

Team Narrative CVs for funding applications: guidance for team leads

Some funders, including UKRI, now require a single narrative CV (R4RI, or Résumé for Research and Innovation) for a team funding application, instead of an individual CV from each team member. This document provides suggestions for preparing a team narrative CV.

We also recommend that you familiarise yourself with [Narrative CVs: A Guide for Applicants](#), which was developed by research support professionals at the University of Oxford to support the preparation of individual CVs for funding applications, and other resources on Oxford's narrative CV [webpage](#).

Background information on the narrative CV, and why funders are using it, is provided on [Page 3](#).

Format

Refer to the specific funding call guidance and download the funder's CV template or equivalent. The length limit may be a set number of pages or a word count. Note that UKRI's Funding Service asks applicants to use the R4RI format within a section entitled 'Capability to deliver', or similar. If allowed by the funder, you could list team members at the top and use their initials in the CV.

Who to include?

Check the funder guidance. For example, the funder may allow you to include individuals who will not have formal leadership roles but are named on the grant and will make a significant intellectual contribution to the research challenge.

Suggested steps

- 1) Gather relevant contributions from team members. You may wish to use the [information-gathering template](#) provided on Page 3.
- 2) Filter the combined lists of contributions from all team members to choose those that make the most compelling case for the capabilities of the team as a whole, in relation to the proposed project.
- 3) Draft text for each of the modules of the narrative CV using the selected contributions.
- 4) Identify potential gaps or weaknesses and improve with further input from team.
- 5) Edit to strengthen the case, and ensure readability and compliance with length requirements.

These steps are expanded on below.

1) *Gather contributions*

We suggest that you use a template with clear guidance to gather relevant information from each team member. An example [information-gathering template](#) is included on page 3. Team members should be asked to:

- Think about their specific role in the project (e.g. providing expertise in a research method, or leading on career development), and provide examples that demonstrate their track-record in relation to that role. The funder may require named individuals for certain roles.
- Provide examples that *best evidence their ability to contribute to delivery of the proposed project*, rather than their default list of 'top' achievements from their standard academic CV.
- Include evidence of the importance and outcomes of the examples provided.

- Highlight activities that involved collaboration with other members of the team, as this may help to strengthen the case. However, individual contributions will also be needed, especially if the team is new.

2) *Filter the examples from team members*

Choose the examples from the team that are most relevant to the project, and ask team members for clarifications if necessary, e.g. if they have stated an output without providing a description of its importance or relevance.

- Pick the strongest entries for each module, based on the skills and experience that your team needs to have – collectively – to deliver the project. Other examples could be mentioned very briefly (see step 3).
- You do not need to include all team members in each module, and the weighting between team members and modules does not need to be equal.
- Focus on the particular skills and experience that each member needs to contribute to the project.
 - E.g. Project director – include evidence of their track-record in leading complex, collaborative projects; Career development/training lead – include examples of how they have supported the development of others; Specific research skills needed for the project – evidence from multiple team members in module 1.

3) *Draft the module text*

Organising the contributions by **theme** rather than by person is likely to be most effective; you can **use sub-headings**.

For example: in module 1 (generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies and knowledge), structure by area of research expertise or the workstreams in the project; in module 2 (development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships), include sub-headings on leadership of complex teams, support for researcher development, and so forth; module 3 (wider research and innovation community), include sub-headings on open research, research culture and EDI, strategic leadership in the research community, and so forth; module 4 (broader research or innovation-users and audiences), themes might include public understanding, influence on policy, and so forth.

There is no fixed structure for how to write the text within each module. For example, you can use continuous prose, bullet points, or a mixture. The length of each module can vary.

This is an example structure you could use for each module.

- **Summary sentence:** the main message that you want a reviewer to notice, such as the collective strength of your team in areas relevant to the application.
- **Sub-headings, with succinct descriptions of the team's strongest contributions grouped by theme:** what the team member(s) did and why it is important, with evidence. This could be in sentences or bullet points.
- **Sentence summarising additional contributions:** a brief mention of other activities or contributions that you do not have space to describe fully but you feel are important for this project.

4) *Identify potential gaps or weaknesses and improve with further; 5) Edit to strengthen the case, ensure readability and compliance with length requirements*

Check your draft against the requirements of the call and the important themes in your project proposal to ensure that you have provided evidence that the team can deliver on all aspects.

Example information-gathering template

You could adapt this example this to fit with the requirements of your funding call. Bear in mind that some of your team members may be unfamiliar with narrative CV formats.

[Project title]

Our team is required to submit a single [\[R4RI/narrative CV – Link to guidance\]](#).

Please use the template below to provide examples from your own activities and achievements that will contribute the building the strongest possible case that our team has the collective capability to deliver the proposed project. We will use the examples that you suggest as a basis for drafting the team CV.

Please return to [email] by [date].

The team narrative CV is intended to outline the team's experience and achievements (individually or collectively) that demonstrate the capability to deliver the project.

Please choose examples that are relevant to this project and provide evidence of their quality and importance. Please describe outcomes, and how you enabled them, rather than just stating activities or outputs. You can include both qualitative and quantitative evidence (avoiding journal-based metrics, such as impact factors). The examples that you suggest for this team narrative CV may differ from the 'top' achievements in your standard academic CV. Please highlight any examples that describe collaborative activities with other members of the team.

You may find it helpful to refer to the [Narrative CV: A Guide for Applicants](#), which was developed by research support professionals in Oxford to support individual applicants and other resources on Oxford's narrative CV [webpage](#).

Background information

Narrative CVs (known as R4RI for UKRI) are designed to help researchers to showcase a wider range of skills and experience than a traditional academic CV. Narrative CVs have modules or sections that allow researchers to frame their contributions to: the generation of new ideas and knowledge; the development of others; the research and innovation community; and broader society. There is flexibility to provide context to explain the broader significance, relevance and impact of your contributions.

Many funders, nationally and internationally, are adopting a narrative CV format for grant and fellowship applications and they are being piloted by some institutions for other uses such as recruitment and promotion. Funders and several universities are coordinating efforts to ensure that their CV templates are similar; this should reduce the amount of time that researchers need to spend preparing different CVs for different applications.

The focus is on quality rather than quantity. The narrative CV format aims to be more inclusive for researchers who have had varied career paths, career breaks, or who have worked across disciplines or sectors. The narrative CV format supports the principles of the Declaration on Research Assessment ([DORA](#)).

Module 1: contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies and knowledge

The most relevant examples are likely to arise from recent research related to the proposed project.

[Adapt based on funder guidance] Examples might include:

- notable contributions, findings and skills acquired from past research
- successes in developing and delivering large scale research challenges
- key outputs such as data sets, software, novel methodologies, research and policy publications

Note: if you are suggesting outputs such as papers, please select the best examples for this call (e.g. 3-6 per person) and for each include a brief description of the relevance to this project, importance to the field, and your contribution.

Module 2: the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships

Examples provided should evidence the team's collective capability to lead and manage the proposed project.

[Adapt based on funder guidance] Examples might include:

- effective leadership and management of large-scale projects or teams
- provision of inclusive team development opportunities including training, rewards, recruitment strategies and mitigation of skill gaps
- strategic leadership in shaping the direction of a project, team or organisation
- management of complex multi-investigator or multisite projects
- training and mentorship

Please provide descriptions of what you achieved through your leadership/management/mentorship, and the success of your approach, rather than a simple list of positions or roles.

Module 3: contributions to the wider research and innovation community

[Adapt based on funder guidance] Examples might include:

- contributions to open research, active sharing of knowledge and skills, community resources
- contributions to collaborations and networks, and other engagement across disciplines, institutions, or countries
- notable examples of influence or responsibility within the research community
- activities which have contributed to the improvement of research integrity or cultures, including equality, diversity and inclusion practices
- examples that show visionary strategic leadership in influencing a research agenda

Note: for the examples you choose, please describe the importance of your contributions to the research and innovation community and relevance to this project, rather than a generic list of roles.

Module 4: contributions to broader research or innovation-users and audiences, and towards wider social and economic benefit

[Adapt based on funder guidance] Examples might include:

- contributions to policy development or public understanding
- successful exploitation of intellectual assets
- other impacts across research, policy, practice and business
- actions to ensure research reaches and influences relevant audiences

Note: as well as describing the activity that you undertook, please emphasise the resulting change. You may need to consider social, economic, environmental, health or cultural benefits, and comment on the scale and depth of the benefit beyond academia.

OPTIONAL Additional information

[Adapt based on funder guidance] You can include information relating to periods that may have impacted your career such as career breaks, secondments, part time work or career disruptions (such as those caused by the COVID-19 pandemic or otherwise), if you wish it to be considered in the assessment.

The additional information you provide will be seen by other team members who are writing the narrative CV, as well as the panel and reviewers, even if it references a sensitive issue. We encourage you to focus on how the issue has affected your career, rather than expanding on the issue itself. Please contact **[name]** if you would like to discuss.