

## Discovery Fellowships

Call status: **Open**

Deadline: **6 May 2021, 4pm**

### Summary

The Discovery Fellowship (DF) provides **support for researchers wishing to undertake independent research and gain leadership skills**. The DF will support the transition of early stage researchers to fully independent research leaders. As such, the DF enables BBSRC to supply the UK with highly skilled, professional research leaders.

### Nature of award

Awards are for three years and it is expected that up to 10 fellowships will be awarded, each of a **value of up to £400,000 (80% fEC)**. **Please note:** BBSRC will provide funds of up to £400k (80% of the full economic cost). The total costs (100% full economic cost) requested may be up to £500,000.

This investment can be used to support personal salary as well as travel and subsistence, training activities, and research consumables, **but not equipment**. In addition to this investment, it is also expected that **a substantial demonstration of support for the fellow be made by the host Research Organisation** (see below – value for money). **Proposals from candidates seeking flexible working arrangements** (for example part-time) **are encouraged**; see the Fellowships handbook for further information (see downloads section).

### Value for money

Applicants and host organisations should note that value for money is an essential criterion against which fellowship proposals will be assessed, alongside excellence and other key criteria. For this competition the reviewers and Research Committee E will be looking for evidence that the host organisation will contribute significantly, with financial and/or in-kind support if an award is made. Proposals that do not provide clear evidence that the research programme is highly competitive in terms of value for money, and in providing additional commitments, are unlikely to be successful.

To reflect this, the proposal now requires a template which must be completed by the host organisation Head of Department. This gives detail of the support the host commits to provide and should be attached as the Head of Department Statement, see the downloads section below. In previous rounds, host organisations have offered significant additional financial support, items of equipment or access to additional staff members or students to our fellows. It is expected at a minimum that hosts should provide support in terms of access to facilities, training courses and support for career development.

In addition, the justification of resources attachment must clearly show why the resources requested are good value for money and why it is in BBSRC's interests to provide investment. Also, letters of support from all parties contributing financial or other support should be uploaded to the proposal under the Letter of Support attachment type giving full and accurate details of the commitments to be made.

## Research areas

Proposals can be submitted in any area of science within our remit. We particularly encourage applications that are aligned with our overarching strategic priorities (see related links including our strategic priorities).

If you are unsure whether your project is within BBSRC remit, please contact the Office using the details provided below.

## Background

**Aimed at** researchers who want to conduct their own independent research within a host laboratory and will have strong evidence of working toward this. Applicants will have demonstrated high potential to become future research leaders.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

As part of UKRI, the BBSRC are working proactively to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion in all we do. This allows for maximisation of the impact of our research and innovation to involve and benefit all parts of society. Everything we fund must embrace a diversity of thought, people and ideas.

BBSRC and Discovery Fellowships uphold this commitment. The BBSRC encourages applications from all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria outlined below from all backgrounds regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, neurodiversity, disability, or socioeconomic background. We warmly welcome applications from individuals who may have undertaken non-standard or non-typical academic routes pre- or post-PhD prior to application.

## Eligibility

Applicants should have a PhD or be expecting to have undergone successful PhD viva prior to 30 November 2021. Individuals demonstrating an upward track to pursuing working independently within a host organisation are eligible.

There is no limit on the number of years of postdoc experience. However, applicants should not hold, or have held, an academic position of lecturer level (or the equivalent in institutions other than universities) or an equivalent competitive fellowship that provides the opportunity to establish an independent research group and therefore independent researcher status. Nor should they have had an offer of such an appointment prior to the commencement of a fellowship, if awarded. This applies to both fixed term and permanent positions.

BBSRC would consider fellowships where the applicant is eligible to supervise PhD students or submit research grants as a PI as equivalent to a lectureship. For example, Wellcome Trust Sir Henry Dale Fellowships, MRC Career Development Awards or NERC Independent Research Fellowships. Note: holders of postdoctoral training fellowships such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions can apply. Royal Society Dorothy Hodgkins Fellows who meet the research experience eligibility requirement outlined above may also apply.

Please note that if applicants have previously applied for BBSRC grant funding as a Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator (therefore confirming that they hold a lecturer level or equivalent post) they are not eligible to apply for a fellowship.

Prospective applicants on university “tenure track” fellowships should contact [postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk) to discuss their eligibility.

**Note: DF applicants are not eligible to apply to any additional 2021 BBSRC fellowship competitions or to the UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowship call in the same calendar year. Please see the Fellowship Handbook for further details on eligibility criteria.**

### International applicants

Proposals are welcomed from applicants of all nationalities, subject to the fellowship being hosted by a UK university or BBSRC-sponsored institute.

**Information for Non-European Economic Area Applicants** - From 20 February 2020 all successful applicants who require a visa to work in the UK will be eligible to be considered under the Global Talent route. This replaces the previous Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route. In line with the highly prestigious nature of the award, this visa route is designed for international researchers, who bring new ideas and perspectives, enriching the UK’s research and innovation workforce and enables the holder to be both adaptable and flexible during their research in the UK.

The grant of any visa is always subject to the standard Home Office general grounds for refusal of a visa. UK Research and Innovation is able to provide additional guidance regarding the appropriate evidence required to complete the visa application process under the Global Talent visa. Please contact [globaltalentvisa@ukri.org](mailto:globaltalentvisa@ukri.org) for further details.

**Information for Economic Area Applicants** - EU applicants should refer to guidance on the UKRI website regarding the effects of EU exit (<https://www.ukri.org/research/international/ukri-eu-exit/eu-exit-people-mobility/>).

### Assessment criteria

In assessing proposals Committee E will consider an applicant’s research proposal, personal track record and future plans, and the research environment in which the fellowship will be held.

As such, the research proposal should be sound and of a novelty and timeliness that will add to the understanding of the research area. The applicant should have an excellent track record (accounting for their research experience) and have considered their training needs (as detailed in the Career Development Plan (to be uploaded as type ‘Workplan’), and the research environment should be supportive and the best place for the applicant to carry out their research project and advance their career.

Each proposal will therefore be assessed based on the **project, person and research environment**. Further details of assessment criteria can be found in the fellow’s handbook.

Applicants will be given the opportunity to provide a PI response to reply to comments made by reviewers prior to the assessment meeting.

### How to apply

Log in to [Joint Electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#)

Select **Council**: BBSRC

Select **Document Type**: Fellowship Proposal

Select **Scheme**: Fellowship

Select **Call/Type/Mode**: Discovery Fellowships – 6 May 2021

Click **Create Document**

Proposals will require the following mandatory attachments (see also DF Je-S help text in application downloads below):

- **CV**. You should complete the standard CV template (see application downloads below). This now includes a section to list applicant publications. We do not accept standalone CVs or publication lists.
- **Case for support and track record**
- **Diagrammatic workplan**
- **Data management plan**
- **Head of department statement** (BBSRC has now introduced the use of a template for the Head of Department statement, see application downloads below. BBSRC will not accept a standalone statement)
- **Statement from host group Principal Investigator** (The Principal Investigator of the proposed host laboratory should hold their post for the duration of the fellowship and be of at least lecturer level or equivalent.)
- **Justification of resources**
- **Career development plan** (this must be attached to your proposal to allow submission)

Please note that a **Pathways to Impact Plan is not required** as a separate attachment for this call. This is in line with the [UKRI announcement](#) regarding the removal of the requirement for applicants to submit a Pathways to Impact plan for all its schemes, effective from 1 March 2020. Completion of the Impact Summary section of the Je-S application form is also not required. **Applicants should describe the impact of their planned work within the case for support attachment.** Further guidance regarding changes to the Je-S application form will follow in due course.

**Animal usage mandatory requirement:**

For proposals with overseas animal use, please refer to our grants guide (see downloads section), paragraph 4.18, for details of the additional information for specific species that must be provided with the proposal. All applicants carrying out research involving the use of pigs, whether overseas or within the UK, are required to address the NC3Rs standardised pig questions within the body of the application. For more information please see the Je-S Helptext document.

Fellowships are awarded under full economic costing (fEC). Support for proposed research should be costed in line with the grants guide.

Detailed guidance on how to complete proposal forms and attachments, including the Career Development Plan, can be found in the DF Je-S help text (see application downloads below) and in the Fellowships Handbook (see downloads section). **Note: Please do not use the fellowship help text in the Je-S system.**

**We do not accept late proposals.**

**Important: applicants should ensure proposals are submitted to their host institution's Je-S submitter/approval pool well in advance (a minimum of 5 working days) of the published deadline. This enables institution checks to be carried out before final submission to BBSRC.**

Please also refer to the full UK Research and Innovation terms and conditions, our grants guide and fellowship handbook.

**COVID-19 Guidance**

UKRI recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities and are committed to ensuring that individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career(s) such as breaks and delays, disruptive working patterns and conditions, the loss of on-going work, and role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic.

Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts of the impact that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the track record and career development of those individuals included in the proposal and will be asked to consider the capability of the applicant and their wider team to deliver the research they are proposing. Where disruptions have occurred applicants can highlight this within their application, if they wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.

UKRI acknowledges that it is a challenge for applicants to determine the future impacts of COVID-19 while the pandemic continues to evolve. Applications should be based on the information available at the point of submission and, if applicable, the known application specific impacts of COVID-19 should be accounted for. Where known impacts have occurred, these should be highlighted in the application, including the assumptions/information at the point of submission. There is no need to include contingency plans for the potential impacts of COVID-19. Requests for travel both domestically and internationally can be included in accordance to the relevant scheme guidelines, noting the above advice.

Reviewers will receive instructions to assume that changes that arise from the COVID-19 pandemic, post-submission, will be resolved and complications related to COVID-19 should not affect their scores.

Where an application is successful, any changes in circumstances that affect the proposal will be managed as a post-award issue.

### [Application downloads](#)

#### **Fellowships CV template (DOC 126KB)**

You may need to download additional [plug-ins](#) to open this file.

#### **Head of Department statement template**

You may need to download additional plug-ins to open this file.

#### **Discovery Fellowships: Frequently asked questions (PDF 138KB)**

You may need to download additional [plug-ins](#) to open this file.

#### **Discovery Fellowships: Je-S guidance and summary of information to be submitted (PDF 968KB)**

You may need to download additional [plug-ins](#) to open this file.

#### **Discovery Fellowships: Top submission tips for applicants (PDF 265KB)**

You may need to download additional [plug-ins](#) to open this file.

## Call Deadlines

Application deadline	6 May 2021, 16:00
Reviewing stage	June - September 2021
Fellowship shortlisting for interviews	TBC (October 2021)
Fellowship interviews	TBC (November 2021)
Fellowship award notification	December 2021/January 2022

### **Contact**

[postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk)

Related calls: fellowships people

**Related calls:** [skills and training people](#) [early career fellowships](#)