

Funding Sources for Building your Research Programme

This document summarises some of the key sources of funding in the UK research landscape and provides links to research calls and further information. The funding schemes highlighted are not intended to be an exhaustive list.

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1. UKRI

UKRI was formed in April 2018 and composes the 7 UK Research Councils, Innovate UK and Research England (formerly part of HEFCE). UKRI and its constituent Councils published their first [Delivery Plans](#) in June 2019. UKRI delivers the majority of public funding for research and innovation in the UK. The National Academies have produced an '[explainer](#)' summarising UKRI's structure, governance and operation to give an overview of how it distributes its funding. Some of the schemes operated centrally by UKRI and those operated by individual Research Councils are summarised below.

1.1. Central UKRI funding

[Central funding from UKRI](#) includes funding for fellowships, strategic priorities, Industrial Strategy, and working with developing countries.

- The [Strategic Priorities Fund](#) supports multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary programmes identified by researchers and businesses – e.g. through EPSRC '[Big Ideas](#)' call.
- The [second wave of calls](#) for the [Fund for International Collaboration](#) was announced in August 2019. There are 13 partnerships, supported with £60 million from UKRI and at least £45 million in matched partner funding and additional in-kind support. The International Relations Office has produced a [list of current and upcoming calls](#).
- The [Future Leaders Fellowships](#) scheme is designed to provide long-term, flexible funding to tackle difficult and novel challenges, and support adventurous, ambitious programmes. The Fellowships are for early career researchers and innovators and aim to enable the fellow to transition to or establish their research/innovation independence, meaning applicants who have already achieved research/innovation independence will not be competitive. The Fellowships are for up to 7 years on a 4+3 basis. Up to 100 Fellowships will be funded per call over 6 calls between 2018-19 and 2020-21
- The [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#) (ISCF) forms part of the Government's £23bn National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) announced in 2016, which included an additional £7.09 billion of allocated funding for R&D for the period 2017/18 - 2021/22. The ISCF supports the Government's Industrial Strategy and [ISCF challenges](#) align with the Industrial Strategy grand challenges: Artificial Intelligence and data, ageing society, clean growth, and future of mobility. The first three waves of ISCF funding have been announced and a number of calls are open for the wave 3 challenges.
- The [Global Challenges Research Fund](#) (GCRF) is a £1.5 billion fund from UK Government. UKRI is the main delivery partner along with the National Academies. Research projects

funded through the GCRF programme need to satisfy ODA (Official Development Assistance) criteria. The Research Office have produced some [GCRF guidance](#), which includes details on current calls, FAQs, toolkits and a [2-page guide](#).

1.2. UKRI - EPSRC

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council ([EPSRC](#)) is the main UK funder for Engineering and Physical Sciences research. EPSRC aims for 60:40 split of funding between investigator-led and managed calls. The Council manages funding calls related to its own delivery plan as well as leading on a number of UKRI-wide calls. EPSRC funding calls are announced through the [EPSRC website](#). EPSRC also run a number of schemes to which you can apply at any time to do research in EPSC's remit:

- [New Investigator Awards](#) – Researchers can only apply once to this scheme that aims to help newly appointed academics get a grant early in their academic career. The scheme replaced the First Grants scheme in 2018.
- [Standard Research](#), researchers can apply at any time to this scheme and the grants are flexible in their size and scope meaning researchers can apply for funding to from small travel grants to multi-million pound programmes. Standard Grants can support a wide range of activities including research projects, feasibility studies, instrument development, equipment, travel, and collaboration.
- There are three career stages for the EPSRC [Fellowships](#) scheme – post-doctoral, early career and established career. Not all areas are open for Fellowships, if you are interested in applying for a Fellowship then you must make sure that your proposed research fits within at least one of the [priority areas](#).

1.3. UKRI - NERC

The Natural Environment Research Council ([NERC](#)) aims to 'place environmental science at the heart of responsible management of our planet'. It funds research into environmental science, technology and new ideas. As well as managed [research funding calls](#), NERC also funds a number of other schemes:

- [Discovery science](#) (responsive mode), includes Standard Grants and New Investigator Grants. January and July closing dates. Imperial is subject to demand management for the Discovery Science schemes, please see the [NERC Standard Grants Demand Management](#) page on College website for more details of the internal peer review process that is in place.
- [NERC strategic research](#) – ideas from community, Includes highlight notices and strategic programme areas;
- [Innovation funding](#); and
- [Fellowships](#)

1.4. UKRI - BBSRC

The Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council ([BBSRC](#)) covers research and training in the Biosciences. Funding includes:

- Managed [funding calls](#);
- [Fellowships](#);
- [Responsive mode](#) – priorities incl bioenergy, data driven biology, industrial biotechnology, and synthetic biology;

- [New Investigator scheme](#) (through responsive mode).

1.5. UKRI - MRC

The Medical Research Council (MRC) funds research to improve human health. They have regular deadlines for their standard mode and more details can be found on their website: [Calls](#), [Fellowships](#), [Call deadlines](#). The Faculty of Medicine runs a shadow panel internal review process for the MRC standard mode boards and FoE applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals to these panels to get useful feedback. For further details on the internal process contact [Kimberley Trim](#).

MRC also offer Early Career Researchers with eligible MRC grants the opportunity to [observe their Board meetings](#).

1.6. Which Research Council to submit your proposal to - Remit Queries Services

For interdisciplinary research at the interface between Research Councils, it is often difficult to know to which Council a proposal should be submitted. You can submit a remit query to the Research Council you think fits best and they will provide feedback on whether your idea fits their remit or if you should submit to a different Research Council. You can also contact the relevant Portfolio Managers at UKRI for advice, their contact details are available on the individual Research Council websites.

- EPSRC have a [remit queries](#) page and you can ask Portfolio Managers for advice, their contact details are listed on the Theme pages
- [BBSRC remit queries](#) and [science contacts](#) pages
- [NERC remit queries](#): send a [remit query form](#) to nercremit@nerc.ac.uk
- [MRC remit queries](#): send a two-page outline to rfd@headoffice.mrc.ac.uk

2. National Academies and learned Societies

The National Academies and learned societies offer a variety of funding schemes. The Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) and the Royal Society schemes are highlighted below.

2.1. RAEng research funding calls include:

- [Industrial Fellowships](#) (lecturer/senior lecturer): 6-24 months on collaborative research in industry.
- [Research Fellowships and Engineering for Development Research Fellowships](#): outstanding early-career researchers who have been awarded their PhD in the last four years. There is an internal process to select candidates as there is a cap on the number of applications the College can submit to the scheme.
- International collaboration: [Newton Fund programmes](#), [Distinguished Visiting Fellowships](#) and GCRF.
- [Research Chairs](#) and [Chairs in Emerging Technologies](#). Speak with Jane Williams if you are interested in applying for a RAEng Chair.

2.2. Royal Society research funding calls include:

- [Industry Fellowships](#): between academic scientists and industry or industry scientists and an academic organisation.
- [Research Grants](#): 12 months seed corn funding (<£15k) for ECRs
- [University Research Fellowships](#): 5 years funding for outstanding postdoctoral scientists 3 to 8 years since PhD who have the potential to become leaders in their field.

- GCRF and Newton Fund calls e.g. [Newton International Fellowships](#) and [Newton Mobility Grants](#)

3. Charities

There is an array of charities that support research in the UK and abroad. A number of the UK charities are highlighted below.

The [Leverhulme Trust](#) funds non-medical related research. Specific attention is paid to the reasons given by applicants in justifying their choice of the Trust as the most appropriate agency for the support of their project. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to consult the statement on the Leverhulme Trust's [approach to grant-making](#).

- Schemes include: [Research Project Grants](#) (<£500k, up to 5 years, no deadline for outlines), [Research Leadership Awards](#) (£800k-£1m), and [Research Fellowships](#) (<£55k). Evaluation criteria at the Leverhulme Trust focus on originality, importance, significance, and merit. The research must also address the values of the Trust.

The [Wellcome Trust](#) funds biomedical science and there are regular deadlines for its schemes which include:

- [Innovator Awards](#) – up to £500k (£750k for multidisciplinary collaborations), apply any time.
- Applications are considered 3 times a year for [Investigator Awards](#) of up to £3m;
- [Collaborative Awards](#) – up to £4m.

There are a number of other medical charities including: [British Heart Foundation](#), [Cancer Research UK](#), [Rosetrees Trust](#), and many others

4. EU Funding

UK institution can still participate in EU funding schemes. The UK Government has underwritten funding of UK participants in H2020 and UK participants can apply for funding to calls up to the end of the Programme in 2020. There is further information on eligibility of UK participants. More information from the College's [Brexit information page](#), the [EU Team](#), [UKRI](#) and from [UKRO](#)

Funding available from [Horizon 2020](#) is divided into three pillars:

- **Excellent Science:** Includes ERC, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, FET
- **Industrial Leadership:** Includes ICT, NMBP, Space
- **Societal Challenges:** are in the areas of Health, Food security, Energy, Transport, Climate, Society, Security

Details of calls can be found on the EU's [Funding and Tenders Portal](#). The next EU Framework Programme for funding research and innovation (from 2021) is called Horizon Europe

Other sources of EU funding include [COST](#) which funds networks of researchers. These networks are open for anyone to join or participate and you can also propose a COST Action in a new area.

5. Internal Funding Opportunities

The College offers a number of different funding schemes for staff which are summarised below and further information is available on the [internal funding web page](#)

5.1. Internal Funding - Collaboration

Funding for Imperial staff to build collaborations includes:

- [Crick attachments](#)
- [Crick Networking Fund](#), 4 deadlines per year.
- [European Partners Fund](#) – Support for Imperial academics to initiate and pursue collaborations with European colleagues.
- [MIT-Imperial Seed Fund](#) – Aims to kick-start early-stage, risky and ‘blue skies’ research ideas that might not otherwise be pursued. The 2018 call had a regional focus on Africa
- [Imperial-TUM Collaboration Fund](#)
- [Imperial-CNRS Collaboration Fund](#) - seed funding to build research capacity under the overarching theme of “Data 4.0 – Leading the fourth industrial revolution with data-driven technologies”

5.2. Internal Funding - Fellowships and PhD Students

- [President's PhD Scholarships](#) – 3 rounds a year
- [Science and Solutions for a Changing Planet \(NERC\) DTP](#), managed by the Grantham Institute.
- [London Interdisciplinary Social Science DTP](#) (ESRC)
- Centres for Doctoral Training
- [Institutional Strategic Support Fund](#) (ISSF) - (managed by Faculty of Medicine) - Supporting novel interdisciplinary biomedical research in the Wellcome Trust remit

5.3. Internal Funding - Blue Skies Research

The [Excellence Fund for Frontier Research](#) was established to support research ideas which are potential breakthrough programs, up to £250k.

5.4. Internal Funding - Impact

The College receives funding from Research Councils Research Councils to support the development of economic and societal impact from the research they fund through activities that widen participation in business engagement and knowledge exchange, broaden and enhance the skills of the researchers and accelerate the commercialisation and impact of research.

The [EPSRC IAA](#) supports early stage translation of EPSRC supported research. There is an [open call](#) for proposals featuring early and later stage impact schemes and [Knowledge Transfer Secondments](#).

The [BBSRC IAA](#) provides support for the College's academics to develop impact relevant activities which capitalise on the knowledge generated from BBSRC funded research and training grants.

6. Research funding bulletins

Alex Berry produces a regular funding opportunities bulletin that is sent to all departments in the Faculty. Please [contact Alex](#) if you would like to receive this directly.

[Idox GRANTfinder 4 Education](#) is the College's provider of information on research funding. You can login through single sign on and tailor research funding alerts to your research area and interests.