Royal Society Career Development Fellowships 2025

The following scheme notes set out the eligibility and application process of the **Royal Society Career Development Fellowships 2025 round**. Please read through the entire document before proceeding with an application.

Contents

1. Overview

1.1 Background

A key priority for the Royal Society is to support outstanding scientists and engineers and to attract and retain researchers in the UK. Through providing funding and career development opportunities, we support talented scientists to develop their research ideas and establish independence. Broadening access to academia to talented individuals who are at the beginning of their research career and helping them to achieve their full potential is a key aspect of our work and an essential step in supporting scientific excellence.

The Royal Society Career Development Fellowship aims to increase opportunities for talented researchers from underrepresented backgrounds to establish a successful research career in STEM. With the initial focus on researchers from a Black heritage background, this pilot scheme aims to support the most promising early career scientists and engineers who have just completed (or will shortly be completing) their PhD, providing them with the opportunity to undertake a four-year postdoctoral fellowship. The fellowship will enable the successful candidates to develop their research, benefit from tailored mentoring and training opportunities and gain the confidence and skills required for a successful research career. The fellowship will provide a strong basis to allow the award holders to pursue independent research careers in future, enabling them to apply for further independent early career fellowships.

1.2 Changes to the scheme

- **Applicant Eligibility** – For the second round of the pilot, applications should be submitted by researchers who are UK nationals or have completed a part of their education in the UK through their Undergraduate, Master's or PhD degree studies or hold/have held a postdoctoral researcher position in the UK.

1.3 Aims of the Scheme

The fellowship aims to:

- Support talented early career researchers from underrepresented backgrounds in taking the first step towards establishing their research in a UK institution
- Provide researchers with the opportunity to undertake high-quality curiosity-led research
- Provide the most promising researchers with the mentoring, networking opportunities, training and support required to establish a successful research career in the UK
- Support talented researchers from underrepresented groups to pursue a career in STEM and strengthen the UK scientific workforce

Broadening participation of talented individuals from diverse backgrounds
The Society commissioned two reports to understand: a) where there is underrepresentation of ethnic minority students and academic staff in STEM and b) how the diversity profile of the UK postdoctoral population compares to the applicant pool of the Society's early career fellowship schemes.

The key findings of the reports showed that students from Black heritage are leaving STEM in greater numbers at all stages of the career pipeline in comparison to other ethnic groups, but particularly at the transition from PhD to postdoctoral researcher. The review of the Society's own data demonstrated that there is little representation of researchers from Black heritage in the applicant pool of the Society's early career fellowship programmes. The Career Development Fellowships aim to both increase opportunities for Royal Society funding

for researchers from diverse backgrounds and encourage other organisations to develop targeted interventions across UK STEM Higher Education and the research community. This pilot has been designed to initially support researchers from Black heritage to achieve their full potential, advance in their research career and transition out of studentship into leadership. The evaluation of this pilot will inform potential extension of this fellowship to include additional demographic groups that are also underrepresented in STEM.

1.4 Training and Development

A key element of this scheme is the provision of a high-quality programme of training, mentoring and engagement to support the career development of the successful candidates. This programme will be free to access and in addition to the funding provided as part of the fellowship. The following will be included:

- **Bespoke Mentoring** – award holders will be offered the opportunity to be paired with mentor(s) from a network of professionals from academia and industry who will help them navigating the first year in their fellowship and share their advice and direct experience in how to set up a successful career in STEM.
- **Training and development** – the Society currently offers a range of high-quality training and support that will be available to successful candidates, including:

  - Grant writing
  - Understanding the publishing process
  - Public engagement
  - Scientific Entrepreneurship
  - Media skills
  - Engaging with policy makers
  - Introduction to research team management

- **Peer-to-peer support** and **Networking opportunities** – the Society will facilitate peer support and networking with the wider research community. Successful candidates will have the opportunity to engage with other Research Fellows as well as Fellows of the Royal Society and will also have the opportunity to present their research work at the Royal Society Meeting of Minds conference.

Additional funding will be provided to successful candidates to enable them to procure through their host organisation more tailored technical and non-technical training and development.

1.5 Subjects Covered

Research must be within the Royal Society's remit of natural sciences, which includes but is not limited to biological research, chemistry, engineering, mathematics and physics. For a full list, please see the breakdown of subject groups and areas supported by the Royal Society.

The Society does not support clinical or interventional research on humans at the individual or group level, social sciences or humanities, unless otherwise stated. Submissions from clinically qualified scientists may be considered but please discuss your application in advance with the Grants Team.

Any questions concerning the eligibility of your application should be directed to: CDF@royalsociety.org

1.6 Value of Funding and Support Provided

Core Funding Rules are listed within the [Royal Society Grant Funding Guidance](#). Please note that in instances where Core Funding Rules are in conflict with the Programme Specific Funding rules, the Programme Specific Funding rules included in this guidance document always take precedence.

Programme Specific funding Rules
Applicants are permitted to apply for up to **£690,000**. This is a maximum value over four years (i.e. the total contribution requested from the Society may not exceed £690,000).

An assumed level of inflation should be included for the full duration of the grant. The level of inflation will need to be justified.

Funding can cover:

- **Research Fellow's basic salary costs and associated on-costs** as set by the host institution (80% contribution).
- **Directly allocated** (including estate costs) and **indirect costs** (80% contribution)
- **Research expenses (Other Directly Incurred Costs)**, including consumables, equipment, travel, attendance/presentations at conferences, etc (100% contribution). Funding can also be used to contribute to technical assistance to support the delivery of the fellowship project.
- **Relocation and visa costs** for the applicant and their dependants (partner and children). The total grant cap may be exceeded in order to cover relocation/visa costs if this is well justified in the application.

It is expected that a minimum of £30,000 of research expenses per annum will be requested within the total award value of £690,000. Requests of research expenses below the minimum value of £30,000 in line with the specific research field can be considered and must be fully justified. Please note that these applicants will not be able to request the maximum grant value without a further justification.

Training: a training support package will be provided by the Society during the course of the four years. The training activities are outlined above. In addition to the training opportunities offered by the Society, Research Fellows can include in their research budget a request for up to £5,000 per year to support further technical training and career/professional development activities.

1.7 Duration and start of Fellowship

Expected number of Fellowships offered for the first round: **7**

Fellowships are expected to commence between 1 October 2025 and 1 January 2026. Requests to change the start date of the award will be considered at point of offer. Funding is provided for **four years**.

Flexibility during the Fellowship
The Society allows flexible working arrangements for health reasons or caring responsibilities as part of the fellowship, which can be held either on a full or part-time basis. There is also provision for maternity, paternity, shared parental leave, adoptive or extended sick leave as well as financial support for childcare costs that arise from attending conferences, collaborative research visits or invited talks directly related to the fellowship.

If you would like to hold the fellowship at less than 1.0 FTE due to childcare/caring responsibilities or personal circumstances, **please provide costs at 1.0 FTE in the application**. If successful, you will be able to submit a change in working hours request for consideration and the Society will adjust the payments accordingly.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Applicant Eligibility

This pilot scheme is open to researchers who self-identify as being from a Black heritage background according to the England and Wales Census 2021, including:

- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Black Other
- Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed – White and Black African
- Other mixed background (to include Black African, Black Caribbean or Black Other)

Applicants who identify with one of the ethnic groups listed outside the above categories in the England and Wales Census 2021 would be ineligible.

Applicants must:

- Be **UK nationals** or have **completed a part of their education in the UK** through their Undergraduate, Master's or PhD degree studies or **hold/have held a postdoctoral researcher position in the UK**.

- **Have a PhD or will have a PhD by the time the funding starts.** Applicants who have not yet completed their PhD when applying will require a letter of support from their supervisor. Applicants in the final year of their PhD studies will be eligible to apply but must have completed their PhD examination with minor corrections prior to starting the fellowship. The Society reserves the right to request a confirmation of the successful completion of the PhD examination/viva at the point of offer.

- **Have less than 24 months of full-time postdoctoral experience by the closing date of the round.** Career breaks and additional circumstances that may have affected/delayed your research career will be taken into account when calculating this limit. Please contact the Grants Team for further advice at CDF@royalsociety.org

The Society appreciates that there are diverse research career paths and understands the challenges of managing a research career alongside other personal commitments. When reviewing applicants' eligibility and research experience, the Society will consider time spent outside the research environment (e.g. time away due to personal reasons such as maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoptive leave or other caring responsibilities, ill-health, or working in a non-research environment/role, such as industry).

Furthermore, where applicants have taken formal periods of maternity, paternity, shared parental, and adoptive leave as the primary carer (either the mother, father, partner or adopter), or extended sick leave, the Society will allow an additional amount of time on top of each period of leave when assessing eligibility. Each case will be considered individually as per guidelines below:

Maternity, paternity, shared parental leave and adoptive leave
In addition to the actual time taken off work, an additional amount of time equivalent to 100% of the duration of leave taken will be added on top, up to a maximum of 6 months.

Example 1:

- An applicant has previously taken 4 months' parental leave.
  When considering the number of months post-PhD, the Society will deduct the 4 months parental leave plus a further 4 months (8 months in total).
- If 28 months have passed since the completion of the candidate's PhD, the Society would deduct the 8 months in bullet 1 from the 28 months to calculate the candidate's relevant months of research experience.
- This makes 20 months research experience and therefore makes the candidate eligible.

Example 2:

- An applicant took 12 months' parental leave.
- When considering the number of months post-PhD, the Society will deduct the 12 months leave plus an additional 6 months (18 months in total).
- If 40 months have passed since the candidates completed their PhD, the Society would deduct the 18 months from the 40 months to calculate the candidate's relevant months of research experience.
- This makes 22 months research experience and therefore makes the candidate eligible.

Extended sick leave (defined as more than four weeks off work, as per the UK Government's definition)
In addition to the actual time taken off work, an additional amount of time equivalent to 100% of the duration of leave taken will be added on top, up to a maximum of 6 months. As with parental leave, cases will be considered individually, and the host organisation may need to confirm that the applicant qualifies for this provision. Supporting documents may be requested at the Society's discretion. The Society reserves the right to consider individual requests outside of the outlined policy in exceptional circumstances.

The Royal Society recognises that diversity is essential for delivering excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The Society wants to encourage applications from the widest range of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences to maximise innovation and creativity in science for the benefit of humanity. We regularly review and revise processes to help ensure that all talented applicants have an equitable chance to succeed as per the assessment criteria. This includes ensuring all Panel members are briefed on unconscious bias in decision making as part of our assessment process.

Support for disabled applicants
The Royal Society welcomes applications from disabled scientists and provides support and adjustments to ensure that they can participate fully in the selection process. If you require support or an adjustment when accessing the application form, attending interview, or for any other part of the application process, please contact the Grants team at CDF@royalsociety.org or call +44 20 7451 2666. All requests for adjustments are made in confidentiality. Any request for an adjustment will not normally be shared with Panel members unless it becomes relevant to the selection process itself. If we need to share your request with anyone (for example if Panel members are required to implement any adjustments during interviews), we will ask for your permission first.

Adjustments can include but are not limited to:

- Extension of the deadline
- Additional support to complete the application form
- Receiving the application form in a different format, such as on a Word document
- Support during interviews as required, including technical support for candidates requiring accessibility software or services
- Additional costs that candidates may incur on account of their particular disability to attend an interview.

The Grants team will be pleased to answer questions about eligibility and/or points covered in this section.

2.2 Host Organisation Eligibility

Fellowships must be held in a UK Higher Education Institute (HEI), a UK Research Council supported Research Institute (RCI), a not-for-profit research institute (IRO), or a Public Sector Research Establishment (PSRE). For information on eligible UK host organisations, please see our [Organisations Eligible for Royal Society Research Funding webpage](#).

Candidates are not required to move host organisations for the proposed fellowship. When choosing the host organisation, candidates should consider the suitability of host organisation in building a research environment that would enable them to thrive and support them to achieve their career goals.

2.3 Application Sponsor

It is expected that Research Fellows will be hosted at a UK research institution and supported by an academic sponsor. The applicant's sponsor must be an established independent researcher with prior experience of managing and/or mentoring and supporting early career researchers. The sponsor will commit to supporting training and supervising the successful applicant for the duration of the fellowship, providing opportunities for networking, mentoring and career development through their host organisation and wider networks. In addition, the sponsor will be expected to ensure that the applicant receives the necessary career guidance to progress within the research landscape, to apply for grants and other fellowships, to develop collaborations, and to achieve an independent and successful research career.

The fellowship will be awarded as an independent research fellowship to the applicant. Whilst the research proposal may be closely related to the sponsor's field of research, the fellowship must not be used to supplement the sponsor's research. The applicant must have the autonomy to develop their own ideas and conduct their own research with the support of their sponsor.

Contact between the sponsor and the applicant prior to the application is essential. This contact should lead to a clearly defined and mutually beneficial research project proposal. Applicants are not required to change institution in order to take up their fellowship and they can be sponsored by their current PhD supervisor or a research academic they are currently working with/for or with whom they have worked in the past.

Please note that the Royal Society will not assist applicants in identifying a UK sponsor.

Global Talent Visa
Research Fellows requiring a visa to work in the UK may be eligible to apply for a Global Talent Visa under the Fast-tracked process of endorsement. In line with the prestigious nature of the award, the Global Talent visa is designed for people who are recognised as leaders and potential leaders in their field. Further details can be found on the Royal Society's website: https://royalsociety.org/grants/global-talent-visa-overview/

3. Assessment Criteria and Review Process

3.1 Assessment Criteria

- The ability of the individual to deliver the fellowship project and their potential to develop an independent research career. Track record commensurate with actual research experience including research

career to date, contributions to publications, conferences and seminars, external recognition (e.g. awards), datasets held in repositories, software as well as any experience or commitment to public communication of science.

- The quality of the proposed research project and likelihood of achieving the goals.

- The suitability of host organisation and research environment, the proposed support for career development and the scientific suitability of the sponsor.

By the end of their fellowships, award holders are expected to be strong candidates for independent research fellowships equivalent to University Research Fellowships, Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowships and/or academic posts in institutions.

3.2 Review Process

Applications are assessed by members of the CDF Selection Committee and an 'extended panel' who have expertise in the subject areas covered by the Society's remit. Three Panel members with the most appropriate scientific expertise will review each application using the criteria above. Following completion of this review stage a final shortlist will be drawn up with the oversight of the Chair. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed by the CDF Selection Committee.

The subject tags you select on your application play a vital role in matching your application with appropriate reviewers so it is extremely important to **select only the most relevant subject tags on your application**.

Please be assured that the Royal Society specifically requests anyone involved in reviewing applications to consider them in confidence. More information on the Review Process can be found in Appendix 1.

All applicants will be notified of outcomes via email.

At the end of the round, we will provide unsuccessful applicants with an overview of the main areas of feedback as highlighted by the Panel. Interview feedback will be provided to shortlisted applicants. Additional resources will be made available to unsuccessful applicants to support them in their next career step.

4. Timetable

Opening date	**Tuesday, 24 September 2024**
Closing Date	**Tuesday, 19 November 2024, 3:00 PM (UK Time)**
Interview prep webinar	Week commencing 14 April 2025
Interviews	Thursday 15 May 2025
Expected results	June 2025

5. References and Participants

To complete and submit the application form, the applicant is required to provide supporting statements or references from three individuals. The following individuals must be included:

- UK Sponsor

- Head of Department
- One nominated referee

The primary consideration for a referee is that they are able to comment independently and authoritatively on your application. Your referee should be someone who has worked closely with you and is familiar with your research (for example, a PhD supervisor, mentor, prior collaborator). Please note that you cannot choose your PhD supervisor if they are also acting as Sponsor for your application. You should make sure that your referee is able to provide a reference before adding them to your application.

Nominated referees **must not** be:

- the Applicant's sponsor
- a member on the assessment Panel for this scheme; or
- a member of the Royal Society's Council.

References must be submitted in English. If a reference is not submitted in English, it will not be accepted and may render the application ineligible. No two references can be from the same person. If two references from the same person are submitted, it may make the application ineligible.

The supporting statements must be submitted through Flexi-Grant. Please follow the steps below.

Step 1 | Ensure all participants have a Flexi-Grant account

- All referees and other participants must set up a Flexi-Grant account in order to contribute to an application.
- If a participant already has a Flexi-Grant account they should use that, if not then a new account should be set up.

Step 2 | Invite participants to contribute to an application

- Applicants should invite referees and other individuals to submit their supporting statements through the 'participants' tab.
- The participants tab can be found on the application form summary page and contains details of each participant required to contribute to the application.
- Applicants should select 'invite' and enter the e-mail address of the person they wish to invite to provide the relevant reference or statement and send the invitation.

Step 3 | Monitor participants responses

- The recipient will need to accept your invitation before they can participate in the application.
- You can monitor the progress of your participants' activity through this section of the application form and issue reminders as required.
- Once the participant has accepted your invitation, their status will be displayed as 'active'.
- Once participants have completed all their sections of the application form, they should select **'Save & Submit'** on the application form page or select '**Submit your contribution'** on the summary page.
- Upon completion of their section of the application form their status will be displayed as 'complete'.

Please note that you will not be able to submit your application form until the status of all participants shows 'complete'.

Please note that once an applicant submits an application on Flexi-Grant®, it is then directed to the designated approver for the employing organisation at which the applicant has applied to host an award (see 10.1 Application Approvals in the 'Application Guidance Notes' Section). It is recommended that referring and supporting participants fulfil their requirements **at least 5 working days** before the submission deadline (**Tuesday, 19 November 2024 at 3:00PM UK time**) to ensure there is sufficient time for organisational approval. The host organisation approver must approve the completed application by the submission deadline.

It is the applicant's responsibility to liaise with the nominated referee, the UK host organisation's approver and the Head of Department to ensure that the required tasks are completed by the deadline. Please contact the Grants Team before the deadline if there is any issue. Alternatively, the UK's host organisation approvers, the Head of Department, and the nominated referee can contact us directly. The Royal Society will not be held responsible for emails that are not received due to address errors or spam filters and no provision is made for non-receipt of emails sent by the Royal Society.

Once participants have completed all their sections of the application form, please remind them to select **'Save & Submit'** on the application form page or select '**Submit your contribution'** on the summary page.

Re-opening the Application form to Participants
On the occasion that an invited participant accidentally submits their section of the application form prematurely, the Lead Applicant has the ability to re-open the application form for the participant. To do this, the Lead Applicant should return to the Participant tab on the application form summary page. You will find a 're-open' button alongside the name of any participant who has completed their section of the form. Once you click this button, the form is reactivated and available for participants to amend.

Research Support Role
The Research Support role displayed under the participants tab is an optional role, which allows you to invite an individual from the relevant UK host organisation research support team to review and amend the application prior to submission. **The primary purpose is to ensure that the requested finances have been recorded correctly for this specific grant programme; this is strongly advised for this scheme.**

As the Research Support role is **optional**, applicants can revoke this participant request in order to submit their application if the section has not been completed. Please navigate to the participants tab and revoke the request for the Research Support role.

Additional system guidance can be found in the 'Systems Guidance Notes' Section.

6. Contact information

Enquires about this scheme can be made using the contact details below. **Before contacting us, please check whether your question is answered by these scheme notes and/or the FAQs available on our website**. If not, please email the Grants Team via CDF@royalsociety.org or call +44 20 7451 2666.

Please quote your application reference number in all correspondence with the Grants Team.

7. Use of Data

All application data, including personal data, is governed by the [Royal Society's Privacy Policy](#). This Policy sets out how and why the Royal Society uses your personal data, and how we protect your privacy when doing so. Please refer to the section entitled "Grants Applicants and Holders" for details of how the Privacy Policy determines the use of applicant data.

In addition to the usage set out in the Royal Society's privacy policy, please note that information regarding your application for Royal Society Career Development Fellowship may be shared with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) for data monitoring and scheme evaluation purposes. You may also be contacted by selected third parties such as independent evaluators, consultancy groups, and career development organisations. If successful, the Royal Society will contact you regarding the administration of your award throughout the course of your funding and after its completion. You may also be contacted by the Royal Society, DSIT, or an agent acting on their behalf, for reporting and evaluation purposes throughout the course of your funding and after its completion.

8. Use of generative AI

Generative AI tools offer potential benefits for research but also challenges and risks. The Royal Society has joined with other funders to set our expectations around the use of generative AI tools in funding applications. [Funders joint statement: use of generative AI tools in funding applications and assessment](#).

When developing funding proposals, researchers must ensure generative AI tools are used responsibly and in accordance with relevant legal and ethical standards where these exist or as they develop. Funding proposals for Royal Society grants should adhere to our existing commitments to policies on [Research Integrity and Trusted Research](#). Applicants are responsible for ensuring the originality, validity, reliability, and integrity of any outputs created or modified by generative AI tools. Where generative AI tools are used in funding proposals their use should be acknowledged in the application by naming the AI source and specifying how the content was generated (for example by listing the prompt used).

9. System Guidance Notes

Please read these guidance notes carefully as you complete the application form.

9.1 Using Flexi-Grant ®

Applications can only be submitted online using the Royal Society's Grants management system (Flexi-Grant®) via https://grants.royalsociety.org. Further information about the Grants management system can be found via https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/flexi-grant/. If you have not previously used Flexi-Grant®, please follow the registration process from the Flexi-Grant®, homepage. **Paper-based applications will not be accepted.**

Before completing the online form, all applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements and ensure all necessary information is presented in the application. These requirements are strictly adhered

to and applications without all the necessary information, or evidence to show the assessment criteria are met, will be rejected.

All applications must be approved by the UK host organisation and the 'Participants' sections must be completed before you can submit via Flexi-Grant®. Late applications will not be accepted.

Further guidance and support can be found through the [applicant and approver knowledge base](#).

9.2 ORCID Identifier

All applicants should submit an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) identifier if they have one before their application is submitted. ORCID maintains a registry of unique researcher identifiers and a transparent method of linking research funding, research publications, research data and any other research outputs to these unique identifiers. This is a mandatory requirement at the application submission stage only. You can register for an ORCID identifier via https://orcid.org/register

9.3 Completing the application form

The application can be completed by using the navigation tabs on the application summary page, with each page categorised as follows:

Summary
Understanding our Promotion
Eligibility Criteria
Contact Details
Applicant Career Summary
Research Proposal
Use of Animals in Research
Use of Human Patients and Tissue
Financial Details
Applicant Declaration
UK Sponsor
Head of Department Support
Nominated Referee

Please note that questions with * are mandatory fields, which is typically the majority of questions. You will only be able to submit your application for approval by the host organisation once all sections of the application form have been marked as complete and your participants have marked their work as complete (please check the status of participants under the participants tab on the application form summary page). **Late applications will not be accepted.**

A full list of question fields to be completed as part of the application can be found in the 10.2 Question Guidance in the 'Application Guidance Notes' Section below.

10. Application Guidance Notes

10.1 Application Approvals

It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that approval of the application by the UK host organisation is completed before the closing date.

The person responsible for approving your application will be the delegated authority at the UK host organisation where you are applying to hold your award. This may be someone within the research office, Faculty administration, Vice-Chancellor, or other administrative or management role.

The approver must be someone with the authority to confirm that the potential award can be hosted within their organisation, confirm that there is the capacity to deliver the proposed research and assure the proposed budget is appropriate and eligible for the scheme.

You will only be able to submit your application for approval by the UK host organisation's approver once all sections of the application form have been marked as complete and all participants have marked their work as complete <u>AND have submitted</u> their section. The lead applicant must check the status of the participants under the 'Participants' tab on the summary page of the application form. **Applications submitted after the deadline will <u>not</u> be accepted.**

Please bear in mind it is **the responsibility of the applicant** to:

- Inform the Head of Department and nominated referee of the deadline

- Liaise with the Head of Department and nominated referee to ensure that they have received their invitation with instructions to participate in completion of your application as no provision is made for non-receipt of these automatic emails

- Keep track of the progress of Head of Department and nominated referee completion status on your application summary page. You can issue a reminder email through the participants tab on your application summary page.

If the instruction email from the Royal Society has not been received, please:

a) double-check the accuracy of the email address supplied on the application form
b) advise the intended recipient to check their spam filters/junk folders
c) contact the Royal Society with an alternative email address for the recipient

The Royal Society will not be held responsible for automated emails that are not received due to address errors or spam filters.

<u>10.2 Question Guidance</u>

Please read the following guidance notes carefully as you complete the form. In the table below, each box represents a page of the application form; the left-hand column contains the questions within each of these pages as set out in the form; the right-hand column contains useful guidance on its completion.

Note that questions with * are mandatory fields.

Summary	
Summary page	The summary page of the application form provides instructions for submission of your application for approval from the UK host organisation. In addition, you are provided with an overview for each section of your application form, including the approximate length of time it will take to complete each section. The summary page also allows applicants to manage and invite participants (e.g. UK Sponsor, Head of Department and one Nominated Referee) who are required to contribute to the application form. Instructions for inviting participants can be found under the 'participants' tab on the application summary page. **Note:** you will only be able to submit your application for approval by the host organisation once all sections of the form have been completed.

Understanding our Promotion	
Understanding our Promotion *	Please select how you found out about the scheme.

Eligibility Criteria	
Eligibility Criteria *	Please provide confirmation that you meet the eligibility criteria. Details of the eligibility criteria can be found in the 'Eligibility' Section of these scheme notes.

Contact Details	
Title, Names, address, organisation and country *	Review and complete your **personal details** accurately. Errors in this section can cause difficulties in processing your application. Errors will not be corrected after submission. Under this section, you should edit the **contact type** of the participants who will partake in your application form. The system default contact type is set as 'collaborator'. To amend the contact type of your Head of Department, click 'edit', and under the contact type field, select the 'Head of Department'. **Organisation**: this table will automatically display details of the intended host organisation (marked by a tick) which you selected previously and your current organisation, if different from the organisation where the award will be held and administered.
Email address *	This field defaults to the account in which the application has commenced and is where all correspondence pertaining to the application throughout the application process will be sent. The applicant must therefore commence the application using the login email address used to register a user account on Flexi-Grant®.

Applicant Career Summary	
Title of Current Position *	Please state the title of your current position.
Current Employer *	Please enter the official organisation name of your current employer (e.g. University of Bath).
Current Department *	Please enter details of your current department (e.g. Department of Astrophysics).
Country/Territory *	Please select the country/territory where your current employer (or last employer if currently unemployed or on leave) is based.
Current Position Start Date *	Please enter the date when your current position started.
Current Position End Date *	Please enter the date when your current position is expected to finish. If you are on an open-ended contract, please enter 31 December 2050.
Field of Specialisation *	Please enter details of your field(s) of specialisation. (**Maximum 20 words**)
PhD Award Date *	Please enter the date that you were awarded your PhD. If you have not completed your PhD, please enter your expected completion date. Please note, applicants must have a PhD or will have a PhD by the time the funding starts. Applicants who have not yet completed their PhD when applying will require a letter of support from their supervisor (please see question below). Applicants in the final year of their PhD studies are eligible to apply but must have completed their PhD examination with no or minor corrections prior to starting the fellowship. The Society reserves the right to request a confirmation of the successful completion of the PhD examination/viva at the point of offer.
Supporting Documents	If you have not yet completed your PhD, please upload a letter of support from your PhD supervisor (PDF only).
PhD Institution *	Please state the name of the institution where you were awarded or are completing your PhD.
PhD Country/Territory *	State the country/territory in which you were awarded or will be awarded your PhD.
Date of First Post-Doctoral Research Position	Please enter the date when your first post-doctoral position started. Applicants must have less than 24 months of full-time postdoctoral experience by the closing date of the round. Career breaks and additional circumstances that may have affected/delayed your research career will be taken into account when calculating this limit.
Personal Statement *	Please provide a personal statement about your career and research aspirations in the long term. You should state why the aims of this fellowship will be beneficial to you at this stage in your career, how you intend to build a bridge to the next step in your career and how the fellowship will help you to reach your goals.

	Please use the personal statement to provide details of research-related contributions, achievements as well as any additional activities you have undertaken to demonstrate your contribution to the wider scientific endeavour (e.g. conferences, generation of new ideas, tools and methodologies workshops, public engagement activities, public communication of science, etc). You can also use this statement to describe any activities beyond traditional academic outputs that would demonstrate your ability to successfully carry out your proposed project. **Plain text only (Maximum 500 words)**
Applicant Career History *	Please provide a full list of your appointments since your PhD **in a clear reverse chronological order** stating if part-time (and percentage part-time) when necessary. The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence for your academic merit as possible. Please provide full details of any periods of part-time working, career breaks, extended sick leave or maternity/paternity/adoptive leave as your eligibility may depend on the accuracy of this information. **Please provide dates in the format of DD/MM/YYYY (days may be omitted if unknown).** You are not required to include prizes and achievements in this section; this can be included in the Personal Statement section. **Note**: You can retrieve your career history information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.
Impact of Covid -19	The Society appreciates that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on researchers and their work will be varied. Please provide a summary of how the pandemic has affected your research activities. This can include but is not limited to delays in publishing/submitting a key paper(s) (please note preprints can be included in your publications list), pause on experiments/research plans, reduced ability to work due to additional caring responsibilities. **Plain text only (Maximum 500 words)**
Applicant Qualifications *	Please list all your qualifications **in reverse chronological order**. The depth of information you provide is up to you but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence of your academic merit as possible and as appropriate for the funding for which you are applying. **Note**: You can retrieve your qualification information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.

List your Key and/or Relevant Publications *	Please provide details of authors, titles and references of your key preprints and publications in refereed journals, **in reverse chronological order**. You should include those outputs most relevant to the application to support your case. Please note that publications will be reviewed on the basis of scientific content, rather than publication metrics or the identity of the journal. Most significant publications - Please identify with asterisks (*) the publications which you consider to be most significant for your research. For multi-authored publications, please indicate your contribution. Your list should have three sections: (i) refereed papers in primary journals, (ii) contributions to symposia and compiled volumes (refereed only); and (iii) preprints. If your field of research differs in any way from normal conventions, e.g. lead author, first author, and publications in journals being the main gauge of success, please provide a brief explanation at the top of your publication list. If appropriate, give the publisher or where each publication may be obtained, providing a URL if available. Citations for preprints must state "Preprint", the repository name and the articles persistent identifier (e.g. DOI). **Plain text only (Maximum 1000 words)** **Note**: You can retrieve your publications to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.
Applicant Research Funding *	Please list your current and previous research funding (if any) **in reverse chronological order.** The depth of information you provide is up to you, but this will represent you under assessment and so it is worth including as much good evidence for your academic merit as possible and as appropriate for the funding for which you are applying. Please give particulars (type of award, value and title of research) and if relevant confirm if these would continue if you are successful in securing this Fellowship. Please note here **pending parallel fellowship applications** and when you expect to be given a decision. **Note**: You can retrieve your information from your profile to complete this section of the application form using your ORCID identifier.

Research Proposal	
Start Date *	Please enter the proposed start date of the project. Fellowships are expected to commence between 1 October 2025 and 1 January 2026.

End Date *	This must be exactly **4 years** from the proposed start date. Please note that the Fellowship can be held part-time due to childcare/caring responsibilities or personal circumstances. If successful, you will be able to submit a change in working hours request for consideration and the Society will adjust the duration of your award accordingly.
Project Title *	Please give the full title of your proposed project. (**Maximum 20 words**)
Key Words *	Please provide **5-10 keywords** which could be used to identify your research. These will aid with identifying the most appropriate reviewers.
Subject Group *	Please select the group that most closely reflects your area of research.
Subject Area *	Please select the subjects that most closely reflect your area of research.
Abstract *	Please 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. **Plain text only (Maximum 400 words)**
Lay Summary *	Please provide a lay summary of your proposed project. This should be understandable by a lay person. 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. If relevant, please also explain the potential impact or wider benefits to society of your research. Please be aware the CDF Panel is composed of a broad range of experts who will not all be specialists in your specific area. Please bear this in mind when writing your summary for a non-specialist audience. Panel members place importance on this part of the application. **Plain text only (Maximum 250 words)**
Research Proposal *	Your Research Proposal should be **developed in collaboration with your Sponsor**. Your research proposal should provide a general description of the proposed research to be carried out. This should include, but is not limited to, the following: • clear specification of the context, research objectives and expected outputs of the proposed study • description of the methodology to be used, including data analysis • an indication of milestones/timescales

	You can either detail your research proposal within this application form (Text Field Option), or alternatively upload it as a PDF file.
	PDF file upload: PDF files must be no longer than **3 sides of A4 only**, in portrait orientation, be titled and the **text size cannot be smaller than Arial size 10**. If the page length is exceeded, the text will be truncated by the Society.
	All images and references have to fit within the three-page limit of the research proposal document.
	When uploading PDFs, please 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 that we will only print applications in black and white.
	If using the Text Field option rather than the PDF upload then this requires plain text only (Maximum 1500 words).
	Please note: When entering plain text, **avoid using symbols** as some may not be accepted by Flexi-Grant®. 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.
Named Collaborators	If you have named collaborators in your research proposal, please provide letters of support.
	Please ensure the letters from your collaborators **only confirm their commitment to collaborate on this project**. The letters should provide information about their role in the project and their commitment to this.
Host Organisation *	Please select the host organisation where the award will be held from the drop-down list.
Host Department *	Please provide the name of the proposed department at your host organisation. Please enter the official name (e.g. School of Chemistry rather than Chemistry).

Data Management and Data Sharing
The Royal Society supports science as an open enterprise and is committed to ensuring that data outputs from research supported by the Society are made publicly available in a managed and responsible manner, with as few restrictions as possible. Data outputs should be deposited in an appropriate, recognised, publicly available repository, so that others can verify and build upon the data, which is of public interest. To fully realise the benefits of publicly available data they should be made intelligently open by fulfilling the requirements of being discoverable, accessible, intelligible, assessable and reusable.
The Royal Society does not dictate a set format for data management and sharing plans. Where they are required, applicants should structure their plan in a manner most appropriate to the proposed research. The information submitted in plans should focus specifically on how the data outputs will be managed and

shared, detailing the repositories where data will be deposited. In considering your approach for data management and sharing, applicants should consider the following:

- What data outputs will be generated by the research that are of value to the public?

- Where and when will you make the data available?

- How will others be able to access the data?

- If the data is of high public interest, how will it be made accessible not only for those in the same or linked field, but also to a wider public audience?

- Specify whether any limits will be placed on the data to be shared, for example, for the purposes of safeguarding commercial interests, personal information, safety or security of the data.

- How will datasets be preserved to ensure they are of long-term benefit?

Outline of data management and data sharing plan *	If the proposed research will generate data that is of significant value to the research community, please provide details of your data management and sharing plan. (**Maximum 200 words**)
Fieldwork *	Will you be conducting fieldwork as part of your research? Yes/No *
Fieldwork	Please provide all details of any proposed fieldwork to be carried out. Please ensure you provide details of location, duration and justification for the fieldwork.
Fieldwork (Upload only)	Please upload documents related to the following (if applicable): 1. Permission Any mandatory documents that show local support has been assured by way of permission from the government concerned to travel to and work in the country. 2. Collection of specimens Any mandatory documents that show: - Specific permission has been obtained from the host country to collect and to export specimens and material - The director of the museum or other decision makers where these specimens will be deposited has indicated his/her desire or willingness to have such specimens and material

Use of Animals in Research *

The Royal Society is committed to supporting the development of alternative methods to reduce and/or replace the use of animals in research. Applicants proposing to use animals in their research must ensure that the use of animals falls within the regulations stipulated in the Animals (Scientific Procedures Act) 1986 and subsequent amendments. Additionally, applicants should continually be aware of developments in best practice and adopt the principles of the 3Rs when designing and conducting experiments on animals.

As a funder of research, the Society takes its responsibilities towards the UK Animals (Scientific Procedures Act) 1986 seriously and requires applicants to consider the questions below when preparing grant applications that include the use of animals.

Does your proposal involve the use of animals or animal tissue? *	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you have selected 'Yes' it is mandatory to complete all of the relevant questions on the Use of Animals in Research page.

Experimental Design Assistant

The Royal Society recommends that applicants use the [Experimental Design Assistant](#) (EDA), which is a free resource from the NC3Rs to support researchers in the planning of animal experiments. This will help to facilitate robust study design and reliable and reproducible findings.

The EDA helps applicants build a machine-readable diagram representing their experimental plan, following capture of their methodology, and allows the applicant to then generate a PDF report which provides a transparent description of the experimental design in a standardised format, which can be uploaded to the application form.

Please note: Applicants who choose to use the EDA, and subsequently uploads the EDA report to the application form, are advised to enter **see report** or **N/A** into any question fields within this section of the application form that have already been captured in the EDA report, to avoid any duplication.

Use of Human Participants and Tissue

Any application for a research proposal involving human participants, patients or tissue and therefore requiring local ethical committee approval will be considered only when accompanied by the necessary permission certificate or proof that ethical permission will be sought, which must be provided in English.

Does your proposal involve the use of human participants, patients or tissue? *	Select 'Yes' or 'No'. If you have selected 'Yes' it is mandatory to provide either a certificate or letter, as proof that ethical permission has been, or will be, obtained. Please upload the file as a PDF in portrait orientation.

Financial Details

General information	When completing the budget table in Flexi-Grant®, please ensure to **provide values at the appropriate fEC level (100% or 80%)** as indicated in the [Royal Society Grant Funding Guidance](#).
Host Organisation Type *	Different funding rates are applicable to Higher Education Institutions, Research Council Institutes and Independent Research Organisations. Please select your organisation type from the drop-down list.

Budget Table *	Please enter the values applied for under the budget table headings. This should be done in collaboration with your host organisation's research/finance office. The maximum value of the award is **£690,000**. Within this maximum value, a reasonable level of inflation to all grant costings should be applied. The full duration of the award is 4 years. The values should be inputted in the appropriate fellowship year. Please note that year 1 = first year of fellowship from 1 October 2025. The total grant cap may be exceeded in order to cover relocation/visa costs if this is well justified in the application. Please refer to the [Royal Society Funding Guidance](#). There is not a limit to the amount of research expenses (**Other Directly Incurred Costs**) that you can apply for in each fellowship year, provided that the maximum value of the award does not exceed £690,000. However, the funds should be distributed between fellowship years as evenly as possible. If there is any underspend at the end of a fellowship year, funds can be carried over to the following year.
Justification for Salary *	Please include grade and salary point as per the host organisation salary structure. A justification of annual increment should be included.
Justification for Research Expenses*	Please fully justify all requested costs (**Other Directly Incurred Costs**) by referring to each budget heading. Funding will not be awarded without justification. Please justify costs for **equipment items over £10K**. If requesting costs towards a **workshop**, please provide a breakdown and justification of the costs. Please confirm that you and your host organisation have fully considered the environmental impact of these costs, in line with the [Royal Society Grant Funding Guidance](#) (see paragraph 5.4.1 of the Funding Guidance). Please justify why the meeting could not be hosted by alternative means, e.g. online.
Justification for Relocation and Visa Expenses *	Please include the number of dependants (partner and children only allowed), which visa type you are applying for, its cost, and an estimation of other relocation expenses.
Justification for Inflation rate applied *	Please include the percentage inflation rate applied across all budget categories and the reasoning behind the percentage used. While there is not a minimum or maximum limit for the inflation rate that can be added to each budget heading, applicants should include a reasonable rate. The Royal Society reserves the right to reduce the levels of inflation applied if it does not consider the rate applied to be reasonable.

Applicant Declaration *
Please declare that:

- You have read the Terms and Conditions of Award under which Royal Society grants are awarded and if a grant offer is made, you agree to abide by them. The Terms and Conditions for Royal Society applications can be found at https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/career-development-fellowship/

- You have access to the necessary facilities to enable you to deliver the research proposed and will continue to have access to the facilities for the duration of the project.

- You have agreed with your Head(s) of Department that you will be afforded sufficient time and resources to deliver the research project as described in this application.

UK Sponsor *

Please provide a statement in support of the application as a PDF on headed paper, that includes your name, title, and contact details. Please describe:

- The Applicant's current research and their suitability for the project
- The strength of the host organisation in the applicant's research field
- Any planned activities to support the applicant's career development

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Head of Department Support *

You should invite the Head of Department at your host organisation to provide a statement of support by following the instructions under the 'Participants' tab on the application form summary page. Please check that they are able to supply their statement in advance of **Tuesday, 19 November 2024 at 3:00 PM (UK time).**

You will not be able to submit your application for approval from your host organisation until the references have been completed.

Please check which email address your Head of Department would like to use, as they may already be registered on Flexi-Grant® and mistakes may lead to a delay in processing your application.

The Head of Department is required to summarise as part of their statement and organisation's commitment to the candidate:

- Current activities undertaken by the host organisation to create a supportive research environment where early career researchers can thrive

- The suitability of the candidate for the fellowship and department

- Set out how the host department/organisation will provide any additional support including but not limited to additional funding, mentoring, further training and networking opportunities and guidance to enable the candidate to thrive in their career and research

- Any potential benefits that will result from the proposed collaboration for the Applicant and the Sponsor and how this will enrich the research environment of the department

Nominated Referee *
You should invite one referee who can provide confidential references for your application, by following the instructions under the 'Participants' tab on the application form summary page. Please check with them that they are happy to provide the references and inform them that they will be contacted by email and asked to provide references via the Flexi-Grant® system by **Tuesday, 19 November 2024 at 3:00 PM (UK time).** You will not be able to submit your application for approval from your host organisation until the reference has been completed. The primary consideration for a referee is that they are able to comment independently and authoritatively on your application. Your referee should be someone who has worked closely with you and is familiar with your research (for example, a PhD, supervisors, mentor or prior collaborator). Please note that you cannot choose your PhD Supervisor if they are also acting as Sponsor for your application. You should make sure they are able to provide a reference before adding them to your application. The nominated referee **must not** be: • The Applicant's Sponsor • A named collaborator in your application • A member on the assessment Panel for this scheme • A member of the Royal Society's Council References must be submitted in English. If a reference is not submitted in English, it will not be accepted and may render the application ineligible.

Diversity Monitoring	
Diversity Monitoring	The Royal Society is committed to promoting diversity in UK science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) by seeking to increase participation from under-represented groups. Please help us to monitor how effectively we are doing this by providing the requested information. All questions are mandatory. The information provided will form a confidential statistical record in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will not be used for any purpose other than analysis of the Society's activities. 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. You must either complete the form or tick the boxes stating that you 'prefer not to say'. If you do not select a box for each question, the system will regard your application as incomplete and will not allow you to submit it.

Appendix 1: Application and Review Process

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ROUND CLOSES
Final submission to the Royal Society by deadline of **Tuesday, 19 November 2024** at **3:00PM UK time** ⟶ Non-submissions: Rejection

Application is checked for eligibility ⟶ Rejection

Application enters selection process. Some Applicants may be invited for Interview. ⟶ Rejection

AWARDED