Research Services

Early Career Researchers: Funding Routes
Introduction

This is a list of some of the funding opportunities available for Early Career Researchers. Basic information about each grant is available below. For more detailed information, click on the name of the award which links through the relevant page on the funder’s website.

Early Career Specific Funding Routes

**AHRC Leadership Fellows Early Career Route**
*Scope:* Arts and Humanities  
*Deadline:* Open Call  
*Duration of Award:* 6-18 months  
**Funding:**
- £50,000-£250,000  
- Cost of mentoring (one hour per month)  
**Eligibility:**
- Applicants must be actively engaged in postdoctoral research and be of postdoctoral standing  
- University will need to confirm it has identified the applicant as a research leader or potential research leader  
- Applicants must have at least two years of post-doctoral experience in an academic/research environment and a track record of research publications and/or other research outputs as appropriate.

**AHRC Research Grant Early Career Route**
*Scope:* Arts and Humanities  
*Deadline:* Open Call  
*Duration of Award:* up to a limit of 60 months  
**Funding:**
- £50,000-£250,000  
- Cost of mentoring (one hour per month)  
**Eligibility:**
- Applicants must be within 8 years of the award of PhD or within 6 years of first academic appointment

**BBSRC Future Leader Fellowships**
*Scope:* Biological Science  
*Deadline:* Applications in response to time-limited call  
*Duration of Award:* 3 years  
**Funding:**
- Up to £375,000  
- Cost of mentoring (one hour per month)  
**Eligibility:**
- Applicants should have a PhD or be expecting to have undergone successful PhD viva prior to the start of the project  
- Applicants should not exceed five years in active postdoctoral research employment prior to announcement of the awarded FLFs.
British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship

Scope: Humanities and Social Sciences

Deadline: Two stage call – usually October and March deadlines

Duration of Award: 3 years

Funding:

- No fixed amount (varies depending on host institution)
- Covers full-time Post-Doctoral Fellow salary; small-scale research expenses (maximum £6000); costs towards mentor time (one hour per month) and host institution’s estates and indirect costs

Eligibility:

- Applicants must be supported by the UK host institution in which they wish to hold the Fellowship
- Applicants must be within three years of the award of a doctorate
- Applicants must be a UK or EEA national, or have completed a doctorate at a UK university.

ERC Starting Grants

Scope: Any field of research

Deadline: Grants can only be submitted in response to a yearly Call for Proposals

Duration of Award: Up to 5 years

Funding: Up to €1.5 million

Eligibility:

- Researchers of any nationality with 2-7 years of experience since completion of PhD
- Applicants must have a scientific track record showing great promise and an excellent research proposal.

ESPRC New Investigator Award

Scope: Engineering and Physical Sciences

Deadline: Open Call - assessment panels meet in March, July and November

Duration of Award: No cap on duration

Funding: No cap on funding

Eligibility:

- Applicants should not have previous experience of leading an academic research group or grant
- Applicants with fixed-term appointments are eligible providing their contract extends beyond the end date of the proposed research
- Applicants in a staff post on a research grant are not eligible unless they hold an academic fellowship.

ESPRC Postdoctoral Fellowship

Scope: Engineering and Physical Sciences

Deadline: Open call but projects have to link to current thematic priority areas see http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/areas/ for more information.

Duration of Award: Up to 3 years

Funding:

- 100% salary costs
- Other non-staff costs associated with the research
- No staff costs covered

**Eligibility:**
- Applicants are expected to hold a PhD by the start date of the fellowship or have equivalent research experience
- There are no eligibility rules based on years of post-doctoral experience or whether the applicant holds a permanent academic position
- Applicants have to meet the Fellowship person specification which can be found here: https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/peerreviewprocess/whocanapply/

**ESPRC Early Career Fellowship**
*Scope:* Engineering and Physical Sciences  
*Deadline:* Open call but projects have to link to current thematic priority areas, which can be found here: [http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/areas/](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/areas/)  
*Duration of Award:* Up to 5 years  
*Funding:*  
- 100% salary costs  
- Other staff and non-staff costs associated with the research

**Eligibility:**
- Applicants are expected to hold a PhD by the start date of the fellowship or have equivalent research experience
- There are no eligibility rules based on years of post-doctoral experience or whether the applicant holds a permanent academic position  
Applicants have to meet the Fellowship person specification which can be found here: https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/peerreviewprocess/whocanapply/

**ESRC New Investigator Grant**
*Scope:* Social Sciences  
*Deadline:* Open Call - assessment panels meet in March, July and November  
*Duration of Award:* up to 5 years  
*Funding:*  
- £100,000-£300,000  
- Cost of mentoring has to be met by the applicant’s institution

**Eligibility:**
- Applicants should have a maximum of four years’ academic research experience following the submission of their PhD  
- Applicants cannot be current or former PIs on ESRC or other Research Council grants  
The call is open to applicants with or without a permanent academic post.

**Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship**
*Scope:* All disciplines except medicine  
*Deadline:* Usually 1st March of each year. Lancaster University runs an internal competition for prospective applicants.  
*Duration of Award:* 3 years  
*Funding:*
• The Trust will contribute 50% of each Fellow’s total salary costs up to a maximum of £25,000 per annum and the balance is to be paid by the host institution.
• Each fellow may request annual research expenses of up to £6,000.

**Eligibility:**
• Applicants must not yet have held a full-time permanent academic post in a UK university.
• Candidates must hold a doctorate.
• Applicants must either hold a degree from a UK HEI or must hold an academic position in the UK for which the contract duration at the time of appointment was no less than 9 months.

**MRC Career Development Award**
**Scope:** Medical Research
**Deadline:** The competition is held twice a year and application deadlines can be found on the website.
**Duration of Award:** Up to 5 years
**Funding:**
• Full personal salary costs, support for research staff, consumables expenses, travel costs and capital equipment.

**Eligibility:**
• There are no eligibility rules based on years of post-doctoral experience.
• To be considered suitable for the scheme, applicants should be able to clearly demonstrate that their skills and experience at the time of their application match those of the transition to an independent career stage.
• Applicants are normally expected to hold a PhD.

**MRC New Investigator Research Grants**
**Scope:** Medical Research
**Deadline:** Research board application deadlines are usually around January, May and September.
**Duration of Award:** 3 years
**Funding:**
• MRC salary contribution commensurate with the time attributed to the NIRG, capped at a maximum of 50% of the applicant’s total contracted working time.
• Salary for hours directly attributable to the project and Co-Is.
• Support for additional research or technical posts.
• Consumables and equipment.
• Travel costs.
• Data preservation, data sharing and dissemination costs.

**Eligibility:**
• There are no eligibility rules based on years of post-doctoral experience.
• The minimum formal qualification required is a graduate degree e.g. PhD or MD.
• Applicants should be able to clearly demonstrate that their skills and experience at the time of their application match those of the transition to independence career stage.
• Applicants can hold a lecturer appointment, a junior fellowship, or be in another research staff position.
NERC Independent Research Fellowships

**Scope:** Environmental Science  
**Deadline:** Call with deadline - 2017 call opened in June and closed in October  
**Duration of Award:** 5 years  
**Funding:** No funding limit but applications generally request £500,000 total funding  
**Eligibility:**
- Applicants must hold a PhD or have their PhD awarded before the start of the project  
- Applicants for NERC IRFs must have a maximum of eight years of full-time postdoctoral experience  
- Applicants should not have a permanent academic position.

NERC Standard Research Grant, New Investigator Route

*Please note that NERC has introduced demand management measures on this funding strand which are administered at an institutional level.*  
**Scope:** Environmental Science  
**Deadline:** Annual closing dates in late January and July  
**Duration of Award:** Up to 5 years  
**Funding:** £65,000 - £800,000  
**Eligibility:**
- Eligibility is restricted to those Investigators at the outset of their independent scientific career  
- Applicants must be within five years of first becoming eligible for NERC funding as a Principal Investigator and must not have received competitive research funding from any source.

NERC Standard Research Grant, New Investigator Route

*Please note that NERC has introduced demand management measures on this funding strand which are administered at an institutional level.*  
**Scope:** Environmental Science  
**Deadline:** Annual closing dates in late January and July  
**Duration of Award:** Up to 5 years  
**Funding:** £65,000 - £800,000  
**Eligibility:**
- The Principal Investigator on the proposal must be resident in the UK and be employed by an eligible UK Research Organisation at lecturer (or equivalent) level or above.

STFC Ernest Rutherford Fellowship

**Scope:** Astronomy, physics, technology and research infrastructure  
**Deadline:** Annual call with specified deadline  
**Duration of Award:** 5 years  
**Funding:** Provides funds to cover salary, personal travel and minor equipment costs  
**Eligibility:**
- Applicants must have a PhD and a minimum of five years’ research experience including a minimum of two years’ postdoctoral experience.
**Wellcome Trust Research Fellowships in Humanities and Social Sciences**  
*Scope:* Health-related humanities and social sciences  
*Deadline:* Applications twice a year with preliminary application deadlines in early January and July  
*Duration of Award:* Up to 3 years  
*Funding:* Salary costs and research expenses  
*Eligibility:*  
- Applicants should have been awarded a PhD before they apply  
- Applicants should be a postdoctoral researcher who wants to carry out an extended period of research on their own project

**Standard Grant Funding Routes for Early Career Researchers**

**British Academy/Leverhulme Small Research Grant**  
*Scope:* Primary research in the humanities and social sciences  
*Deadline:* One call per year usually in early September  
*Duration of Award:* Up to 24 months  
*Funding:*  
- Costs of expenses arising from a defined research project (salary payments, computer kit or teaching replacement costs are not funded)  
*Eligibility:*  
- Awards are open to postdoctoral scholars (or equivalent)  
- Applications require the approval of the applicant's employing institution

**Leverhulme Trust Research Project Grant**  
*Scope:* All disciplines except medicine  
*Deadline:* Open call  
*Duration of Award:* Up to 5 years  
*Funding:*  
- Maximum grant value of £500,000  
*Eligibility:*  
- Eligible applicants will already be employed by the eligible institution  
- Applications can be submitted by those holding contract research posts provided that their appointment continues for a period at least equal to the span of the requested award  
- Up to three co-applicants from the same or different institutions may also be included.