ambitious objectives/innovative concepts with feasibility of the research methodology and track record of the Principal Investigator (PI). This training programme will supply you with the necessary knowledge to write a successful ERC proposal and will be an invaluable aid in meeting the ERC standards and getting one step closer to an ERC award. We will also discuss profiles of competitive PIs and the weighing of the PI into the score on the proposed research.

Using the ERC guide "*Instructions for Applicants*" of 2026 calls we will explain how you can address the ERC selection criterion and guiding evaluation questions and draft a competitive project proposal. For example, we will examine terminology used in the ERC guide and templates and explain how to present a competitive proposal by focusing on high-quality science. We will discuss what defines scientific quality and how the ERC evaluation questions can be used to translate your project idea into high-quality research and methodological approach. How can the term '*ground-breaking nature*' be used to mark the innovativeness or originality of the proposed research and the term '*ambition*' to demonstrate the potential breakthrough and impact on science? How can you balance your ambition with factual evidence for feasibility of the scientific approach and providing contingency plans? How to show that you have the right scientific/scholarly expertise and experience required for successfully executing the proposed research?

We will explain in detail how to address the evaluation criteria and writing instructions and in particular innovativeness and feasibility in view of the disciplinary scope of ERC panels.

1. Training objectives

To provide researchers with a good understanding of:

- the evaluation criteria and how to analyse them;
- how to write a competitive scientific proposal considering ERC panels, scientific challenge and type of research; and
- what evidence makes a PI "excellent" according to the reviewers in different domains/panels.

2. Who should attend?

The webinars will be of value for applicants who plan to submit an ERC proposal. Depending on the scientific backgrounds of the participants we will highlight domain-specific issues.

3. Methodology

The webinars will be in English, with no translation. The trainer(s) will provide practical information and discuss with the participants the requested information, the evaluation criteria and the best strategy for drafting the proposal.

The webinars are interactive and include moments for discussion to promote an exchange of views between participants and trainer(s). Each participant receives an extensive yellow research guide with information on the topics listed.

4. Trainer

Mette Skraastad MSc, PhD, is a founder of Yellow Research and has successfully trained candidates in writing ERC proposals since 2008. She has extensive experience both in running ERC workshops, interview trainings and in pre-submission reviewing of ERC grants. Her knowledge and experience in pre-submission reviewing of ERC proposals is an important aspect of our success in ERC proposal writing training.

5. Programme of ERC workshop

Part I	**ERC in a nutshell** What makes ERC different from any other funding agency?
Part II	**What are ERC panels looking for in step 1?** Scientific Excellence is the sole selection criterion. We will discuss what defines excellent research in the context of ERC and how to balance ambition and a major significant progress. We will discuss the different terms used by the ERC to clarify what kind of research is being funded, addressing the writing instructions for Research Questions, State-of-the-Art, Objectives and Proposed Research (**Part I of the Scientific Proposal**), in view of the ground-breaking nature and ambition.
Part III	**Abstract and Principal Investigator Part** We will discuss how to draft the **Abstract** of the proposed research in view of the ERC objectives. We will also discuss how to address the evaluation questions on a scientific excellent Principal Investigator in **the proposed research and PI part** to underpin your intellectual creativity and capacity in view of the proposed research and required scientific expertise.
Part IV	**Selecting an appropriate ERC panel and keywords** The panel decides to whom the grant is awarded. We will discuss the role of the panel and how to select the most appropriate ERC panel and keywords for your proposal and your track record.
Part V	**How to present Methodology + Appropriateness?** The ERC panels are assessing the appropriateness of the methodologies for achieving the goals set by the proposed research. They assess whether the proposed research and methodologies are feasible based on the information you provide on research objectives, strategy and key intermediate goals (milestones). We will discuss matureness of the proposed research in the context of the proposed research and different disciplines, addressing the writing instructions for the **Part II of the Scientific Proposal.**
Part V	**How to design an implementation plan and justify costs** We will discuss how to structure the B2 part and add a logical work and implementation plan in view of the risks taken to force a potential breakthrough in knowledge. We will also discuss how to put together a good team with required expertise and design working arrangements, addressing the writing instructions for feasibility and contingency plans, addressing the writing instructions for **Part II of Scientific Proposal** and **A3 form**.
INFO	**DATE, TIME, LOCATION and CONTACT** **Live webinars:** webinar 1 from 9.30 till 12.00 (GMT) on Wednesday 13 May 2026, follow-up webinar 2 from 9.30 till 12.00 (GMT) on Thursday 14 May 2026 and wrap-up webinar 3 addressing remaining slides and questions from 9.30 till 11.30 (GMT) on Tuesday 19 May 2026. **Contact: lelia.buretia@warwick.ac.uk**