UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX
Internal Selection Process for applications to **NERC'sPushing the Frontiers**
Guidance for applicants

These guidelines are for PIs who would like to submit a proposal to the January 2026 deadline.

The internal proposal should be a **maximum of 4 pages, single spaced, font 11.**
Please note, in order to be fair to all applicants, anything over the 4-page limit will not be shared with the panel.

When drafting your proposal please note that the internal NERC panel will include colleagues who do not have specialist knowledge of your field of research and therefore should be written with non-specialist reviewers in mind. Use the guidance below to help you draft your internal proposal.

Section 1: Lay Summary
Clearly describe your proposed work in terms of: context, the challenges the project addresses, aims and objectives, and potential applications and benefits.

Section 2: Vision
What are you hoping to achieve with your proposed work? Explain how your proposed work:
- is of excellent quality and importance within or beyond the field(s) or area(s)
- has the potential to advance current understanding, or generate new knowledge, thinking or discovery within or beyond the field or area
- is timely given current trends, context, and needs
- impacts world-leading research, society, the economy, or the environment

Within this section we also expect you to identify the potential direct or indirect benefits and who the beneficiaries might be.

Section 3: Approach
Describe how you are you going to deliver your proposed work. Explain how you have designed your approach so that it:
- is effective and appropriate to achieve your objectives
- is feasible, and comprehensively identifies any risks to delivery and how they will be managed
- uses a clearly written and transparent methodology (if applicable)
- summarises the previous work and describes how this will be built upon and progressed (if applicable)
- will maximise translation of outputs into outcomes and impacts
- describes how your, and if applicable your team's, research environment (in terms of the place and relevance to the project) will contribute to the success of the work

Within this section we also expect you to:
- demonstrate access to the appropriate services, facilities, infrastructure, or equipment to deliver the proposed work
- provide an overview of the key milestones and timelines

Section 4: Applicant and team capability to deliver
Why are you the right individual or team to successfully deliver the proposed work? Evidence of how you, and if relevant your team, have:
- the relevant experience (appropriate to career stage) to deliver the proposed work
- the right balance of skills and expertise to cover the proposed work
- the appropriate leadership and management skills to deliver the work and your approach to develop others
- contributed to developing a positive research environment and wider community

Use the Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) format to showcase the range of relevant skills you and, if relevant, your team (project co-leads, researchers, technicians, specialists, partners and so on) have and how this will help deliver the proposed work. You can include individuals' specific achievements but only choose past contributions that best evidence their ability to deliver this work.

Complete this section using the R4RI module headings listed below. See the **UKRI guidance on R4RI**. You should consider how to balance your answer and emphasise, where appropriate, the key skills each team member brings:
- contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies, or knowledge
- the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships
- contributions to the wider research and innovation community
- contributions to broader research or innovation users and audiences and towards wider societal benefit

Section 5: Ethical and responsible research and innovation
What are the ethical or RRI implications and issues relating to the proposed work?

Section 6: Fit to funder
Why is NERC the right funder for this project? How does the proposed project align to NERC priorities?

Submission process
Applications should be submitted to research.initiatives@sussex.ac.uk by noon 17 October 2025

Applicants will be informed of outcomes by 31 October 2025.