

NERC - Valuing Nature Placement Scheme Round 3 Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Do placements have to be full time?

A: No. However, it is up to the applicant to make the case for how they can undertake a meaningful placement within the one to four month period.

Q: Are there ways in which people with current research commitments could undertake a Valuing Nature Placement?

A: Potential applicants could contact their funders to ask if there is flexibility in delivery of current research awards, so long as overall delivery is not affected. For example, a “no-cost extension” could allow an award holder to undertake a Valuing Nature placement.

Q: Can applicants choose their host institute, or will the VNP list possible options?

A: Applicants should choose their host institute themselves. Potential hosts or candidates for placements are invited to put their details on the Valuing Nature Offers Platform (<http://valuing-nature.net/offers>) - select “Placement” from “Opportunity” dropdown list to see offers contributed so far. The Offers Platform also lists offers from previous funding calls (select “All” from “Opportunity” dropdown list) which may provide further ideas for placements.

Q: What organisations are eligible for this scheme?

A: Awards will only be made to organisations that are eligible for NERC funding (this includes all UK Higher Education Institutions that receive grant funding from UK higher education funding bodies – full details here <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/funding/eligibilityforrcs/>).

Q: Can researchers based outside of the UK apply for placements?

A: Yes, although the focus of this scheme is on increasing the UK’s capability in Valuing Nature transdisciplinary research. Awards will only be made to organisations that are eligible for NERC funding (see above), so applicants will need to secure employment with a UK host organisation for the placement. The scheme will not fund international travel.

Q: Is the scheme open to PhD students?

A: Yes, as long as applicants can take time out from their PhD studies to undertake a placement (this may require authorisation from the PhD institute and funder). The placement can be complementary to the PhD, however, the placement should not be used as an opportunity to conduct research that would otherwise be funded through your PhD.

Q: Does an applicant have to have a home organisation?

A: No, in some scenarios an applicant may not have a home organisation (e.g. if they have recently submitted their PhD thesis). In these cases the applicant should submit a letter of support from the host organisation, covering the issues usually dealt with by the home organisation (as listed in points a & b under section 9 of the application form). Note, awards can only be made to organisations that

are eligible for NERC funding (details above), so in this case the host organisation would need to be eligible for NERC funding.

Q: Is there an age limit for applicants?

A: No.

Q: Does the applicant have to have an employment contract while undertaking the placement?

A: This would be the standard model, with the award being made to the home (or occasionally the host) organisation to cover employment costs. Please contact info@valuing-nature.net if you have specific queries on this issue.

Q: What will be the size of awards?

A: Applications need to specify the amount of resource requested. £130,000 is available to be allocated to successful applications, which was expected to cover 5-10 awards, though this will depend on the amounts requested. The assessment criteria for applications include “value for money”.

Q: What salary will be paid for placements?

A: The salary should be set at a level appropriate to the applicant’s stage of career. For staff currently in employment we would expect salary costs to be at the level of their normal salary. The assessment criteria for applications include value for money.

Q: Can applications cover time for a “home” supervisor as well as a “host” supervisor?

A: Yes, if that is needed to make the placement effective. All costs should be specified and the reasons justified on the application form.

Q: Can host organisations host more than one placement?

A: Yes.

Q: Does NERC’s demand management apply to this call?

A: No. There is no limit on the number of applications submitted to this call per institution.

Q: Can previous Placement Holders reapply?

A: No. If you have already been awarded a Valuing Nature Placement you are not eligible to apply.