

## NERC GEOPHYSICAL EQUIPMENT FACILITY: MINOR LOANS

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This document supplements the GEF loan application guidance notes and loan terms & conditions.

During 2013, the GEF is piloting a relaxed set of requirements for certain smaller loans of equipment, with the aim of reducing the administrative burden on PIs for whom such loans usually play a small, but enabling, part in a larger project. These “Minor loans” will have a streamlined application procedure with a more rapid turnaround, and reduced reporting requirements after the loan period.

**Eligibility.** In addition to the usual GEF conditions, a Minor loan application must meet all of the following criteria (otherwise, the standard GEF application system will apply):

- The only GEF equipment that can be requested in a minor loan is GNSS receivers (up to 4).
- Minor loans must last less than 6 weeks, and should normally commence within 1-3 months of application;
- Minor loans must constitute straightforward non-commercial use of the equipment, within the NERC or other Research Council remit.
- Minor loan applications may only be made by users who can demonstrate previous experience of the type of equipment in question (e.g. involvement in a previous GEF loan).
- A PI or Co-I may not normally apply more than once for a Minor loan in any 6-month period.

The decision as to whether or not an application can be accepted under the Minor loans category rests with the Facility manager.

**Application procedure.** Only the PDF application form is required; the usual attached Case for Support is optional. Minor loan applications will be graded as soon as reasonably practicable, by the relevant Facility Manager and normally two or three steering committee members including the Chair (avoiding conflicts of interest). However, if there is a potential scheduling conflict between a Minor loan application and a standard loan application that is pending review, the decision on the Minor loan application will be deferred until the standard loan application has been considered.

**Scheduling.** The loan may proceed immediately, subject to scheduling and availability constraints, if awarded a suitable grade. Priority is given first to loans already under way, then to Urgency loans, then to standard loans, and finally to Minor loans.

**Extensions.** No extensions are permitted for Minor loans. [A full Urgency application could be submitted to request continued use of the equipment, but must very clearly demonstrate scientific Urgency criteria and merit. The whole loan would then be regarded as an Urgency loan, with normal reporting requirements.]

**Reporting.** The usual brief end-of-loan equipment performance report is required for all loans. However, “Minor loan” users are required only to submit a reduced scientific report consisting of a 300-500 word executive summary describing the experiment and its main scientific findings, including how the GEF equipment was used to contribute to these, plus full particulars of data archiving and research outputs (published, in press, planned, or conference). Further information, figures, etc. may optionally be appended. The reduced scientific report is due within 12 months of the end of the loan (as usual). Users must adhere to the same requirements as standard users for reporting of ensuing research outputs to GEF and NERC in the years following the loan.

**Unsuccessful applications.** If a Minor loan application is unsuccessful, either because it does not meet the eligibility criteria or because it is judged to lack scientific merit, then it will normally only be reconsidered if submitted as a standard loan application (i.e. at the next steering committee meeting, with a full case for support). Exceptionally, a “small loan” application may be given the scientific grade R\* requiring minor issues to be clarified. The loan may then proceed if these are satisfactorily addressed.