

ERC Evaluation Interviews - FAQs

Following UKRO's [webinar on ERC Evaluation Interviews](#), we gathered some frequently asked questions from the applicants preparing for interviews that attended. These have been gathered here with responses prepared by the National Contact Points and with clarification from the ERC Executive Agency.

Duration of ERC interviews

During the webinar, we stated that the overall duration of interviews was set at 30 minutes. This understanding was based on past experience without seeing each evaluation panels' interview format communicated thus far for the 2021 calls.

These panel-specific rules are provided to applicants as part of their interview invitation, so every applicant who has been invited to an interview will have full details of what to expect and should follow the guidance delivered to them.

In response to queries raised during the webinar we have since clarified that there is no strict ERC rule on overall interview duration, with the [2021 Information for Peer Reviewers Starting and Consolidator Grant Calls pg. 12](#) stating:

"Each panel decides on the exact format of its interviews (duration; number of slides allowed, if any; time allocated to the presentation and to the questions and answers session)."

In 2021 some panels have adjusted the overall duration of interviews above or below 30 minutes.

Talking about yourself as a Principal Investigator

Concerns have been raised about how to present your track record and career development plans as part of an ERC interview.

In general, we expect the tone of the ERC interview to be collegial, international and focused on supporting excellent, frontier research. Apart from variation from one panel to another due to differing research field cultures, there is likely to be a spread of cultural backgrounds represented on each panel which would mitigate against any dominant expectation of how an applicant should or should not behave. We think it is highly unlikely that an applicant would be rejected for not being serious enough in the interview, indeed some successful applicants have said during our webinars that they opened with a funny story that summed up their project. This will not be the right approach for everyone, but it shows that is possible. Our advice is to prepare thoroughly, practice and use feedback to decide how you want to present yourself and to feel at ease so that your proposal can shine through.

In general, we would advise applicants to follow the appropriate ERC Principal Investigator profile for their call when preparing for your interview. These profiles specify the kind of track record and career development at each level. You can find this in your call's respective Information for Applicants document.

Be explicit and open about your personal achievements, qualities and capability. Our experience over the years has been that applicants sometimes present themselves in overly humble terms in their written application and their interview. There is a balance to strike to avoid exaggeration, but you should be clear about anything that demonstrates your fit for the profile and your project objectives.

When thinking about how you come across and how to present yourself, it is worth reiterating that the tip from successful applicants in most cases has been that they decided what the best approach was for them and prepared for the interview by getting as much feedback from a variety of mock evaluators as possible, with some even studying recordings of their own practice performances.

How the PDF version of the applicant's presentation is used

Various queries were received about the way in which PDF versions of the slides might be seen or not seen by the evaluation panel. In our capacity as the UK's ERC National Contact Point, we contacted the ERCEA on this aspect of the process and received the following clarification:

The panel will not see the slides in advance of the applicants' interview. As indicated in the interview letter, if there are technical difficulties for the PI to show the slides from their computer the ERCEA staff will project the slides from the ERCEA computer during the interview.

Panel questions about project management in light of potential COVID restrictions

UKRO, in its capacity as the UK's ERC National Contact Point, contacted the ERCEA to ask whether contingency planning for COVID disruptions would be raised by panelists when interviewing applicants. Their response was:

The Experts may ask anything that they think is appropriate for the feasibility and implementation of the project. The Experts are briefed about the ERC procedure and any other points that is necessary to carry out the Step 2 panel meeting.

More information

- [UKRO Evaluation Interview Webinar recording](#)
- [ERC Interview Explainer Video](#)
- [Guide for Peer Reviewers Starting and Consolidator Grant Calls](#)
- [ERC Rules of submission and evaluation under Horizon Europe](#)

UKRO Portal

- [UKRO Portal](#) (subscriber access required)