

The Brian Mercer Award for Innovation

1. Overview

Aim: The Brian Mercer Award for Innovation provides funding for individuals or groups to develop an already proven concept or prototype through to the creation of a near-market product for commercial exploitation, i.e. to a stage where an approach for venture capital becomes a reality.

If the idea or concept is at an earlier stage of development (i.e. proof of concept/early prototype not yet developed) you should apply for the Brian Mercer Feasibility Award which provides initial support to test the feasibility of a project. They enable holders to investigate the technical and economical feasibility of commercialising an aspect of their scientific research, possibly in conjunction with a third party, and to such a point where an industrial or commercial collaboration can be established.

Subjects covered: The award is designed to promote possible commercial exploitation of existing research in the built environment, energy, clean technology and nanoscience/ nanotechnology and is intended to fill the funding gap between the scientific research and the exploitation of the idea through venture capital.

Eligibility: The awards are open to applicants of any nationality who have a PhD (or are of equivalent standing in their profession), who hold a substantive post in a UK university and will be in post at the host organisation for at least the duration of the project. The project must commence within three months of the date of notification.

Applicants may make only one application to each closing date. Applications from individuals or groups who already have established contacts with industrial or commercial collaborators are particularly encouraged.

Length of tenure: The award can be held for a maximum of 2 years.

Place of tenure: The award must be held in a UK University or not-for-profit research organisation.

Value: Up to £250,000 (this figure includes VAT where applicable).

Number offered: Two per year on average.

Closing date: 9th May 2012

Results available: Past experience suggests that results of the competition will be available at the end of July.

Important changes: The time from the application closing date to decision has been significantly reduced. In order to make this possible, the application process has been reduced to a single stage.

2. From Labs to Riches

Applicants who are successful will be invited to the Royal Society annual 'Labs to Riches' event in November 2012, where the Brian Mercer award winners are formally announced. The event is aimed at promoting innovation and wealth creation in science and technology amongst a mixture of academic entrepreneurs, financiers, journalists and prominent industry figures.

3. Commercial Activity

In the event that the outcome of research which is supported through the Brian Mercer Awards for Innovation is exploited, The Royal Society will in principle reserve the right to convert the innovation award grant into equity in any subsequent commercial activity (up to a maximum of the value of the award). The Society will enter into discussions with the award holder and host organisation to agree a fair and reasonable return, which reflects the contribution of the Brian Mercer Innovation award grant to developing the commercial activity. In these cases, further equity investment may also be available by application to the Royal Society Enterprise fund, which provides early-stage equity funding for innovative new businesses emerging from the science base.

4. Completion of application

Applications can only be submitted online using the Royal Society's electronic Grant Application and Processing (e-GAP) system (<https://e-gap.royalsociety.org> or via the e-GAP information link on the front page of the Society's web site). Applications cannot be submitted on paper. Please read the below instructions before you start filling out your application and refer to the guidance notes in the section that follows as you complete the form.

Important e-GAP information

Personal details: Once logged on to e-GAP and before starting your application click *My Details* at the top of the page. Please ensure that this information is up to date.

Automatic log-out: Save your work regularly to prevent accidental loss of text. NB If the system does not detect any activity for 3 hours it will log out and everything that has not been saved will be lost. Typing and moving between tabs within an application is **not** considered an activity, you need to have pressed the Save button.

Loss of work: You should not have multiple browser windows/tabs of your application open simultaneously and only one user should edit an application at a time, otherwise changes might be lost.

Character limits: If you exceed specified character limits the system will not allow you to save (NB that limits refer to characters, not words, and that the count includes spaces). We recommend that you first type and save the text in a word processor and check the character limit before pasting it into e-GAP. Character limits apply to text boxes, page limits to PDFs.

Plain text: When entering plain text, avoid using symbols as some may not be accepted by e-GAP. You should generate a PDF of your application (by choosing 'print' on the form) to check that the application appears as you want it to.

Uploading PDF documents: When uploading PDFs add your name and a heading to the top of every page. Please ensure that there are no security settings activated on uploaded PDFs and avoid uploading documents containing illustrations with fine details or colour as this can cause problems when creating a PDF of the application. Please note we will only print applications in black and white.

Mandatory fields: All fields on an application form that are marked with an asterisk (*) require an entry before the application can be submitted. If a mandatory field is not relevant to you, please enter 'N/A'.

Email addresses: e-GAP relies on automatic email contact. It is therefore essential that you enter email addresses accurately throughout. When you enter an email address into e-GAP it will create a new account if that address has not been seen before, even if the referee already has an account under a different address. Therefore please check what email login referees may already be using for e-GAP to avoid creating multiple accounts. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that the Host Organisation Approver and Head of Department have all been contacted. The Royal Society will not be held responsible for automated emails that are not received due to address errors or spam filters.

Tracking progress: You can track the progress of your application through the submission and review processes by going into your e-GAP account, selecting '*My Applications*' and then '*Manage Application*' for the application in question.

Application sharing: You can allow other e-GAP users to view your draft application, in advance of submission, by providing their email address and entering the permissions you want them to have. They will be able to log in using their existing password and also see and, depending on permissions, amend your application. To do this, the other e-GAP user needs to click on *My Applications* once they have logged on in order to see *your* application.

Application deletion: You can delete your application at any time and will be able to recover it for a period of 7 days afterwards. After this it will be permanently removed from the system.

Application Guidance Notes

Assessment criteria

Applicants should note the following criteria used in assessing applications:

- The primary considerations in the assessment process will be the scientific, engineering and technological excellence of the applicant(s) and the quality, novelty and commercial potential of the proposed project
- The extent of any similar or precursory work undertaken by the applicant(s) as well as any funding provided for the project by other bodies and the overall value for money of the proposal will also be considered in assessing applications
- Priority will also be given to truly innovative proposals which take a project forward from concept to prototype to a point at which the idea could be presented for venture capital support
- Consideration should be given to the future commercial potential of the research

Completing the e-GAP form

In the below table each box represents a tab on the e-GAP application form; the left-hand column contains the questions within each of these tabs as set out in the form; the right-hand column contains useful guidance on its completion. Please read these notes carefully as you fill out the form.

Summary	
Summary table	When your application form is complete, all sections on this table will have a green tick. You will then be able to submit your application.

Applicant personal details	
Title, names, address etc	Take care to complete this accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application.
University and country for PhD	Please provide details of your PhD. If you do not have a PhD but are of equivalent standing in your profession, please give appropriate details.
Co-Applicants	Please list details of any co-applicants (limit 4000 characters). This can also be uploaded as a PDF document if preferred. Information regarding industrial or commercial collaborators will be asked in the Proposal section. (Please keep this to 1 side of A4).

Applicant career summary	
Statement of qualifications and career	Please add a list of the research positions you have held for the last 5 years including dates by clicking 'Add qualification'.
Outline of present research	Please give a brief summary of your research experience as background to the current application. Maximum 1000 characters including spaces.
Publications	List up to five most relevant peer-reviewed publications. You should give full details including the names of all authors, the full title, the journal in which it was published and the date. Papers accepted for publication may be included. Please note that reprints are not required.
Present position	Please state your current position i.e. lecturer, reader etc. Maximum 200 characters including spaces.
Present Employer	Please state where this position is held. Maximum 200 characters including spaces.
Present Department	Your department. Maximum 200 characters including spaces.

Organisations	
Host organisation	Select organisation where the research will be carried out. All applications must be approved by the host organisation authorities e.g. research grants office, finance department etc. (For details, see 'Submission process' section below) Most establishments appear in the drop-down list but if your proposed organisation

is not there, please contact the Royal Society.

It is your responsibility to ensure that your application is complete in time for the host organisation to process it and provide their approval by the closing date. It is recommended that you allow at least 5 working days for this process.

Proposal	
Project Title	Maximum of 120 characters including spaces.
Collaboration	Please list the names of any industrial or commercial collaborators. A supporting letter from each of your collaborators should be uploaded. The letters should confirm their willingness to support your project and give details of the resources they will be supplying, i.e. time or 'money in kind'. These letters should be uploaded in PDF format and be addressed to 'The Chair of the Brian Mercer Award Panel, The Royal Society'. Please note that it is not necessary to post a hard copy of the letters.
Abbreviated title	Please specify your topic from the following: built environment, energy technology, clean technology, nanoscience or nanotechnology.
Start/end date	Use dd/mm/yyyy format. Please note that awards cannot start retrospectively, must be taken up on the first day of the month and that the project cannot not exceed two years.
Scientific abstract	<p>Provide a scientific summary of your proposed project. This should be a summary of your Research Proposal briefly outlining the background and summarising the aims of your project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain text only Please enter a maximum of 3,500 characters including spaces in the text box <p>You will not be able to upload a PDF document for this field.</p>
Patents	Please enter details of any relevant patents which you hold or applying for, including patent numbers and dates of registration. Maximum 1500 characters.
Lay report	<p>Please provide a lay summary of your proposed project. This should be readily understandable by an A-level science student. You should explain why you have chosen to work in this subject area and what it is about your proposed research that you find particularly exciting, interesting or important. Please also explain the potential impact or wider benefits to society of your research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain text only Please enter a maximum of 3,500 characters including spaces in the text box. <p>You will not be able to upload a PDF document for this field.</p>
Project Description	<p>This outline proposal should be a self-contained case for support, stressing novelty and potential applicability. It should include statements on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim and objectives of the proposed project • How the proposal relates to current (or earlier) work of the applicant(s) or other members of the team • The programme of work, including the methods to be used and timescales; • Details of collaborative arrangements • Justification for the choice of the items or equipment in the application • The resources required and hence the case for an award.

	Applicants can include direct project related costs including, for example, contributions towards securing research assistance or essential scientific equipment. Indirect costs and estate costs are not covered by this award. Applicants may not include provision for personal payments to the grant holder(s), payments for the use of financial, personnel and other central or departmental services, library services, administrative, general running or overhead and other unspecified costs, office expenses, photocopying, publishing costs, stationery, postage, telephone, faxes etc. and general premises or accommodation costs.
Strategy Plans	Please provide a detailed business plan, including an exploitation plan (especially whether you have identified any industrial partners for this).
Financial details	
Sum requested from the Royal Society	Please give the total amount requested inclusive of any VAT payable. £250,000 maximum.
Justification	Please justify the sum requested .

Departmental support	
Head of department	<p>Please provide accurate details of your head of department.</p> <p>Please ensure the email address you supply is accurate or there is likely to be a delay in the application process. It is your responsibility to ensure you have the correct email address.</p> <p>Once your host organisation has approved your application an automatic email will be sent to the specified person who is asked to write a short statement of support. Please check that they are able to supply their statement by 16th May 2012.</p>

Equal opportunities	
Equal opportunities	<p>The Royal Society is committed to its policy of Equal Opportunity in the provision of its awards. Please help us to monitor the effectiveness of this policy by providing the information requested.</p> <p>This information will be kept separately from the rest of your application and will not be seen by those involved in the selection process, including referees etc.</p> <p>This section is optional; however the Society would greatly appreciate it if you complete the details. You must either complete the form or tick the box stating that you do not want to complete the form ('Opt Out'). If you do not tick one or other of the boxes the system will regard your application as incomplete and will not allow you to submit it.</p>

5. Submission process

- Once the e-GAP application form is complete, you are strongly advised to create a PDF version of it and check it thoroughly (including email addresses and uploaded PDF files) before submitting it for approval by your host organisation.
- Once you have submitted your application for approval, an automatic email will be sent to the approving department at your host organisation asking them to log on to the system. You will not be able to edit your application after it has been submitted for approval. The approver will either approve and submit your application, contact you to request modifications or decline your application and contact you.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you complete your application in time for the host organisation to process it (including requesting changes) and provide their approval by the closing date. We recommend that you allow at least five working days for this process.
- If your host organisation approver requests modifications through the e-GAP email facility they can unlock your application, allowing you to edit it. Once you have completed the requested changes please use the application summary to re-submit your application for approval. Please also contact your Head of Department and alert them to the changes.
- Once your host organisation has approved your application and submitted it to the Royal Society it will not be possible to make any changes.
- Once the closing date has passed, host organisations cannot approve applications or submit them to the Royal Society and unapproved applications are removed from consideration. No late applications will be accepted.
- When your application has been approved the Head of Department will receive an automated email requesting them to provide their statements on e-GAP. These should be submitted within one week after the closing date.
- We recommend that you check your application is submitted on time. To see details of the host organisation approver and to check the status of your application, log into e-GAP and click on the link to the Application Summary. You will also be able to see whether Head of Department statement has been submitted.
- In the two weeks following the closing date, submitted applications will be checked by the Royal Society. If they conform to the eligibility requirements, the eligibility status on the Application Summary page will be marked as 'Complete'.

Check list

Please use the following check list to ensure that you have completed all stages of the application process by the relevant deadlines:

1. Complete e-GAP application form at least one week before the closing date.
2. Before submitting your application, check that your Head of Department is available and willing to provide a statement by no later than one week after the closing date.
3. Submit application to host organisation approver via e-GAP at least five working days before the closing date.
4. Check that the host organisation approver has approved your application by the closing date.
5. Send Appendix 1 ('Instructions for Head of Department') to your Head of Department.

6. Check that your Head of Department has completed their statement by no later than one week after the closing date.

6. Review process

- All applications for The Brian Mercer Award for Innovation are initially reviewed and assessed by members of the selection panel who have the most appropriate scientific expertise.
- Following this a shortlist is drawn up. The shortlisted applicants are then reviewed by two independent referees who have been suggested by the panel.
- Finally the selection panel considers each shortlisted application together with the independent references at a meeting held in July.
- It is expected that applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application by email by the end of July.
- Some feedback may subsequently be available on request although for those not shortlisted the level of feedback will be limited.

Please be assured that the Royal Society specifically requests anyone involved in reviewing applications to consider them in confidence.

7. Enquiries

If you have any enquiries about the submission of your application or about the e-GAP process, please contact the Grants Team, The Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London, SW1Y 5AG, email: innovationgrants@royalsociety.org or call 020 7451 2539.

Appendix 1

Please pass a copy of these instructions to your Head of Department. Once you have submitted your application for approval they will be contacted automatically by email.

Instructions for Head of Department

Statements can be submitted online using the Royal Society's electronic Grant Application and Processing (e-GAP) system before and up to 5 working days after the closing date.

The e-GAP system automatically logs you out after periods of inactivity (typing is not considered activity). Therefore we recommend that you save your work frequently or, preferably, write your reference in a word processor first and then copy the text into e-GAP, using the following instructions:

1. Go to the e-GAP website: <https://e-gap.royalsociety.org/Login.aspx>
2. Enter your email address. If you have never used e-GAP before, an account will have automatically been generated for you using the email address supplied by the Applicant.
3. Enter your password. If you have forgotten your password, or are using e-GAP for the first time, click the 'Forgotten Password?' link. This will send you an email containing a link from where you will be able to set your password. Please bear in mind that this email will only be valid for 30 minutes after requesting it, so please ensure that you set your password as soon as you receive the email.
4. Click on 'Tasks'
5. Click on 'Reference List'
6. Click on 'Provide Reference' (if you would like to view a PDF of the application first, click 'Print Application', or you may view the application form in its original format by clicking on 'View Application' on screen at the top of the reference form).
7. Complete both sections including:
 - Support - written reference on both the applicant and the proposal.
 - Details of statement provider - Your personal details including your position, institution, department and contact details.Click on 'Save' at regular intervals as you proceed.
8. Click on 'Save' and then 'Submit' (If the 'Submit' button does not appear, one of the mandatory fields, indicated with *, has not been completed. Please check all necessary fields are complete and click 'Save' again – the 'Submit' button should then appear.)

Your reference is then automatically forwarded to the Royal Society.

If you have any questions about providing your reference please contact Geoff Russell on (020) 7451 2539 or email: innovationgrants@royalsociety.org