



Funding opportunity

Ernest Rutherford Fellowship 2025

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)
Funding type:	Fellowship
Total fund:	£6,000,000
Publication date:	4 June 2025
Opening date:	4 June 2025 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	1 October 2025 4:00pm UK time

Last updated: 17 June 2025 - [see all updates](#)

Apply for an STFC Ernest Rutherford Fellowship (ERF) to work on an independent research project. Projects must be within the remit of STFC's core science programme.

You must:

- be an early career researcher
- hold a PhD qualification or have relevant experience and clear leadership potential
- be hosted by an eligible UK research organisation with a STFC ERF quota

You must not hold a tenured academic post or academic position at lecturer level.

We will fund your application at 80% of its full economic cost. The host research organisation must agree to find the rest.

The fellowship will last up to five years.

Who can apply

To lead a project, you must be based at an eligible organisation. [Check if your organisation is eligible](#).

Who is eligible to apply

Ernest Rutherford Fellowships are intended for early career researchers who do not hold a tenured academic position at lecturer level. You are not eligible if you currently hold an academic position at lecturer level or the equivalent in institutions other than universities. If you secure an academic position at lecturer level prior to the offer of a fellowship, you will be ineligible to hold the fellowship.

You must hold a PhD or have relevant experience at the time of applying for an Ernest Rutherford Fellowship.

Years of experience

We do not define eligibility for Ernest Rutherford fellowships in terms of a minimum number of years of experience. Instead, you should read the assessment criteria to determine if you have the skills, knowledge and experience to apply for an Ernest Rutherford Fellowship.

Eligible institutions

Fellowships may be held at an eligible UK research organisation with an STFC ERF quota.

ERF departmental quota

You are advised to contact your proposed host department as early as possible and certainly well ahead of the deadline for submission of applications.

Departments may have internal processes to select which candidates to support and the deadlines for these may be several weeks in advance of the STFC closing date. Departments should not expect you to accept an offer to be hosted before 18 July 2025.

We set a strict limit on the number of applications that each department may submit. Therefore, it may not be possible for a host to support all interested applicants.

See the list of departments, contacts and internal deadlines (PDF, 203KB).

Any departments who exceed their limit will be required to withdraw the excess applications. It is therefore very important that you seek assurance from your proposed host department that your application can be accommodated within its limit.

Fellowship applications associated with the Cockcroft or John Adams institutes are made through the relevant partner institution but are counted against the Cockcroft or John Adams Institute limits and should be flagged in their application.

Fellowship applications associated with the UK Astronomy Technology Centre are counted against the University of Edinburgh School of Physics and Astronomy limit.

Inclusive selection process

Host organisations must provide a statement describing the inclusive process they have used to select their chosen candidates by completing an online survey by 1 October 2025. Submission of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) statement is mandatory for departments submitting an ERF application.

The intention of this survey is to better understand the process by which departments are selecting candidates and to identify examples of best practice. The statement should describe the process used to identify potential candidates. It should not include personal details of potential candidates nor any details that may enable them to be identified.

Applications submitted by host organisations will be assessed by the STFC Education, Training and Careers Committee.

A list of the questions that will be on the survey can be found in the 'Additional information' section.

Choice of organisation

We recognise that mobility is not the only means to acquire the skills and experiences necessary to build a research career. We also recognise the need for having a fixed institution to provide unique facilities or opportunities, and other circumstances where moving would be unsuitable, such as domestic arrangements.

To demonstrate a commitment to the development of ERFs, we expect you to have agreed with the Head of Department of the host institution their support, and evidence this in the appropriate 'Host organisation support' section of the application.

Resubmissions

You can apply to the 2025 fellowship round if you were previously unsuccessful with the same, modified or a different fellowship application providing that you still meet the eligibility criteria. If you are resubmitting the same project, you should ensure that any feedback previously given by the panel has been addressed. We reserve the right to reject an application if the panel's comments have not been addressed.

Unsuccessful research grant applications submitted to other schemes are not eligible to be resubmitted to the STFC Fellowship scheme unless the work proposed is substantially different in terms of objectives or work to be carried out.

Please note the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) submission policy is under review and we may not accept uninvited resubmissions in future opportunities.

Who is not eligible to apply

The following are not eligible to apply. You should not apply if you hold, or have ever held:

- a permanent position at lecturer level (or the equivalent in an institution other than a university) that includes setting up a group and conducting your own research
- an equivalent competitive fellowship that allows you to establish an independent research group, and therefore independent researcher status
- a tenured academic post

If you are unsure of your eligibility status, please email fellowships@stfc.ukri.org to confirm before you apply.

Other funding

You should not be in receipt of duplicate funding for the same or similar application from more than one funding agency. Details of similar applications that have been submitted to other funding agencies must be added in the 'Other funding support' section of the application. You must advise us if a successful funding decision is made by the other funding agency.

Applicants who have applied for the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships can also apply for an Ernest Rutherford Fellowship but cannot hold two fellowships which fund their working time simultaneously.

International applicants

Fellowships are open to applicants of any nationality. Where applicable, you will need to comply with UK Visas and Immigration requirements and hold a work permit prior to taking up the fellowship. Work permits are a matter for direct negotiation between the institution, the UK Visas and Immigration and the Home Office.

All successful applicants who require a visa to work in the UK will be eligible to be considered under the Global Talent visa route.

In line with the highly prestigious nature of the award, this visa route is designed for people who are internationally recognised as world leaders or potential world-leading talent in the fields of science and the arts and enables the holder to be both adaptable and flexible during their research in the UK.

The grant of any visa is always subject to the standard Home Office general grounds for refusal of a visa. UKRI is able to provide additional guidance regarding the appropriate evidence required to complete the visa application process under the Global Talent visa route.

Applications are welcome from candidates who intend to use the fellowship as a means of re-establishing themselves in the UK following a period overseas.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are [committed to achieving equality of opportunity](#) for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.

We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances. This includes:

- career breaks
- support for people with caring responsibilities
- flexible working
- alternative working patterns

UKRI can offer [disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders](#) during the application and assessment process.

Applications are welcome from those seeking to resume a research career, following a period of absence from active research of, normally, at least one year. The break may have been due, for example, to long term illness, injury or disability, family or caring responsibilities, parental leave, personal reasons, working in non-academic employment.

If this applies to you then you could consider applying for the [STFC Return to research support bursary](#).

You should make clear any substantive periods of absence from research within your application. This can be included under 'Additions' in the 'Applicant capability to deliver' section. Further details on the nature of the absence and how it has affected track record, productivity and career progression may be provided if desired. Information provided will be used only to make appropriate adjustments when assessing an individual's track record, productivity, and career progression.

Full or part time

Fellowships can be held either on a full-time or a part-time basis by applicants wishing to combine their fellowship with caring responsibilities.

A part-time award can be held at 50% or above of full-time equivalent. A part-time fellow may not hold another part-time position in conjunction with the fellowship. The period of award for fellowships held on a part-time basis will be extended on a pro rata basis.

What we're looking for

Scope

The aim of an Ernest Rutherford Fellowship is to support future scientific leaders to establish a strong, independent research programme.

The project must afford scope for original work and align to STFC strategic objectives and core business areas:

- astronomy, solar and planetary science
- particle physics
- particle astrophysics
- nuclear physics
- accelerator science
- computational science
- quantum technologies

If you are unsure if your research falls under STFC's remit, please email fellowships@stfc.ukri.org ahead of the application process.

The role of the fellow will be to undertake their own research programme.

Duration

The duration of this award is five years.

Projects must start by 31 March 2027.

Funding available

Fellowship applications are costed on the basis of full economic cost (FEC). If a fellowship is awarded, STFC will provide funding at 80% of the FEC requested.

The host institution must agree to fund the balance of FEC for the application

from other resources. Universities and other higher education organisations use the transparent approach to costing (TRAC) methodology to calculate FEC.

For further information about FEC, see the [STFC guidance for applicants](#).

What we will fund

Ernest Rutherford Fellowships provide funds to cover your salary, the costs of personal travel and some minor equipment costs. These will have been awarded under the 'Directly incurred costs' heading. Fellows who have returned from a career break may also use funds applied for retraining and updating their skills where this has been justified in the context of the proposed research project.

You may request costs associated with reasonable adjustments where they increase as a direct result of working on the project however, your host organisation must provide funding for any costs associated with reasonable adjustment as part of your employment.

Salary

Your salary will have been agreed with your proposed host institution prior to submitting an application. The agreed salary should be in accordance with the institution's standard recruitment and employment practices. The appointment level on the institution's salary scale should be justified in the application. The salary costs requested should include employer's national insurance and superannuation contributions.

Salary increments over the period of the fellowship should be taken into account, but not anticipated future pay awards. We will award funds on the basis of the agreed salary scales at the time of announcement, with provision for future years increase on the basis of standard UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) indexation rates. Once announced the grant will not normally be increased to take account of different indexation rates.

Travel

Personal travel is taken to include necessary collaborative visits and fieldwork, and attendance at one conference workshop or symposium during each year of the fellowship. This excludes fieldwork and visits that form part of the work of a research group with which you may be associated.

If you are associated with an STFC research grant, you must ensure that any travel connected with the research project for which the grant was given is claimed from that source.

You should estimate in your application all personal travel and subsistence funds required during the lifetime of the fellowship. Travel and subsistence costs are expected to be around £2,200 each year. If there are exceptional circumstances for applying for additional funding in excess of the guidance

levels. Please give justification in your application.

Other costs

You may request minor equipment and consumables up to a total of £5,000 for the duration of the fellowship under 'Directly incurred other costs'.

At the end of the fellowship, any resources purchased will belong to the institution. If there are exceptional reasons for applying for more than the guideline level, then justification of these costs should be included in your application.

We do not fund mentoring time and this cost should not be included in the funding costs. Laptops may be costed where a new member of staff (for example, a fellow) who is employed purely for the grant will require this, or where a higher specification is required for the completion of specific grant related activities such as data modelling or enhanced graphics.

These costs should be applied for under 'Directly incurred other costs'.

Relocation and visas

If you are moving to the UK from overseas to take up an award, you may request relocation and visa costs including Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) and Certificate of Sponsorship.

These costs should be applied for under the 'Directly incurred other costs' heading on the proforma and are in addition to the £5,000 under 'Other costs'.

We will award relocation costs up to a maximum of £1,200 if moving from Europe or £3,000 if moving from outside of Europe.

Directly incurred costs

Costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project are charged as the cash value actually spent and are supported by an auditable record. Ernest Rutherford Fellowships provide funds to cover your salary, the costs of personal travel and some minor equipment costs.

These should be requested under the 'Directly incurred costs' heading. If you are returning from a career break you may also apply for funds for retraining and updating your skills where this can be justified in the context of the proposed research project.

Directly allocated costs

Estates costs include building and premises costs, basic services and utilities and appear under the 'Directly allocated costs' heading. Estates costs are calculated by the research organisation on application.

Pooled technician costs can also be claimed under 'Other directly allocated'

costs.

Indirect costs

Indirect costs include the costs of administration, such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services. Like estate costs, indirect costs will be calculated by the research organisation and a single figure will be entered on the application.

Read about funding available in the [STFC guidance for applicants](#).

What we will not fund

We will not provide funding in research grants for any publication costs associated with peer-reviewed journal articles and conference papers. UKRI provides direct funding to research organisations for this purpose. Fellows that were awarded publication costs associated with research outputs other than journal articles and conference papers, such as books, monographs, critical editions, catalogues and so on may, however, claim these as a 'Directly incurred other cost'.

The Ernest Rutherford Fellowship is for an independent research project. You cannot apply for costs to fund postdoctoral research assistants (PDRAs) or PhD students.

Supporting skills and talent

We encourage you to follow the principles of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and the [Technician Commitment](#).

Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)

UKRI is committed in ensuring that effective international collaboration in research and innovation takes place with integrity and within strong ethical frameworks. Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I) is a UKRI work programme designed to help protect all those working in our thriving and collaborative international sector by enabling partnerships to be as open as possible, and as secure as necessary. Our [TR&I Principles](#) set out UKRI's expectations of organisations funded by UKRI in relation to due diligence for international collaboration.

As such, applicants for UKRI funding may be asked to demonstrate how their proposed projects will comply with our approach and expectation towards TR&I, identifying potential risks and the relevant controls you will put in place to help proportionately reduce these risks.

See [further guidance and information about TR&I](#), including where you can find additional support.

How to apply

We are running this funding opportunity on the new UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service so please ensure that your organisation is registered. You cannot apply on the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system.

The fellow is responsible for completing the application process on the Funding Service, but we expect all team members and project partners to contribute to the application.

Only the lead research organisation can submit an application to UKRI.

To apply

Select 'Start application' near the beginning of this Funding finder page.

1. Confirm you are the fellow.
2. Sign in or create a Funding Service account. To create an account, select your organisation, verify your email address, and set a password. If your organisation is not listed, email support@funding-service.ukri.org. Please allow at least 10 working days for your organisation to be added to the Funding Service. We strongly suggest that if you are asking UKRI to add your organisation to the Funding Service to enable you to apply to this opportunity, you also create an organisation Administration Account. This will be needed to allow the acceptance and management of any grant that might be offered to you.
3. Answer questions directly in the text boxes. You can save your answers and come back to complete them or work offline and return to copy and paste your answers. If we need you to upload a document, follow the upload instructions in the Funding Service. All questions and assessment criteria are listed in the How to apply section on this Funding finder page.
4. Allow enough time to check your application in 'read-only' view before sending to your research office.
5. Send the completed application to your research office for checking. They will return it to you if it needs editing.
6. Your research office will submit the completed and checked application to UKRI.

Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant.

When including images, you must:

- provide a descriptive caption or legend for each image immediately underneath it in the text box (this must be outside the image and counts

towards your word limit)

- insert each new image on a new line
- use files smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Images should only be used to convey important visual information that cannot easily be put into words. The following are not permitted, and your application may be rejected if you include:

- sentences or paragraphs of text
- tables
- excessive quantities of images

A few words are permitted where the image would lack clarity without the contextual words, such as a diagram, where text labels are required for an axis or graph column.

For more guidance on the Funding Service, see:

- [how applicants use the Funding Service](#)
- [how research offices use the Funding Service](#)
- [how reviewers use the Funding Service](#)

References

References should be included within the word count of the appropriate question section. You should use your discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

Hyperlinks can be used in reference information. When including references, you should consider how your references will be viewed and used by the assessors, ensuring that:

- references are easily identifiable by the assessors
- references are formatted as appropriate to your research
- persistent identifiers are used where possible

General use of hyperlinks

Applications should be self-contained. You should only use hyperlinks to link directly to reference information. You must not include links to web resources to extend your application. Assessors are not required to access links to conduct assessment or recommend a funding decision.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Use of generative AI tools to prepare funding applications is permitted, however, caution should be applied.

For more information see our [policy on the use of generative AI in application and assessment](#).

Deadline

STFC must receive your application by 1 October 2025 at 4:00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply after this time.

Make sure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines.

Following the submission of your application to the funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed, and applications will not be returned for amendment. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected.

Personal data

Processing personal data

STFC, as part of UKRI, will need to collect some personal information to manage your Funding Service account and the registration of your funding applications.

We will handle personal data in line with UK data protection legislation and manage it securely. For more information, including how to exercise your rights, read our [privacy notice](#).

Sensitive information

If you or a core team member need to tell us something you wish to remain confidential, email fellowships@stfc.ukri.org

Include in the subject line: [the funding opportunity title; sensitive information; your Funding Service application number].

Typical examples of confidential information include:

- individual is unavailable until a certain date (for example due to parental leave)
- declaration of interest
- additional information about eligibility to apply that would not be appropriately shared in the 'Applicant and team capability' section
- conflict of interest for UKRI to consider in reviewer or panel participant selection
- the application is an invited resubmission

For information about how UKRI handles personal data, read [UKRI's privacy notice](#).

Publication of outcomes

STFC, as part of UKRI, will publish the outcomes of this funding opportunity at [STFC Board and panel outcomes](#).

If your application is successful, we will publish some personal information on the [UKRI Gateway to Research](#).

Summary

Word limit: 550

In plain English, provide a summary we can use to identify the most suitable experts to assess your application.

We usually make this summary publicly available on external-facing websites, therefore do not include any confidential or sensitive information. Make it suitable for a variety of readers, for example:

- opinion-formers
- policymakers
- the public
- the wider research community

Guidance for writing a summary

Clearly describe your proposed work in terms of:

- context
- the challenge the project addresses
- aims and objectives
- potential applications and benefits

Core team

List the key members of your team and assign them roles from the following:

- fellow

Only list one individual as fellow.

UKRI has introduced a new addition to the ‘Specialist’ role type. Public contributors such as people with lived experience can now be added to an application.

Find out more about [UKRI’s core team roles in funding applications](#).

Application questions

Classification of application

Word limit: 10

Please select one of the following classifications that are the closest match to your application for expert review purposes:

- accelerator physics
- astronomy extragalactic
- astronomy near universe
- astronomy near universe exoplanet / solar
- nuclear physics
- particle astrophysics and cosmology
- particle physics experiment
- particle physics theory

Year of PhD award and research organisation

Word limit: 10

Please provide the year you were awarded your PhD and the research organisation.

Years postdoctoral experience

Word limit: 1

Please add the number of years postdoctoral experience you will have on 1 September 2025.

Please add whole numbers only and round up or down as appropriate.

Posts held since PhD

Word limit: 200

Please detail the positions held and the organisations you worked at since your PhD.

Resubmissions

Word limit: 500

Is your application a resubmission?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Please state 'yes' or 'no'.

If yes, please demonstrate how you have addressed the feedback provided by

the panel in your application.

Vision and Approach

Create a document that include your response to the vision and approach. The document should not be more than six sides of A4, single spaced in 11-point Arial (or equivalent sans serif font) with margins of at least 2 cm. You may include images, graphs and tables.

For the file name, use the unique Funding Service number the system gives you when you create an application, followed by the words 'Vision and Approach'.

Save this document as a single PDF file, no bigger than 8MB. Unless specifically requested, please do not include any sensitive personal data within the attachment.

If the attachment does not meet these requirements, the application will be rejected.

The Funding Service will provide document upload details when you apply.

Vision: what are you hoping to achieve with your proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how your proposed work:

- is of excellent quality and importance within or beyond the field(s) or area(s)
- has the potential to advance current understanding, or generate new knowledge, thinking or discovery within or beyond the field or area of its focus
- is timely, given current trends, context, and needs
- impacts world-leading research, society, the economy or the environment

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

In the Vision section we also expect you to:

- identify the potential direct or indirect benefits and who the beneficiaries might be
- have a clear and distinctive strategic vision for your own research in the context of the broad research area within which you work, including internationally
- describe how your research plans fit into an international context
- show the importance and alignment of the project to the [STFC Programme](#)

Approach: how are you going to deliver your proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how you have designed your work so that it:

- is effective and appropriate to achieve your objectives
- is feasible, and comprehensively identifies any risks to delivery and how you will manage them
- uses a clearly written and transparent methodology (if applicable)
- summarises the previous work and describes how you will build on and progress this work (if applicable)
- will maximise translation of outputs into outcomes and impacts

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant.

Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

Within the Approach section we also expect you to:

Explain how you have designed your work so that it:

- demonstrate access to the appropriate services, facilities, infrastructure, or equipment to deliver the proposed work
- provide a detailed and comprehensive project plan, including milestones and timelines in the form of a chart or diagram
- describe how the planned programme of research shows potential to significantly advance the field with the appropriate balance of risk versus reward
- detail a project that is feasible within the period of the fellowship demonstrating a rigorous approach to reach achievable goals

References may be included within this section.

Applicant capability to deliver

Word limit: 1,650

Why are you the right individual to successfully deliver the proposed work?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Evidence of how you have:

- the relevant experience (appropriate to career stage) to make best use of the benefits presented by this funding opportunity to develop your career
- the right balance of skills and aptitude to deliver the proposed work
- contributed to developing a positive research environment and wider community
- the appropriate team working or leadership skills (appropriate to career

stage)

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

The word limit for this section is 1,650 words, 1,150 words to be used for the Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) modules (including references) and, if necessary, a further 500 words for Additions.

Use the R4RI format to showcase the range of relevant skills you have and how this will help to deliver the proposed work. You can include specific achievements and choose past contributions that best evidence your ability to deliver this work.

Complete this section using the following R4RI module headings. You should use each heading once, see the [UKRI guidance on R4RI](#). You should consider how to balance your answer, and emphasise where appropriate the key skills you bring:

- contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies, or knowledge
- the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships
- contributions to the wider research and innovation community
- contributions to broader research or innovation, users and audiences, and towards wider societal benefit

Additions

Provide any further details relevant to your application. This section is optional and can be up to 500 words. You should not use it to describe additional skills, experiences, or outputs, but you can use it to describe any factors that provide context for the rest of your R4RI (for example, details of career breaks if you wish to disclose them).

You should complete this section as a narrative. Do not format it like a CV.

The [roles in funding applications policy](#) has descriptions of the different project roles.

Career development

Word limit: 1,000

Why is this fellowship the right way to develop your career and how will you use it to benefit others?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Ensure that you have identified:

- career development goals appropriate to the fellowship funding opportunity
- how the fellowship will provide a feasible and appropriate trajectory for your personal development and to achieve your stated career development goals (as appropriate to your career stage and field)
- how you will instigate positive change in the wider research and innovation community, for example through Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), advocacy or advisory roles, stakeholder engagement, participation in expert review, influencing policy, public engagement, or outreach

Within the Career development section we also expect you to describe:

- how you will ensure continued research and professional development in those you will be managing on the project, to have a positive research and innovation experience, with opportunities or support to progress their own careers (useful links [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and [Technician Commitment](#))
- how the proposed work will provide a feasible and appropriate trajectory for you to acquire additional skills, like research, leadership, communication and management
- what mentoring arrangements are proposed and how they are appropriate to you

List of directly relevant publications and outputs

Word limit: 500

Please provide a list of directly relevant publications and research outputs by year.

List directly relevant research publications and outputs that have been submitted.

You can also list preprints but please make clear those still in progress.

Your list of publications should not include presentations.

Host organisation support

Word limit: 1,000

How will the host organisation support your fellowship?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Provide a support statement including:

- evidence detailing how the host will support you, as appropriate for your career development and the vision and approach of the fellowship
- who you have engaged with in your host organisation (name and role)

- how your research environment will contribute to the success of the work, in terms of suitability of the host organisation and strategic relevance to the project
- how the host organisation will ensure your time commitment to the fellowship is protected
- what development and training opportunities will be provided and how they form a cohesive career development package tailored to your aims and aspirations
- what financial or practical support, such as access to the appropriate services, facilities, infrastructure, or equipment, is being provided and how this strengthens your application

Within the Host organisation support section we also expect you to describe:

- evidence of support from the lead of the proposed host research and innovation group (including the project lead, formerly known as principal investigator or fellow)
- details of the fellowship work to be conducted at another UK or overseas host organisation and how they will support you (if applicable)

Resources and cost justification

Word limit: 1,000

What will you need to deliver your proposed work and how much will it cost?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Justify the application's more costly resources, in particular:

- significant travel for field work or collaboration (but not regular travel between collaborating organisations or to conferences)
- any consumables beyond typical requirements, or that are required in exceptional quantities

You can request costs associated with reasonable adjustments where they increase as a direct result of working on the project. For further information see [Disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders](#).

Assessors are not looking for detailed costs or a line-by-line breakdown of all project resources. Overall, they want you to demonstrate how the resources you anticipate needing for your proposed work:

- are comprehensive, appropriate, and justified
- represent the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes
- maximise potential outcomes and impacts

Other funding support

Word limit: 200

Please give us details of support sought or received from any other source for this or other research in the same field.

If you are seeking or have received support for this or other research, please provide the following information:

- awarding institution
- awarding organisation's reference
- title of project
- decision made yes or no
- award made yes or no
- start date
- end date
- amount sought or awarded (£)

Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)

Word limit: 500

What are the ethical or RRI implications and issues relating to the proposed work?

If you do not think that the proposed work raises any ethical or RRI issues, explain why.

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Demonstrate that you have identified and evaluated:

- the relevant ethical or responsible research and innovation considerations
- how you will manage these considerations

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

If you are collecting or using data you should identify:

- any legal and ethical considerations of collecting, releasing, or storing the data (including consent, confidentiality, anonymisation, security and other ethical considerations and, in particular, strategies to not preclude further reuse of data)
- formal information standards that your proposed work will comply with

Intellectual property (IP) management and communication

Word limit: 500

What is your IP exploitation plan?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Evidence of your plans to:

- manage the outputs of the project, including any intellectual assets and intellectual property
- have freedom to operate
- protect the foreground IP or market position
- disseminate and communicate the outputs of your project
- access potential future investments, if required

Data management and sharing

Word limit: 500

How will you manage and share data collected or acquired through the proposed research?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Provide a data management plan that clearly details how you will comply with UKRI's published [data sharing policy](#), which includes detailed guidance notes.

Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)

Word limit: 100

Does your proposed work relate to UKRI's Trusted Research and Innovation principles?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Demonstrate how your proposed work relates to UKRI's Trusted Research and Innovation principles including:

- list any dual-use (both military and non-military) applications to your research
- if this project is relevant to one or more of the [17 areas of the UK National Security and Investment \(NSI\) Act](#), please list the area(s)
- please read the [academic export control guidance](#) and confirm if an export control license is required for this project and the status of any application(s)
- if your project involves any items or substances on the UK strategic export control list, please list these

We may ask you to provide additional TR&I information later, in line with UKRI TR&I Principles and funding terms and conditions (RCG 2.6.2, 2.7.1 and 2.7.2).

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

We will assess your application using the following process.

Expert review

We will invite experts to review your application independently, against the specified criteria for this funding opportunity.

You will not be able to nominate reviewers for applications on the new UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service. Research councils will continue to select expert reviewers.

We are monitoring the requirement for applicant-nominated reviewers as we review policies and processes as part of the continued development of the new Funding Service.

Applicant response

You will be invited to comment on any expert review comments. You will receive 10 days from invitation to submit your response.

Panel

Following expert review, we will invite experts to use the evidence provided by reviewers and your applicant response to assess the quality of your application and rank it alongside other applications.

Interview

For shortlisted applications, an expert interview panel will conduct interviews with applicants after which the panel will make a funding recommendation.

Feedback

In addition to reviewer comments you will receive panel feedback.

Principles of assessment

We support the [San Francisco declaration on research assessment](#) and recognise the relationship between research assessment and research integrity.

Find out about the [UKRI principles of assessment and decision making](#).

Using generative artificial intelligence (AI) in expert review

Reviewers and panellists are not permitted to use generative AI tools to develop their assessment. Using these tools can potentially compromise the confidentiality of the ideas that applicants have entrusted to UKRI to safeguard.

For more detail see our [policy on the use of generative AI](#).

Assessment areas

The assessment areas we will use are:

- vision and approach
- applicant capability to deliver
- career development
- host organisation support
- ethics and response research and innovation (RRI)

Find details of assessment questions and criteria under the ‘Application questions’ heading in the ‘How to apply’ section.

Contact details

Get help with your application

If you have a question and the answers aren’t provided on this page

Important note : The Helpdesk is committed to helping users of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service as effectively and as quickly as possible. In order to manage cases at peak volume times, the Helpdesk will triage and prioritise those queries with an imminent opportunity deadline or a technical issue. Enquiries raised where information is available on the Funding Finder opportunity page and should be understood early in the application process (for example, regarding eligibility or content/remit of an opportunity) will not constitute a priority case and will be addressed as soon as possible.

Contact details

For help and advice on costings and writing your application please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation’s submission process.

For questions related to this specific funding opportunity please contact fellowships@stfc.ukri.org

Any queries regarding the system or the submission of applications through the Funding Service should be directed to the helpdesk.

Email: support@funding-service.ukri.org

Phone: 01793 547490

Our phone lines are open:

- Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm
- Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm

To help us process queries quicker, we request that users highlight the council and opportunity name in the subject title of their email query, include the application reference number, and refrain from contacting more than one mailbox at a time.

For further information on submitting an application read [How applicants use the Funding Service](#).

Additional info

Background

STFC fellowships are governed by the grant conditions as set out in the [research grants guidance for applicants](#), unless otherwise stated.

Applications are accepted and awards are made on the understanding that research organisations and fellows agree to observe the terms and conditions and the scheme requirements set out in this guidance and any amendments issued during the currency of the award.

We intend for the scheme to be flexible and reserve the right to deal as we think fit with applications of unusual character and to waive any rule at our absolute discretion.

For further information, you should refer to:

[UKRI FEC grant standard terms and conditions of grant](#)

[UKRI FEC grants standard terms and conditions of grant guidance](#)

Research organisations must appoint research fellow employees for the full duration of the award and integrate the research fellow within the research activities of the host department, while ensuring that they are able to maintain independence and focus on their personal research programme.

Awards are made on the understanding that the fellow's work and progress are subject to the same monitoring and appraisal procedures as those of other academic staff within the host institution, and that there are adequate facilities at the host institution for the research proposed.

See the [terms and conditions guidance for Ernest Rutherford Fellowships](#).

Research and innovation impact

Impact can be defined as the long-term intended or unintended effect research and innovation has on society, economy and the environment; to individuals, organisations, and the wider global population.

Global Talent visa

Ernest Rutherford Fellows are eligible for a [Global Talent visa](#) under the ‘exceptional promise’ category for future research leaders.

Research disruption due to COVID-19

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities. We are committed to ensuring that individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career, such as:

- breaks and delays
- disruptive working patterns and conditions
- the loss of ongoing work
- role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic

Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the capability to deliver and career development of those individuals included in the application. They will be asked to consider the capability of the applicant and their wider team to deliver the research they are proposing.

Where disruptions have occurred, you can highlight this within your application if you wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.

Supporting documents

[ERF 2025 Departmental quota limits, contacts and internal deadlines \(DOCX, 97KB\)](#)

[ERF ED&I host department statement questions \(DOCX, 79.8KB\)](#)

[ERF equality impact assessment \(DOCX, 28KB\)](#)

Updates

17 June 2025

Updated ERF 2025 Departmental quota limits, contacts and internal deadlines document added in 'Additional info'

Timeline

○ **4 June 2025 9:00am**

Opening date

○ **1 October 2025 4:00pm**

Closing date

○ **October 2025 to January 2026**

Expert review

○ **January/February 2026**

Applicant response

○ **March 2026**

Decision to interview

○ **April/May 2026**

Interview

○ **May/June 2026**

Awards announced

Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)

© 2025 Copyright UKRI

<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/ernest-rutherford-fellowship-2025>