



EPSRC synthetic biology postdoctoral fellowship

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)
Funding type:	Fellowship
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Opening date:	2 December 2020
Closing date:	Open - no closing date

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Start application

Apply for a fellowship focusing on the engineering challenges of delivering synthetic biology as a mature technology.

You must have either:

- a PhD
- at least four years' experience in a relevant field by the start of your fellowship.

An eligible UK research organisation must host and support you during your fellowship.

Your fellowship can be up to three years long. This is prorated for part-time fellows, at a minimum of 50% FTE.

Your project can use one or a combination of:

- discovery science
- innovation
- instrumentation and technique development
- software engineering.

There is no limit on how much funding you can request. We cover 80% of your full economic costs. Your research organisation must fund the remaining 20%.

[Open all](#)

Who can apply

Research grants are open to UK higher education institutions, research council institutes, UKRI-approved independent research organisations and NHS bodies with research capacity.

[Read the guidance on institutional eligibility.](#)

You can apply if you have a PhD or have worked in a relevant field for at least four years by the start date of your fellowship.

There are no eligibility rules about how many years of postdoctoral experience you need or whether you are currently in a permanent academic position.

We encourage applicants who have taken a non-standard career path after their first degree. We also welcome applications from candidates who want to move back into research after a career break or any other type of break from active research.

There are no restrictions on nationality.

For more information, [read our fellowship application guide \(PDF, 280KB\)](#).

We will not accept uninvited resubmissions of projects that have been submitted to UKRI or any other funder.

Submissions to this call will not count towards the EPSRC repeatedly unsuccessful applicants policy.

What we're looking for

You could consider applying for a post-doctoral fellowship if you:

- have recently started formulating your own research ideas for programmes of work up to three years in duration that will deliver high quality research with a focus on discovery science, innovation, instrumentation or technique development, or software engineering
- can demonstrate that you have acquired the skills and expertise to successfully deliver your research proposal
- have not previously held a significant grant (usually defined as those which included PDRA time, capital equipment or were in excess of £100,000 full economic costs)

- have identified training and development needs to enable you to prepare for an enhanced career in research and innovation.

If you have already been in receipt of significant funding as defined above, or have been leading in an area of technical development, you may wish to apply for an open fellowship.

Research organisations may wish to show their commitment to applicants by providing additional support and resources. [Read the host organisation statement](#) for more detail.

You can apply for up to three years for a postdoctoral stage award. We will also allow fellowships over shorter periods. You can spend between 50% and 100% of your time on a fellowship.

If you want to work part-time, you can hold your EPSRC fellowship part-time as well, at a minimal level of 50%. In these circumstances, the duration of your fellowship can be extended pro rata.

We will fund 80% of the full economic costs of your project. You may request funding for:

- equipment and other items needed to carry out the project
- costs related to impact
- travel and subsistence.

We will not fund costs for additional researchers on postdoctoral fellowships or individual items of equipment over £10,000 (including VAT). [Read the equipment below £10,000 \(including VAT\) guidelines](#).

If you are a research organisation

We expect eligible research organisations to submit the most suitable candidates for these fellowships and identify the additional support and resources they will provide the applicant with if successful.

If you are a research organisation, you must:

- make sure that aims and aspirations of the applicant are suitable for a fellowship application
- support the applicant to ensure they have:
 - identified areas they need to improve on and how they intend to gain experience to meet these needs
 - considered their knowledge of ethical, responsible and inclusive research culture and thought about how they could further this knowledge
 - considered if they need a mentor, and what aspects of their development their mentor will help with.
- identify the additional support you will provide to ensure successful project delivery and provide enhanced career development opportunities.

Find details of current fellows

We invest in people with leadership potential at all career stages, helping them to lead excellent research projects.

[Read more about our current fellows](#) to learn about those inspiring scientists and engineers and find out how taking part in a fellowship has influenced their careers.

To find examples of projects we have funded, [search for 'fellowship' in our online portfolio](#).

How to apply

The things you must do before you start your application for a fellowship:

- check that your theme is open for post-doctoral fellowships applications and, if you are not sure, contact the relevant portfolio manager or theme fellowship coordinator
- [read the fellowship application guide \(PDF, 280KB\)](#).

You must apply using the [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#).

We are always open for applications for fellowships.

When applying, select 'New document', then:

- council: EPSRC
- document type: fellowship proposal
- scheme: EPSRC fellowship
- call, type or mode: EPSRC post-doctoral fellowship.

Consider which options apply to your application from the list below and copy and paste into the keywords box:

- discovery science
- innovation
- technical skills.

Your application should include the following attachments:

- case for support (nine pages, seven on the scientific case and two on the non-technical aspects (to cover the non-scientific elements of the assessment criteria) of your application
- work plan (one page)
- host organisation statement (two pages)
- justification of resources (two pages)
- narrative CV and track record (four pages) for the fellowship candidate only (see template)
- project partner letters of support from all project partners included in the Je-S form (no page limit), noting that:
 - additional letters of support are not permitted on fellowship applications

- where applicants are collaborating with other departments at the host organisation this should be included in the host organisation statement.
- technical assessments for facilities listed as needing one in the Je-S guidance (no page limit)
- cover letter (no page limit and this will not be seen by peer reviewers).

You should attach your documents as PDFs to avoid errors and use single-spaced 11 Arial or similar sans serif typeface.

We recommend you start your application in good time. You can save completed details in Je-S at any time and return to continue your application later.

When you submit the application, it will first go to your host organisation for review.

[See the Je-S handbook \(Je-S website\)](#) for full advice on completing applications.

You can find more details about the application process in our:

- [fellowship application guide \(PDF, 280KB\)](#)
- [fellowship frequently asked questions \(PDF, 115KB\)](#).

We will fund 80% of the full economic costs of your project. You may request funding for your salary, equipment and other items required to carry out the project, costs related to impact, and travel and subsistence.

[See our guidance on completing your application.](#)

How we will assess your application

Your application is assessed by peer review. It will be sent electronically to at least three reviewers, including at least one nominated by you. You will have the opportunity to respond to reviewer comments if your application gains enough support.

The proposal, reviewers' comments and your response will then go to a panel that will score it against our assessment criteria and rank it with other proposals. Panels are organised by theme and meet at different times of the year.

Our assessment criteria at the review stage:

- research quality (primary criterion)
- national importance (secondary major criterion)
- applicant and partnerships (secondary criterion)
- resources and management (secondary criterion)
- fellowship vision
- continued professional development
- project delivery.

Find out more about:

- the assessment process in [our guidance for reviewers](#)

- assessment timescales in the [EPSRC fellowships framework application guidance \(PDF, 585KB\)](#).

At the prioritisation panel, the panel will assess the application against:

- research quality (primary criterion)
- applicant and partnerships (secondary major criterion)
- national importance (secondary criterion)
- resources and management (secondary criterion).

Following the prioritisation panel, we will invite successful candidates to interview.

Interviews will take place around six weeks after the prioritisation panel meeting. An interview panel will assess your application against the criteria below:

- fellowship vision
- continued professional development
- project delivery.

Contact details

If you need any further general information about applying for a fellowship, email researchcareers@epsrc.ukri.org.

If you are not sure if your research fits within the remit of this funding opportunity or if you have specific questions about our theme areas, you should [contact the relevant portfolio manager or theme fellowship coordinator](#).

Additional info

EPSRC occasionally offers other fellowship opportunities, some of which are in partnership with external organisations or with other UKRI research councils. These fellowships may have different eligibility, application and review processes.

Check our [Funding finder](#) for details of the latest funding opportunities across UKRI.

Supporting documents

[EPSRC fellowship guidance for applicants \(PDF, 280KB\)](#)

[EPSRC fellowship frequently asked questions \(PDF, 115KB\)](#)

[Equality impact assessment \(PDF, 192KB\)](#)

Find out more about:

- [resubmissions](#)

- [repeatedly unsuccessful applications](#)
 - [equipment](#)
 - [use of animals \(PDF, 34KB\)](#)
 - [responsible research and innovation](#)
 - [ethical considerations](#)
 - [equality, diversity and inclusion](#)
 - [other EPSRC funding options](#).
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NOTE This is the first phase of our new website – let us know if you have [feedback](#) or would like to [help us test new developments](#).

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