Return to research support bursary

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	**Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)**
Funding type:	Grant
Maximum award:	£2,500
Publication date:	20 September 2020
Opening date:	N/A
Closing date:	Open - no closing date

Last updated: 23 October 2020

Start application ▶

If you are a researcher looking to return to an academic research career after a break of two or more years, this bursary can help you to develop a proposal suitable for submission to the STFC fellowship scheme.

You can apply for funding of up to £2,500 to cover the cost of activities that will help you prepare a proposal for STFC fellowship funding, such as:

- literature reviews
- familiarisation with equipment and techniques
- attendance at meetings and seminars.

You may also use it to help cover the costs of preparing an application for funding, provided that you are a named researcher on the proposal.

Open all

Who can apply

To be eligible to apply, you must have a PhD in an area that falls within the remit of the STFC core science programme:

- astronomy
- solar and planetary science
- particle physics
- particle astrophysics
- cosmology
- nuclear physics
- accelerator science.

This area should also be the focus of your application.

You can apply for the bursary if you are a researcher who has taken a career break because of caring responsibilities, long-term illness or time spent working in a non-research role.

We would normally expect you to have a career break of at least two years, but if you have had a shorter break and do not have a right to return to your previous employer you may still be eligible to apply.

We calculate your absence from research from the start of your career break to when the next round of fellowship funding is scheduled to start. This is usually in September each year.

What we're looking for

You can hold the bursary at any UK institution which has a recognised expertise in areas funded by STFC. You are responsible for identifying and contacting a suitable host university and research group to act as your host during the period of the bursary.

We strongly encourage institutions to provide appropriate support for returners in research, such as mentoring or role model schemes, and support in developing an application for future funding.

Many departments advertise opportunities to apply for STFC fellowships on their websites.

You can apply for a maximum of £2,500.

The return to research support bursary will fund reasonable costs connected to visiting the host institution to develop your application for future funding. Other eligible costs include childcare or other care, and travel to the host institute or to meetings.

Where the costs are for care, we expect that this will be mainly for registered or approved carers. The care must be provided by someone eligible to work in the UK.

You must provide evidence of these expenses before STFC can refund your costs.

Successful applicants may undertake their proposed programme of activities in parallel with part-time employment, either at the host institution or elsewhere.

We expect bursary holders to produce a proposal to the STFC fellowship scheme. You may also contribute to an application for project funding provided that you are a named researcher.

If you are unable to produce a proposal, you should submit a short report outlining:

- the activities you have undertaken
- any outcomes from this work
- the reasons why it has not been possible to produce a proposal.

Find out about **current bursary holders on the Gateway to Reseach Portal**.

How to apply

You must apply using our **online form** and upload the following three documents:

- an outline (up to 500 words) and timetable of the activities you are proposing, including a breakdown of the financial support you are requesting, for example travel or care costs
- your CV including your publication record and statement (up to 500 words) of how you meet the eligibility criteria, using our **CV template (DOC, 180KB)**
- a letter of support from the host department indicating that they will provide suitable support if you are successful in your application.

Host organisations must be prepared to grant you official status, such as 'visitor', for the period of the award and provide equipment and access to the facilities you need.

You must be clear about the reasons for your choice of institution when you apply. You must consider which institute would be most appropriate to further your research career.

If you are applying to hold an award at an institution so that you can move to be with your spouse or partner, you should make this clear in your application. This will not disadvantage you.

How we will assess your application

Your application will be reviewed by a panel comprising members of a sub-group of the **STFC Education, Training and Careers Committee**.

Panel members will use the following criteria:

- the excellence of your research achievements before the break, such as:
  - scientific output and the significance of results
  - the ability to communicate your science effectively
  - your standing at national/international level

- the likelihood of the award leading to a high-quality and timely research proposal
- your potential, including:
  - your capability to perform the wider role and responsibilities of an academic career (such as public engagement, service on committees or teaching)
  - evidence of leadership
  - awareness of the future development of the subject
  - development of new technology

- the appropriateness of the group you intend to work with.

We will inform you of the outcome of your application within one month of submission.

Contact details

If you need further guidance, contact the STFC fellowships team on **fellowships@stfc.ukri.org**.

Additional info

Supporting documents

- **CV template (DOC, 180KB)**

Related content

Gateway to Research Portal