

Your Search Journey on ResearchConnect



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Getting Started

Any funding search on ResearchConnect is guided by the following two elements:

- Keywords
- Filters

We generally recommend using both in combination to achieve the best results, but it is also possible to only use keywords with no filters, or to carry out a search based purely on filters without adding a keyword.

Working with Keywords

Here are some ideas on what type of keywords to use for your searches:

1. Topic, e.g.
 - occupational health
 - data mining
 - cattle husbandry
 - outpatient urology
 - 3D printing
2. Activity or purpose, e.g.
 - travel
 - conferences
 - laboratory materials
 - outreach
3. Location, e.g.
 - Africa
 - Baltic sea
 - Caribbean
 - Arctic
4. Application area, e.g.
 - Aviation
 - Vaccines
 - Migration policy
 - Resilience

PROTIP ResearchConnect uses British spellings for all of its content, with the exception of proper names and titles.

Working with Filters

Here are the most important filters you should consider using when carrying out searches:

1. Research Discipline
Make your selection as targeted as possible by selecting sub-disciplines and feel free to pick multiple areas.
2. Who You Are
In most cases, we recommend picking both your personal career stage as well as the type of organisation in which you are based.
3. Research Location and Resident Location
Both filters are vital! Always pick both.
4. Funding Type
This might be useful if you are specifically looking for fellowships or interested in awards given for already completed research.
5. Research Activities
This filter is helpful if you already know exactly what type of tasks or activities you need funding for.

PROTIP Use text fields above the tick boxes to find the best matches when looking for relevant research disciplines and research activities.

You can combine any number of keywords with any number of filters.

See our [Boolean Search Tips](#) guide on query string syntax to learn more about how the ResearchConnect search algorithm responds to the combination of different search terms and Boolean operators.

Testing the Waters

We recommend an iterative approach to funding searches on ResearchConnect. As a first step, try out a combination of keywords and filters. Depending on the type and number of search results you get, follow the following steps:

- Too few results >> **Broaden your**
- Too many results >> **Narrow your**
- Results are not relevant >> **Tips for Troubleshooting**

Broaden your Approach

There are different reasons why a search will return only a small number of results. Depending on the reason, we recommend different actions.

- **Reason 1: Terminology**

Consider if your search terms can be replaced with similar or adjacent words.

- What other related keywords can you use?
- Are there multiple terms used for the same concept (e.g. coronavirus vs COVID-19)?
- Is there an overarching topic you could refer to instead?

A Note on Our Search Algorithm:

Keywords are matched against fund/call text fields as well as any underlying metadata (i.e. the tagging). The algorithm also uses an 'elastic' approach which means that it includes results that are thematically related to the search term you used. For example, when using the search term 'experiment' you will also get results referring to 'experimentation' and 'experimental'.

See also the example on **The Life Cycle of Otters** in the **Case Studies** section on page 5.

- **Reason 2: Filters**

Try removing or substituting some filters you have applied and see if this improves the list of results. Here are some suggestions:

- Remove or change the 'who you are' filters: opportunities are tagged according to who can submit the application (lead applicant), but many funders also allow for collaborations with different organisations or researchers within the scope of their research projects.
- Remove or change the 'research disciplines' filters: many funders allow for or even encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration. This means that opportunities not primarily targeting your own research area might still be relevant for you.

See also the examples on **Stem Cell Research** and an **Encyclopaedia on Arabic Archaeology and Architecture** in the **Case Studies** section on page 5.

- **Reason 3: General lack in funding**

Despite our best efforts to cover a broad range of funding opportunities, there will always be gaps for particular research disciplines, topics and funding types. This is simply due to

the fact that not all research areas or research(-related) activities receive the same amount of attention from funders. If your search returns only a small number of results, it may well be because your ideal funding opportunity simply does not exist. In this case, we would recommend looking for thematically open opportunities, i.e. grants or fellowships that are not targeted specifically at your research area but are open to all (or many different) disciplines. To identify such opportunities, we would recommend the following actions:

- Remove all search terms relating to a specific topic or discipline.
- Instead, focus on the filter options to narrow down your list of results according to your needs (e.g. via location, type of fund, research activities, etc.).
- Try search terms relating to criteria beyond the research topic. Some funders like to prioritise their funding according to location, application area, career level or humanitarian aims. Examples of relevant keywords are:
 - Identity: women, refugees, travellers, etc.
 - Career level: senior, clinician scientist, start-up, etc.
 - Geography: coastal, Eastern Europe, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), etc.
 - Goal: resilience, wellbeing, awareness, etc.

Narrow your Approach

There are different reasons why a search will return a very large number of results. Depending on the reason, we recommend different actions.

- **Reason 1: Too many search terms**

The search algorithm will rank the results it returns according to their relevance. This means it will first display results that match several of the chosen search terms (or related words). However, further down the list, it will also include results that match only one keyword in the list you provided. This means that the total number of results increases with each new keyword added. To avoid this, ensure you do not use too many keywords at the same time. Instead, set up multiple different searches with different keywords. Alternatively, refer to our guide on the Boolean operators (on page 6) best used to cut down on unwanted results.

- **Reason 2: Unspecific terminology**

General search terms such as 'medicine', 'cancer' or 'artificial intelligence' can lead to hundreds of results. A more useful approach is to use more specific search terms that reflect specific aspects of your area of interest. Examples could be:

- Use 'drug development' or 'transplants' instead of 'medicine'.
- Use 'tumour' or 'metastasis' instead of 'cancer'.
- Use 'LLM' or 'trustworthy' instead of 'artificial intelligence'.

- **Reason 3: Too few filters applied**

If you receive a very long list of results, it may be useful to use the different filters to help you create a relevant shortlist. Consider the filters mentioned in the information box on page

1 to pick useful filters. You may also consult our glossary of [research disciplines](#) and [research activities](#) to choose the best options for the type of funding you are looking for.

Tips for Troubleshooting

In certain situations, you may find it difficult to identify opportunities that are relevant for the type of project or activity you are looking to finance. While the reason for this will differ in each case, here are some suggestions that may help you identify suitable workarounds:

Bilateral or Multilateral Research

When looking for funding opportunities that support research in two (or more) specific countries, you may find that the number of results based on the location filter is very high. This is due to the database showing all the relevant results for country A as well as all the relevant results for country B, instead of showing only opportunities that are open to both countries at the same time. To remedy this issue, try the following strategies:

- Add the name of the countries as keywords.
- Adjust the tagging to show cross-border activities, i.e. set the 'resident location' to country A and the 'research location' to country B (or vice versa).
- In the case of bilateral projects, make sure to select the 'Bilateral research partnerships' tag.

A Note on Filters and Tagging

The filters you apply to your search draw on the specific metadata tagging of each opportunity in the ResearchConnect database by our Content Team members. Our researchers carefully consider what tagging to apply to each fund/call by balancing comprehensiveness with usability. This means, e.g. that a large grant that also covers the costs for public engagement may not include the 'public engagement' tag as this is not the primary focus of the opportunity.

This approach is designed to prevent high numbers of irrelevant results.

More Search Tips

Here are some other useful hints to help you make the most of ResearchConnect.

Funds vs Calls

You can select whether to view funds or calls, or both. This is an additional tool to broaden or narrow your search.

Funds

When 'funds' is selected, the list of results will show all the relevant funding programmes, including:

- Recurring opportunities such as annual fellowships, biennial prizes or regular open topic grants.
- One-off funding opportunities with a particular thematic focus.
- Overarching programmes by large funders comprising of multiple calls with varying deadlines and on different topics.

Calls

When 'calls' is selected, the list of results will show details of the individual calls that are part of larger overarching programmes.

Closed Funds

By default, the results list on ResearchConnect will include all relevant opportunities that have the status 'open' (i.e. open for applications) and future (i.e. the start date of an upcoming application window has been confirmed but the funder is not yet accepting applications).

Including 'closed' opportunities in your search is another way to broaden your search if you have been unable to find many suitable funding opportunities. It is useful to also check 'closed' funds because a large percentage of funds on the ResearchConnect database are recurring opportunities. This means that a fund that is currently closed may reopen in a few months' time. Identifying these closed opportunities can help you to plan ahead.

Saving Searches and Setting Up Alerts

Once you have created a search with some promising results, we recommend that you save the search and also sign up for alerts. This way you will be notified when new opportunities that match your search criteria are added to the database.

Case Studies

This section includes some real-world examples of how the above approaches may be implemented in the context of specific research topics.

The Life Cycle of Otters

This example case relates to a research project on the life cycle of otters. It showcases how you can broaden your approach by using different search terms.

In this instance, the researchers struggled to find any results with the search term '**otters**'. However, by expanding the search to include words such as '**mammals**', '**animals**', '**wildlife**' or even more general terms or related concepts such as '**ecosystem**' or '**conservation**' more relevant results were identified. This approach makes use of the fact that funders are often willing to support very specific projects under a more general fund if the project falls within their broader area of interest.

Stem Cell Research

The below funding search example for stem cell research shows how you can use the discipline tagging to broaden your approach.

Aside from performing a text search on '**stem cell**', you could use the discipline tag '**Regenerative Medicine**' under the Medical Research tree. If you wanted to include a few more disciplines, the '**Biomedical**', '**Genetics and Genetic Medicine**' and '**Molecular Sciences**' tags may also be useful, while the '**Clinical and Human Biological Sciences**' under the Biotechnology and Biology tree could be included to expand the results further.

Encyclopaedia on Arabic Archaeology and Architecture

This real-world example relates to a search for funding to develop an encyclopaedia relating to archaeology and architecture in Arabic. It shows how it may be helpful to consider the inter- or transdisciplinary aspects of your research project.

For this example, in the first instance, a number of tags could be selected from the Arts and Humanities tree, including '**Heritage Science**', '**Archaeology**' and '**History of Architecture and Design**'. With the focus on the Arabic world, the '**Islamic Studies**' and also possibly '**African Studies**' tags could be selected.

Focusing specifically on the online library/encyclopaedia aspect of this project, you could select '**Bibliographic Research**' and '**Information Science**', as well as '**Digital Humanities**' and possibly '**Museums, Galleries, Libraries and Archives**'. Finally, some more general disciplines could be chosen to expand the results further, including '**Culture, Language and Area Studies**', as well as possibly '**Art History**' and '**Design**', which may provide some additional opportunities of interest.

Boolean Search Tips

The following query string syntax can be used in the search box on ResearchConnect. Any results will use keyword(s) you have entered and match this against fund or call text fields as well as any underlying metadata.

Exact Matches

There are two different ways to make sure the search prioritises an exact match to the word you have typed into the search bar.

"humane"	Both these options will prioritise funds that include the word 'humane' and results with words like human, humanism, humanities, etc. will show at the bottom of the list.
+humane	

Please note that the elastic search algorithm on ResearchConnect will always also include similar or 'related' results further down the results list. Using the above syntax will only ensure exact matches are prioritised.

Multiple Words

When looking for phrases or word combinations you have multiple ways of searching.

"Horizon Europe"	This will return schemes where the whole phrase appears in this word order (just like you wrote it).
+Horizon +Europe	This will return schemes where both the words 'Horizon' and 'Europe' appear. But they can appear in any order and also not necessarily in the same sentence/phrase.
+Europe -Horizon	This will return schemes that include the word 'Europe' but do <u>not</u> include the word 'Horizon'. This might be useful when looking for a scheme with the word 'Europe' in the title, because it will keep the many Horizon schemes from popping up as well.

Beginning of a Word

When you are unsure of the exact title of a scheme, it might also be useful to be able to search by only the beginning of a word. An example could be if you are not sure if a scheme refers to 'maritime' or 'marine'. In this case, you can use the truncation formula.

Mari*	This will return all schemes with words that begin with the letters 'mari', including maritime and marine (but also Marie and Maria).
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