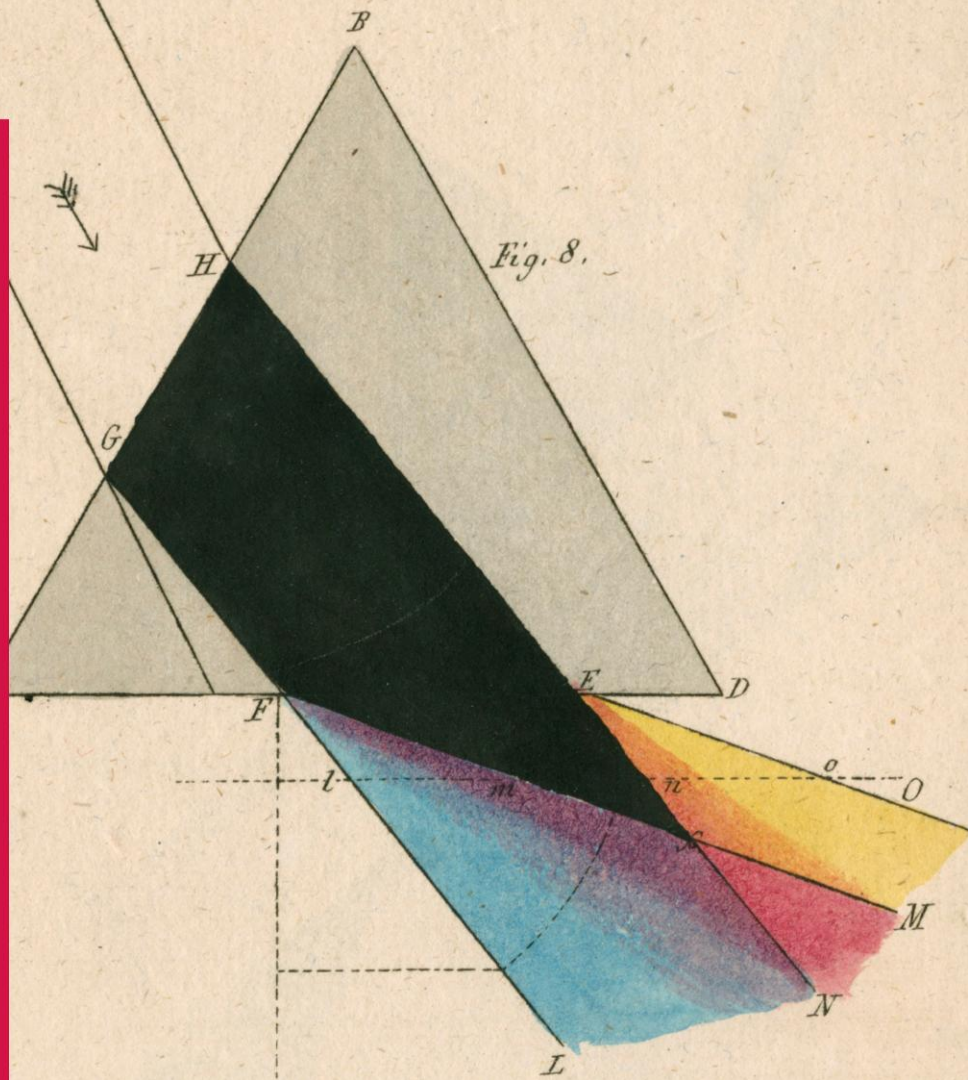


# Faraday Discovery Fellowships 2026

A guide for potential applicants

THE  
ROYAL  
SOCIETY



## Outline of presentation

- Introduction to the Royal Society
- Background to the Faraday Discovery Fellowships
- Details of the scheme – who is it for and what does it offer?
- Engagement, Training and Development
- Application and assessment processes
- Changes from the 2025 round
- Key dates
- Feedback and tips from previous round

## **The Royal Society**

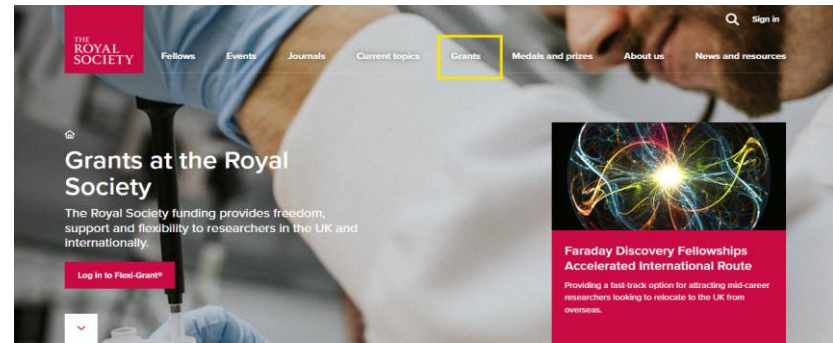
The Royal Society is a self-governing Fellowship of many of the world's most distinguished scientists drawn from all areas of science, engineering, and medicine.

The Society's fundamental purpose, as it has been since its foundation in 1660, is to recognise, promote, and support excellence in science and to encourage the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity.

## What do we fund?

- UK Early Career Fellowships
- UK Mid-Career Fellowships
- UK Senior Career Fellowships
- International Fellowships and Awards
- UK Industry, Innovation and Research Capacity

Royal Society remit: research in the life and physical sciences, including engineering, excluding clinical medicine.

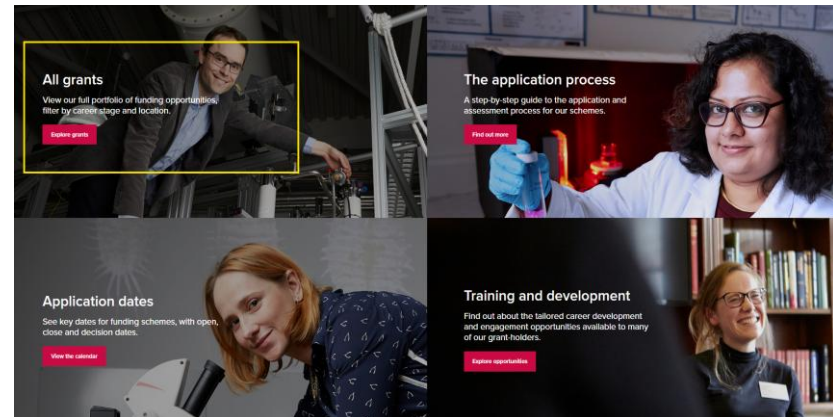


### Fellowships and grants for outstanding researchers

We support scientists pursuing discovery-led and applied research through a wide range of schemes and career development opportunities.

The Royal Society recognises that diversity is essential for delivering excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and 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.

Our work is guided by the principles of Excellence; Inclusivity; Flexibility; and Openness and Fairness.



## Background

- **Mid-career gap** – Increasing support for mid-career researchers long standing strategic aim for Royal Society
- **Faraday Fellowships** – first pitched to government in 2019 spending review (unsuccessfully)
- **Pioneer** – Faraday Fellowships proposed as an alternative to ERC consolidator grants
- **Following association** – Government suggested that some elements may still be funded in future
- **New Fund** – DSIT approached the Royal Society about possibility of an alternative funding model in Oct 2023

## The 'Endowment'

- **Announcement:**
  - Included in 2023 Autumn Statement
  - £250 million mid-career fellowship programme
  - **Fast-track** – In May 2025 announced £20m to be ring-fenced to Accelerated International Route, to attract internationally based talented mid-career researchers to the UK
- **Why an 'endowment'?**
  - Novel and innovative approach to funding science
  - HMG recognises the value in offering stability of funding
  - Society will treat as restricted fund spending down all capital and investment income over 20 years

## Advantages of this model of funding



Greater certainty of funding



Greater flexibility for grant holders



Reduced bureaucracy



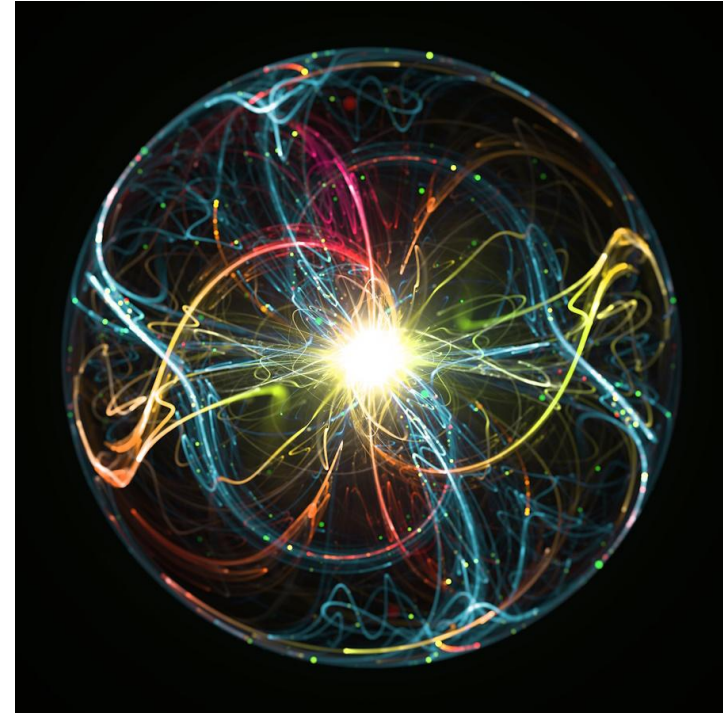
More flexible start dates and spend profile

**Faraday  
Discovery  
Fellowships**

- Up to £8 million
- 10 years
- Approximately 7 awards per year for at least 5 years

**Faraday  
Discovery  
Fellowships  
Accelerated  
International  
Route - AIR**

- £4 million
- 5 years
- Approximately 5 awards over the next 2 years, depending on demand and quality of applications



**Faraday  
Discovery  
Fellowships  
aims**

- Support **the most talented** mid-career research leaders
- Fund high-quality original research
- Develop world leading research groups/teams in the UK
- Train the next generation

## Who can apply?

- Mid-career research leaders with 10 – 20 years postdoctoral research experience
- All Nationalities – for applicants wishing to conduct research in a UK university/eligible organisation
- Academic researchers – HEI or not-for-profit research host organisations
- Academics in collaboration with industry partners\*
- Academics with joint UK-International appointments\*\*

### From 2027 round:

- Only shortlisted applicants in the 2026 round will be able to reapply in the following round, others will need to wait 2 years to reapply (2028 round)

**Applicants may not apply to the standard round and the Accelerated International Route simultaneously**

## Definition of mid-career

- Eligible candidates will have 10\*- 20 years research experience post-PhD or equivalent research experience (\*exceptional candidates with fewer years' experience will be considered)
- Candidates with more than 20 years of research experience will not be eligible. (Career breaks and non-linear career paths will be taken into consideration when calculating the number of years of research as per our standard policy)
- Applicants can submit a case to be considered mid-career based on a **significant change** in research direction
- Eligible candidates will either hold a permanent academic post or be in the latter stages of a recognised long-term fellowship or demonstrate equivalent research experience.

## Mid-Career research leaders

- **Be a recognised research leader** within their field with experience of managing significant research grants as the Principal Investigator. We would expect candidates to have experience of managing a research group, which should include training and supervising PhD students and junior staff.
- **Demonstrate significant and original research contributions** - The Principal Investigator should have an exceptional track record of outputs commensurate with their research experience and be able to demonstrate significant research contributions in the last 10 years.
- **Be an emerging international leader** – Candidates should have well-established international networks and plans to consolidate their independence to become international research leaders in their field.
- **Demonstrate wider contributions to research** – including but not limited to public engagement, schools' engagement, peer review and committee membership.

## What types of research are eligible?

- **STEM** – As with all Royal Society funding the programme will fund research across the whole of STEM. The Royal Society does not fund translational medicine, clinical trials or the development of new treatments. Research with a health outcome or direct impact in health also falls outside of the Royal Society remit.
- **Interdisciplinary** – including collaborations outside of STEM. Lead Applicant must have a track record in STEM.
- **Priority areas** – The programme will not operate thematic priorities.

**Faraday  
Discovery  
Fellowships  
will provide**



Time and freedom to focus on research without distractions



Long-term, stable funding to allow researchers to tackle the most challenging research questions



Resources to establish an outstanding team of researchers



More focus on long-term outputs and impact



Fast-track endorsement on Global Talent Visa application

## Eligible Costs

- Start-up costs
- Research costs
- Staff costs and research students
- Training costs
- Equipment costs
- Knowledge transfer costs
- Inter-disciplinary costs
- Relocation and visa costs (including NHS surcharge costs, for applicant and dependents)
- Public and schools engagement
- **Strong scientific need justification required for funding requests over £6 million**

## Flexibility is built in



Awards are portable



Policies for Maternity, Paternity, Shared parental leave, adoptive and extended sick leave



Award holders who require flexibility may hold the award on a part-time basis and buy in additional resources to meet the research objectives



Reasonable adjustments to support disabled researchers are an eligible cost

## Career development opportunities



### Programme for Faraday Fellows

- Networking
- Training
- Mentoring



### Opportunities for your teams

- Networking
- Training

## Assessment criteria



Lead Applicant - Outstanding track record of candidate and international standing in their field



Research Proposal - the quality, ambition and originality of the proposed research vision and programme, and how it will be transformative, advance research and innovation, and demonstrate the need for funding at the scale (£ and time) provided by the Faraday scheme



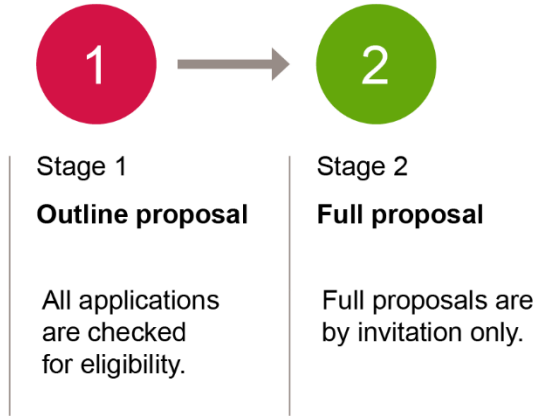
Suitability of the research environment



Justification of resources/ good value for money - Stage 2

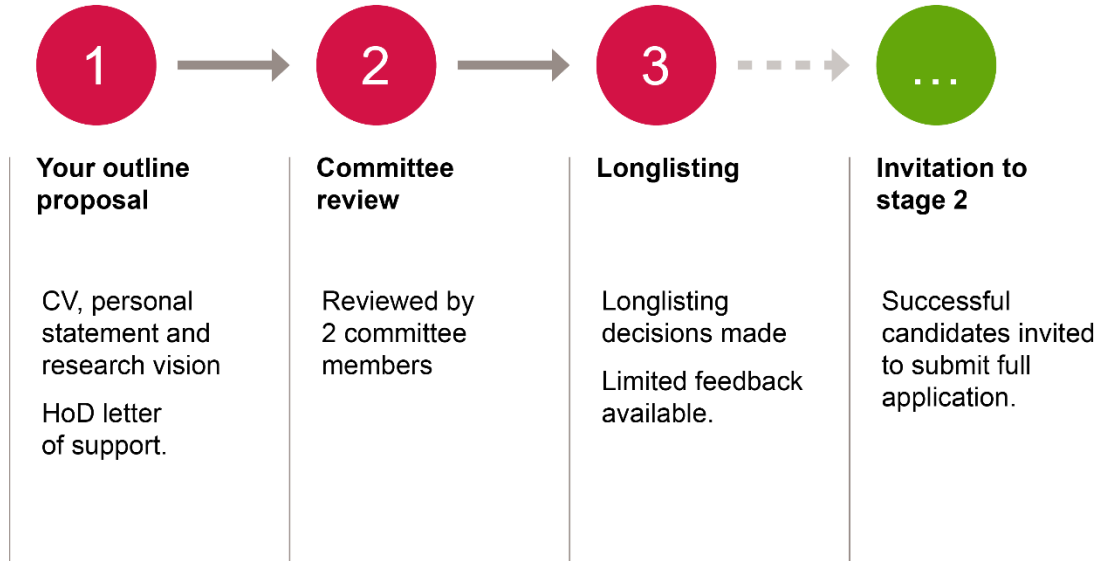
## The application and assessment process

2 stage process



## How your outline proposal is assessed

### Stage 1



## How your invited full proposal is assessed

### Stage 2



## Changes from 2025 round

Area	Change
Award Duration	No changes
Award value	Still £8 million, requiring strong scientific justification for requests over £6 million
Applicant eligibility	Still 10-20 years post-PhD, allowing for career breaks and changing in discipline
	The award is open to the <b>most talented</b> internationally recognised research leaders
Assessment process	Highlight the importance of the proposed science being transformative for the field
	Stage 2 will include a more focussed consideration of the scientific justification for resources requested.
	Rebuttals will be kept, with shorter page limits. Interviews won't be introduced
Demand management	Institutional cap will not be introduced at this round, but will be kept under monitoring
	From 2027, only shortlisted applications will be allowed to resubmit in the following year. All other will need to wait one round (gap year) before resubmitting.

**Faraday  
Fellowships –  
important  
dates\***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Scheme Documents Published	23 July 2025
Open/Close dates for Stage 1 outline applications	5 Aug / 23 Sept 2025
Applicants notified of Stage 1 decision	By 27 Nov 2025
Open/Close dates for Stage 2 applications	27 Nov 2025 / 5 Feb 2026
Shortlisted applicants respond to independent peer review	Late April – Early May 2026
Applicants notified of funding decision	July 2026
Awards start	From October 2026

## Planned rounds

Round	Stage 1 Opening	Stage 2 Opening	Awards start
2025 (Round 1)	14 August 2024	28 November 2024	October 2025
2026 (Round 2)	5 August 2025	27 November 2025	October 2026
2027 (Round 3)	August 2026	November 2026	October 2027
2028 (Round 4)	August 2027	November 2027	October 2028
2029 (Round 5)	August 2028	November 2028	October 2029

## Feedback from previous round

### Eligibility

- Only clear and substantive changes in discipline will be considered
- Career years break need to be checked by the Office only in specific circumstances
- For remit questions, ask the office if in doubt
- A simple but important one: stick to page limits, otherwise application will be made ineligible

### Financial requests

- Stage 2 - £6m to £8m budget case: justification purely on scientific need

## Contact details



<https://royalsociety.org/grants/faraday-discovery-fellowships/accelerated-international-route/>



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