

Royal Society Research Grants Scheme

1. Overview

This scheme provides up to £20,000 'seed corn' funding for 12 months to newly independent researchers or principal investigators, and independent researchers or principal investigators returning from a career break, to enable them to develop new ideas and projects of 'timeliness and promise' and position them for competitive larger awards from other funders. Under-represented groups are particularly encouraged to apply.

Eligibility

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 <https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/subject-groups/>. The Royal Society does not cover clinical medicine (such as patient orientated research and clinical trials), social sciences or humanities, other than when working in partnership with organisations.

Clinical and patient orientated research is considered to be an interventional study on human participants at the individual or group level, including but not limited to surgical or drug intervention. Eligible use of human participants in research can include investigation where the experiments are conducted in vitro – for example, the use of human tissue or other biological samples, chemistry techniques, mathematical modelling or engineering, translational research and collaborative research with clinicians.

Applicants must:

- Hold a PhD or equivalent qualification.
- Be based at an eligible UK organisation and a UK resident at the time of application.
- Be within the **first five consecutive years**, at the time of application, of either (whichever is the earliest):
 - their first permanent independent academic research post
 - a named limited-tenured/fixed-term academic research post, obtained in open competition (Note that tenure must cover the duration of the award).
- Be fully independent researchers with access to their own lab space and with the ability to recruit and to be registered as the primary supervisor of PhD students and research assistants (Career Development or Tenure Track Fellowship holders will be considered only if these requirements are met).

Additionally, applications may also be considered from independent researchers (i.e principal investigators) who have recently returned to academia (within the last 6 months at time of application), following a career break from research. The Society recognises there are diverse research career paths, as well as 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 on top of each period of leave

an additional amount of time when assessing eligibility. Each case will be considered individually as per guidelines below:

- Maternity, paternity, shared parental leave and adoptive leave: On top of the actual time taken off work, an additional amount of time equivalent to the 100% taken will be added on top, for up to 6 months.

Example 1: If an applicant took 4 months leave, additional 4 months would be added and a total of 8 months would be deducted.

Example 2: If an applicant took 18 months leave, additional 6 months would be added (maximum additional time allowed) and a total of 24 months would be deducted.

- Extended sick leave (defined as more than four weeks off work, as per UK Government's definition): On top of the actual time taken off work, an additional amount of time equivalent to the 100% taken will be added on top, for up to 6 months.

Each case will be considered individually and the employing institution may need to confirm that the applicant qualifies for this provision. Supporting documents may be requested for individual cases at the Society's discretion. The Society reserves the right to consider individual requests outside of the outlined policy in exceptional circumstances.

The scheme is **not for**

- (a) post-doctoral researchers or researchers, whose salaries are paid by a grant for which someone else is the principal investigator. These individuals are NOT eligible to apply.**
- (b) supplementing ongoing research covered by a Research Council grant or other large awards,
- (c) well-established scientists moving into a new field of research or continuing an existing line of research.
- (d) meeting a perceived shortfall in funding where another body has defined the cost of a project as being, for example, 90% of that requested by the applicant.
- (e) making up perceived shortfalls in support for postgraduate students, research assistants or others working with/for the applicant.
- (f) projects within humanities, social sciences or clinical medical research.

Additional Guidance

- Applicants must take a leading role in the project.
- Applications can be considered from scientists on sabbatical leave if they remain in a UK university or other research institute in the UK. This would not have to be the applicant's own university/institute. Applications cannot be considered from scientists on sabbatical leave working in industry or overseas.
- All applicants who have previously held a Royal Society Research Grant award are eligible to apply again **24 months** after the submission of the **final scientific report and final finance statement**. Applicants must also meet the eligibility criteria of the current round.
- All applicants are only permitted to submit **one** application for each round.

Duration

Awards are for a period of 12 months.

Value

Up to **£20,000 (including VAT)** is available for the purchase of specialised equipment directly related to the proposal, essential consumable materials, and travel and subsistence for essential field research.

Eligible costs – Justification must be provided

- **Specialised equipment**, which is not available to the applicant from their host institution, or other sources. This can include cost of delivery, installation, spares and software procurement and the cost of maintenance and relocation charges where specific to the equipment (within the duration of the award period), the equipment must be used primarily by the named award holder.
 - In cases where equipment is expected to be used more widely in the institution, the application should be requesting for only part of the total cost. Even if the overall cost is covered partially by the award, the grant holder should have first priority to use the equipment during the award period for the discrete project. If this is the case, then the applicant must provide a reassurance letter confirming priority usage from his/her Head of Department and attach it as a PDF in the 'supporting documents' under the 'Financial Details' tab. Applicants should clarify the position on VAT on purchases before seeking a grant.
 - Equipment bought with the research grant funds belongs to the Royal Society until such time as the project is complete and a report has been made; ownership then passes to the university/institution (please note that in the case of Research Grants this condition is contrary to the Royal Society Conditions of Award notes).
- **Consumables:** Essential consumable materials, purchase cost of specialist publications not otherwise available (these must be named), fieldwork fees/subjects/informants, animal and plant licence fees, software licences and dedicated computing recurrent cost, and the purchase cost of animals (although not housing and maintenance). Please note all applications involving the use of primates, cats, dogs and equidae animals will be sent to the NC3Rs for further review. By submitting an application to the Society, an applicant accepts that the Society has the right to share your application with the NC3RS, without the need to obtain any further consent.
- **Travel and subsistence costs** for visits that are essential for field research, (including at sea, at a marine biological laboratory). Essential field work costs for other individuals are limited to one individual, besides the applicant.
- **Summer students:** Up to £500 may be requested to support summer students.

Costs NOT allowed:

- Grant holders are not permitted to charge access costs for equipment purchased under this scheme.
- Animal husbandry costs including maintenance and breeding costs.
- Travel or registration costs for conference/meeting/workshop/training attendance, collaborative visits, site visits for equipment usage or any training sessions.
- Facility access charges to use equipment or instruments both within and outside the applicant's institution.
- Both internal and external service costs and fees; for example, gene sequencing, carbon dating, MRI scanning, mass spectrometry analysis.
- Any staff costs, whether personal payments (including salary or subsistence allowance [except for essential field work]) to the applicant or to other individuals including overseas collaborators, postgraduate, doctoral students and for other members of staff.
- Sample transport costs.
- Computer costs, unless it is a dedicated cost that is essential to the proposal and the importance has been clearly justified within the application.
- Renovation and refurbishment costs.

- Membership costs to any association(s)/organisation(s).
- General journal subscription costs.
- The use of financial, personnel and other central or departmental services, library services, administrative, general running or overhead and other unspecified costs, including, office expenses, photocopying, publishing costs, stationery, postage & courier services, telephone, faxes, recruitment, legal, communication etc.
- General premises costs, access costs or accommodation costs (except for necessary field work).
- Patents or other related costs.

Any item(s) of expenditure without a description and full justification would be considered inadmissible and would be automatically deducted from the final award amount, if your application is successful.

Contact Information

Enquiries 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. If not, please email: researchgrants@royalsociety.org.

Use of Application Data

Please note that information regarding your application for a Royal Society Research Grant may be shared with the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) 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 for reporting and evaluation purposes throughout the course of your funding and after its completion.

Please quote your application reference number in all correspondence to the Royal Society.

The following scheme notes set out the application process of the Research Grants Scheme. Please read through the entire document before proceeding.

2. Timetable

Applications deadline	11 November 2019 15:00 (UK Time)
Application outcome	February 2020
Successful application start date	March 2020. Earlier or later start dates will not be accepted.

3. Application Guidance Notes

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Using Flexi-Grant®

Applications can only be submitted online using the Royal Society’s Grants and Awards management system (Flexi-Grant®) via <https://grants.royalsociety.org>. Further information about the Grants and Awards 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.

Please note that a Head of Department statement is not required for an application to this scheme.

All applications must be approved by the UK Host Organisation before you can submit via Flexi-Grant®. Late applications will not be accepted.

ORCID identifier

All applicants applying to the Royal Society will be required to submit an ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) identifier before their application will be accepted for submission. 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>.

Adding Participants

All applications must be commenced by the UK applicant. To invite a participant (i.e. Research Support) to your application, the participant will need to be registered on Flexi-Grant®. You will need to ensure you have their registered email address to invite the participant on the participant tab.

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. As this is an optional role, it will not affect your ability to submit your application for approval.

Once you have completed all their sections of the application form, please select ‘Save & Submit’ on the application form page to submit the application form. If you have invited a research support as a participant, please also remind them to select ‘Save & Submit’.

Selection criteria

The assessment criteria is:

- the quality/capability of the applicant
- the degree of independence and involvement of the applicant in the pursuit of the new research

- the quality and novelty of the new research (e.g. initiating or developing specific investigations, entering a promising new or modified field of research, or taking advantage of developments in apparatus offering improved techniques in a new line of research)
- the feasibility of the proposed research plan
- the potential application(s) of the proposed research work
- the possibility of obtaining further funding resulting from the proposed research
- the potential benefits to the applicant(s) and to UK science in general

Completing the application form

Note that questions with * are mandatory fields. Please read these guidance notes carefully as you complete the form.

Summary	
Summary Table	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, the approximate length of time it will take to complete each section, and the number of participants required to participate in completion of your application form. Participants can be invited from the participant 'tab' which can be located just above the page summary header.

Eligibility Criteria	
Eligibility Criteria*	Please make sure that you meet all the eligibility criteria. Details of the eligibility criteria can be found on page 1.

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. The address must be of the organisation at which you are employed. Note: correspondence in connection with this application will be sent to the applicant.
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, and in the event of the application being successful, 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*	State the title of your current position (<i>20 words max.</i>).
Host Organisation*	Please select the organisation where the award will be held from the drop down list. Please note that this should be the official organisation name of your current employer.
Current Department *	Enter details of your current department name (e.g. Department of Astrophysics).
Contract Type*	Please select your current contract type.
Current Position Start date*	Please complete the date in dd/mm/yyyy format. Please note this refers to the position you are holding when submitting this application.
Current Position End	Please enter the date when your current position is expected to finish. If you

date*	are on a permanent contract, please enter 01/01/2050. Please complete the date in dd/mm/yyyy format.
Field of Specialisation*	Enter details of your field(s) of specialisation. (20 words max.).
Summary of current research*	Please provide further information regarding your current position and summarise your research. (200 words max.).
Applicant Career History*	Please list all of your appointments since your PhD and the dates in reverse chronological order, stating if part-time (and percentage part-time) if necessary. Please state the official position title, host organisation and duration of all appointments you have held. 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.
Applicant Qualifications*	Please list all your qualifications in reverse chronological order.
List your key and/ or relevant publications*	Please provide details of authors, titles and references of your best publications in refereed journals, in reverse chronological order. You should choose not only the best but also those most relevant to the application to support your case. Please identify with asterisks the publications which you consider to be most significant and note your contributions. Note: if you have an existing ORCID identifier, you can retrieve your key publications from your profile to complete this section of the application form.
Applicant Research Funding *	Please give brief details of current and any relevant previous research funding. Please include any pending research grant applications and other income for research, indicating source and value (GBP, approximately) in reverse chronological order. This refers to any funding received throughout your career.

Research Proposal	
Project Title*	Give the full title of your proposed project (20 words max.)
Start / End Date*	Please complete the date in dd/mm/yyyy format. These are the dates you intend to start and finish the proposed project. Awards can be held for 12 months. Please see page 4 for when successful applications can start.
Subject group and Subject Area*	Select the subject group/area(s) that most closely defines the research area of the research proposal from the drop-down menu and tick box options. This will enable us to allocate the application to the most appropriate assessment panel.
Lay Summary*	Please provide a lay summary of the proposed research. This should be understandable by a layperson. 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. (250 words max.)
Research Proposal*	Please provide the details of the proposed programme of work, commenting specifically on what your scientific question is, why it is important and what your experimental approach will be during the duration of the award. Text box (500 words) or PDF Upload (Do not exceed 1 pages of A4, portrait orientation. Please do not use a text size smaller than Arial 10 and please also ensure that the PDF document is not more than 3MB. Applicants are requested to make sure uploaded PDF documents are unlocked. Please enter "See attachment" in the field. For further information please refer to the

	Uploading PDF documents section.)
Relevance to Earlier Work*	Please state the relevance of the proposal to earlier work (200 words max.). Please provide information how the proposal relates to your own earlier work.
How does this proposal differ from your current research?*	Please confirm that this is a new project and that you will be taking a lead role in the project. Please also provide confirmation that this grant will not supplement ongoing research, existing grants or continuing an existing line of research. (500 words max.)
Rationale and Motivation*	Please provide a brief statement explaining the impact this proposal may have on your research, the potential applications of the research, and clearly state how this award will help secure the applicant future funding. It is important to also address how the proposed work will benefit the research and development of the applicant and UK science (250 words max.).
Collaborations*	Please provide details of any collaborative arrangements that support the proposed research, including the names of your collaborators (500 words max).
Outline of Data Management and Data Sharing Plan*	
<p>The Society supports science as an open enterprise and is committed to ensuring that data outputs from research supported by the Society are made publically available in a managed and responsible manner, with as few restrictions as possible. Data outputs should be deposited in an appropriate, recognised, publically available repository, so that others can verify and build upon the data, which is of public interest.</p> <p>The 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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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, then please provide details of your data management and sharing plan. (200 words max.)

Use of Animals in Research*	
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
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	
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	
Use of Human Patients or Tissue	
<p>Any application for a research proposal involving human 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.</p>	
<p>Does your proposal involve the use of human patients or tissue?</p>	<p>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.</p>

Financial Details	
Proposed Budget*	Please provide a summary of your requested budget in the table provided. This amount should not exceed £20,000.
Justification for Research Expenses*	Please fully justify your request for all research expenses. A clear justification of all consumable and travel costs must be provided.
Justification for Equipment*	Please fully justify your request for equipment.
Other Sources of Funding	Please state all other sources of funding (secure or otherwise), the amounts and the purpose of each. This refers to any funding related to the proposed project.
Supporting documents	<p>Please upload relevant documents (PDF), such as a quotation for equipment or a letter from the Head of Department confirming priority usage of an equipment you intend to purchase.</p> <p>Please note that additional documents such as a supporting letter or CV are not accepted as supporting document and would be removed from your application prior to assessment.</p>

Applicant Declaration*
<p>By completing this section, you are declaring that the information you have provided in your application is true and correct.</p> <p>You are also signing to confirm the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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.



4. Review process

Applications are assessed by the Research Grants Committees, who provide scores and comments. The Panel Chairs agree on a list of applications that should be funded and also a reserve list.

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

Appendix 1: Application Submission Process Flow Diagram

