Stephen Hawking Fellowships
Frequently Asked Questions

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1 General

1.1 What is a Stephen Hawking Fellowship?

In recognition of Stephen Hawking’s exceptional contributions to scientific knowledge and popularisation of science, UK Research and Innovation will support and develop up to 50 of the next generation of visionary scientists in theoretical physics at the beginning of their careers.

1.2 How many fellows will be supported

Approximately 10 fellowships will be awarded per year for the next five years.

1.3 How is this different from existing Fellowship schemes

This call requires that fellows take part in not only great research but public engagement activities to help carry on Stephen Hawking’s work explaining complex scientific ideas to wider audiences to help bring science into popular culture.

1.4 When will the next submission deadline for Fellowships be?

Dates not yet available.

1.5 Will this count towards EPSRCs repeatedly unsuccessful applicant policy?

Submissions to this call will not count towards the EPSRC Repeatedly Unsuccessful Applicants Policy. Further information about the policy can be found at: 
https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/basics/resubpol/rua/

1.6 Does my Fellowship have to be 4 years?

No, your Fellowship can be held for up to 4 years but can be held for a shorter period if it is a suitable length of time to realise the vision of the project.

2 Eligibility

2.1 Who can apply?

This is a carefully designed call to support researchers at the Postdoctoral career stage (those with equivalent research experience may also apply) in theoretical physics who wish to carry out excellent research and public engagement to bring science to the wider community and promote science in popular culture.

2.2 If I apply for a fellowship would I be eligible for a New Investigator Award?

Yes, holding a Stephen Hawking Fellowship would not affect eligibility for EPSRCs New Investigator Award
2.3 Can fellowships be held at Research Council Institutes?

Yes. Fellows can apply to be based in Research institutes, laboratories and IUK Catapults in line with UKRIs Research Council's eligibility. [https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/](https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/)

2.4 Can a fellowship have more than one host organisation?

No, time can be spent up to 12 months total at academic, non-academic or business organisations, either within the UK or overseas, to benefit from unique research and/or development opportunities related to the Fellowship. The HO will still be responsible for the Fellowship during this period.

2.5 Can I submit two different proposals to the same call?

No, an individual can only submit one application per call.

2.6 Can fellowship be hosted by overseas institutes?

No, applications must be submitted from UK institutions eligible for Research Council funding. However, as long as they are hosted by an eligible UK-based organisation, fellows can spend extended periods overseas if it can be clearly justified in terms of their programme of work and the meets the overarching aims of the scheme.

2.7 Can I apply for a fellowship even though I am not a UK National citizen?

Yes. Applicants must comply with Home Office/UK Visa and Immigration requirements and hold a valid work permit where appropriate. Applicants who require a visa must ensure this is in place before the start date of the award. Host organisations should advise and support applicants in securing the necessary visa.

2.8 I have been working in industry since obtaining my PhD; can I still apply for a fellowship?

Yes. Consideration will be given to applicants who have taken a non-standard career path after their primary degree. Applications are welcomed from candidates who wish to re-establish themselves after a career break or a period of absence from active research.

2.9 Does the Stephen Hawking Fellowship scheme contribute to existing application limits for university departments set by STFC?

No, this is a separate scheme.

2.10 Can I apply for another UKRI fellowship at the same time?

No, you can only apply for one UKRI (including STFC and EPSRC) Fellowship within a rolling 12 month period. An exception will be made for applying to subsequent rounds of the Stephen Hawking Fellowships so account will be made for minor shifts in call dates that may occur.
2.11 If I’ve been unsuccessful applying to a Future Leaders Fellowship can I apply for a Stephen Hawking Fellowship?

Yes, if you have previous been unsuccessful applying to a Future Leader Fellowship you can still apply provided the application is substantially different and you only apply to one in a rolling 12 month period.

3 Funding and Resources

3.1 Would EPSRC/STFC pay for staff acting as a supervisor or mentor?

No, the fellowship does not support the costs of other staff. This includes supervisors and Co-Investigators.

3.2 Does fEC apply to the Fellowship?

All grants will be funded at fEC in line with UKRIs policy. 

3.3 Should inflation be included in the costs?

Inflation should not be included in fellowship costing, as UKRI applies indexation at the time of grant announcement. The relevant excerpt from the funding guide states: Proposals should be made at current (year 1) prices, inclusive of VAT and other taxes, where applicable, with no allowance for inflation.

3.4 Can Relocation costs be included?

Applicants moving to the UK from overseas to take up an award may request relocation and visa costs for the applicant only. These costs should be applied for under the Directly Incurred ‘other costs’ heading on the pro forma. UKRI will award a maximum of £1.2k if moving from within Europe or £3k if moving from outside of Europe.

3.5 Can I apply for equipment on the grant?

The grant will cover equipment up to £10,000 incl. VAT.

3.6 Can I apply for a contribution to child-care costs associated with conference attendance or collaborative visits?

EPSRC/STFC will cover costs for childcare expenses for Fellows, in the event that they incur additional childcare costs as a result of an activity directly associated with their fellowship. The funds may be used to cover, or partially cover, childcare costs that are additional to those that would be incurred anyway, without the conference attendance or collaborative visit. This could include the cost of additional care at home or the cost of items such as flights and accommodation for the child(ren) and a carer if necessary.

3.7 What salary can I request for the fellowship?

You are advised to discuss and agree your starting salary with your proposed host institution before your application is submitted. 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.

UKRI 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 UKRI indexation rates. Once announced the grant will not normally be increased to take account of different indexation rates.

3.8 Are publication costs an eligible cost on a Fellowship grant?

UKRI 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. Publication costs associated with research outputs other than journal articles and conference papers such as books, monographs, critical editions, catalogues etc. may, however, continue to be included in grants as a Directly Incurred Other Cost. Any request for such costs will of course need to be fully justified in the case for support.

4 Maternity, Paternity, Parental and Sick leave

4.1 Will the fellowship cover costs for Maternity, Paternity, Parental and sick leave?

Fellows are allowed to take maternity, paternity, parental and sick leave where appropriate. Please consult the following webpages for detailed information:

4.2 Break in Service/Abeyance

Stephen Hawking Fellows may be allowed to interrupt their award twice during the period of their fellowship for a total of 6 months to spend time on activities unsupported by the UKRI but directly related to their fellowship. UKRIs agreement must be sought in advance. Agreement will not be given for a break during the first or final year of the award. Where a period of abeyance is agreed the award will be extended by a period of time equal to the length of the break. For all Fellows, no additional funding will be given to compensate for possible incremental progression during any period of abeyance.

5 Applications process

5.1 Why do I have to apply through EPSRC

This is a joint fellowship with EPSRC and STFC. The Je-S system only allows for a Scheme to be ‘owned’ by one Council. In the case of the Stephen Hawking Fellowship the lead Council is EPSRC. STFC specific applications will be managed by STFC.

5.2 Do I need to submit an Intent to Submit?

Yes, this is mandatory and a full application will not be accepted from any applicant for whom an Intent to Submit form has not been received. The host institution must have full
knowledge of the Intent to Submit. Intent to Submit forms are to be submitted via SmartSurvey by 20th June 2019.

5.3 Are there restrictions on the number of outline proposals an organisation can submit?

No, but host organisations are expected to provide a bespoke personalised letter of support for each applicant at the outline proposal stage and should be prepared to support all applications made. UKRI reserves the right to reject outline proposals that fall outside of the remit of the call or where the required documentation has not been provided.

5.4 When is the closing date for Intent to Submit?
The deadline to complete an intent to submit is 20th June 2019. Completing this in mandatory before submitting a full application.

5.5 When is the closing date for full applications?
The deadline to submit a full proposal is 16:00, 24th July 2019. Note that clicking ‘submit document’ on your proposal form in Je-S initially submits the proposal to your host organisation’s administration, not to UKRI. Please allow sufficient time for your organisation’s submission process between submitting your proposal to them and the call closing date.

6 Assessment process
6.1 What happens after I submit my proposal?

Full proposals will be allocated to the most appropriate research council and independent reviews will be obtained. Applications will be allocated to a lead Council and will follow that process for obtaining reviews. Various sources are used to obtain appropriate expert reviews. Applicants are encouraged to nominate up to three reviewers in their application which can include nominees from the international community. More detailed information regarding peer review principles can be found on the UKRI website. Applicants will be asked to respond to reviewer comments to respond to any factual inaccuracies. Please see our guidance on how to respond to reviewers on the UKRI call page. Your application, reviewers’ comments and any response by you will be considered by the Stephen Hawking Fellowships Prioritisation Panel where they will be ranked and a shortlist of applicants will be invited to interview.

6.2 Will I receive feedback from the Panel following the sift meeting?

Feedback at this stage will comprise of the peer review comments only. No further feedback will be provided from the panel.

6.3 If I am selected for interview, what do I need to prepare?

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to the interview panel who recommend candidates to be funded. More details of the interview process will be issued to shortlisted candidates.
6.4 Will each Council be allocated a proportion of the budget to support fellows within their remit?

There will be no ring-fencing for specific areas, however, the overall portfolio balance in the longer term will be monitored with potential for light-touch targeting to strengthen priority areas in the future.

6.5 What are the assessment criteria?

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Research Quality (Primary)
- Research Importance (Major Secondary)
- Applicant and their Development (Secondary)
- Research Environment (Secondary)
- Resources and Management (Secondary)

For more detailed information please see the call document on the UKRI website.

6.6 My fellowship was rejected, when can I reapply?

Unsuccessful applicants may resubmit to subsequent calls but are required to demonstrate within their proposal that they have made substantive change/development from the original submission. Changes to the proposals should go beyond addressing issues raised by the reviewers in line with EPSRCs guidance on preparing resubmissions. https://epsrc.ukri.org/index.cfm/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/preparingnewproposals/

STFC and EPSRC reserve the right to reject applications that are not deemed to be substantially different to the original submission.

7 Documents and attachments

7.1 Is there a required format for supporting documents?

All attachments must be completed in A4 size 11 point Arial or Sans Serif font. Margins should be 2cm on all sides. Applications will not be accepted where smaller fonts or narrow versions of the font have been used. Please note that on submission via Je-S ALL non PDF documents are to be converted to PDF. The use of non-standard fonts may result in errors or font conversion which could affect the overall length of the document.

7.2 What is the page length for call supporting documents?

- CV – 2 pages (using the template)
- List of Publications – unlimited
- Case for Support – 9 pages (see call document for specific breakdown)
- Pathways to Impact – 2 pages
- Host Organisation Statement – 2 pages
- Work Plan – 1 page
- Justification of Resources – 2 pages
- Data Management Plan – 2 pages
8 Managing your fellowship

8.1 Could I transfer my fellowship to another UK Higher Education institution?

Yes. Refer to the research grants terms and conditions

8.2 What types of Public Engagement are acceptable?

UKRI does not specify the types of public engagement activates that should be undertaken but it is expected that they go beyond the normal engagement expected from research council fellowships and should be ambitious. This is not limited to physical public engagement and can be enhanced by an online or social media presence. UKRI expects the host institution to fully support the fellow in public engagement and the development of public engagement skills.