



# BBSRC Discovery Fellowship 2021

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Open
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Fellowship
<b>Total fund:</b>	£6,000,000
<b>Maximum award:</b>	£400,000
<b>Publication date:</b>	9 February 2021
<b>Opening date:</b>	9 February 2021
<b>Closing date:</b>	6 May 2021 16:00 UK time

*Last updated: 26 February 2021*

[Start application ►](#)

Apply for a fellowship to support your first steps into independent research and gain leadership skills.

You must have completed a successful PhD viva by 30 November 2021.

You must show you:

- have potential to become a future research leader
- wish to conduct your own independent research within a host lab
- wish to gain leadership skills.

Your project must be within the remit of BBSRC. We encourage projects that fit BBSRC's strategic priorities.

Your project's full economic cost (100% fEC) can be up to £500,000. We will fund 80% of this (£400,000). Your host research organisation must agree to fund the rest.

Discovery Fellowships are three years long. There are up to 15 fellowships available.

This is the only Discovery Fellowship opportunity open in 2021.

[Open all](#)

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## Who can apply

Applicants should have a PhD or be expecting to have undergone successful PhD viva prior to 30 November 2021. Individuals demonstrating an upward track to pursuing working independently within a host organisation are eligible.

Applicants should ensure that the proposed start date is realistic, taking account of the period required for the office to process the proposal. Awarded fellows will be required to commence their fellowship on, or near to, the start date stipulated in their proposal, therefore applicants must ensure that they are in a position to do so. Requests to significantly alter the stated start date will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. Please note, no fellowships can commence prior to 1 April 2022, but all fellowships must commence by July 2022 at the latest following notification of an award.

There is no limit on the number of years of postdoc experience. However, to be considered eligible applicants should have a PhD or be expecting to have undergone successful PhD viva prior to 30 November 2021. Applicants should not hold, or have held, an academic position of lecturer level (or the equivalent in institutions other than universities) or an equivalent competitive fellowship that provides the opportunity to establish an independent research group and therefore independent researcher status. Nor should they have had an offer of such an appointment prior to the commencement of a fellowship, if awarded. This applies to both fixed term and permanent positions.

In addition, applicants should not hold, or have held an equivalent competitive fellowship that provides the opportunity to establish an independent research group and therefore independent researcher status. Holders of fellowships where the applicant is eligible to supervise PhD students or submit research grants as a PI are considered, by BBSRC, as equivalent to a lectureship. As a result, applicants are therefore not eligible to apply. Examples of these fellowships include but are not limited to:

- Wellcome Trust Sir Henry Dale Fellowships
- MRC Career Development Awards
- NERC Independent Research Fellowships.

Note: holders of postdoctoral training fellowships such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions can apply. Royal Society Dorothy Hodgkins Fellows who meet the research experience eligibility requirement outlined above may also apply.

If applicants have previously applied for BBSRC grant funding as a PI or co-investigator (therefore confirming that they hold a lecturer level or equivalent post) they are not eligible to apply for a fellowship.

Prospective applicants on university 'tenure track' fellowships should contact [postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk) to discuss their eligibility.

DF applicants are not eligible to apply to the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Future Leaders Fellowship call in the same calendar year. Please see the [fellowship handbook \(PDF, 333KB\)](#) for further details on eligibility criteria.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

As part of UKRI, BBSRC are working proactively to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion in all we do. This allows for maximisation of the impact of our research and innovation to involve and benefit all parts of society. Everything we fund must embrace a diversity of thought, people and ideas. BBSRC and Discovery Fellowships uphold this commitment. BBSRC encourages applications from all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria outlined below from all backgrounds regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, neurodiversity, disability, or socioeconomic background. We warmly welcome applications from individuals who may have undertaken non-standard or nontypical academic routes pre- or post-PhD prior to application.

## International applicants

Proposals are welcomed from applicants of all nationalities, subject to the fellowship being hosted by a UK university or BBSRC-sponsored institute.

### Information for non-European economic area applicants

All successful applicants who require a visa to work in the UK are eligible to be considered under the Global Talent visa route. This replaces the previous Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent) route. In line with the highly prestigious nature of the award, this visa route is designed for international researchers, who bring new ideas and perspectives, enriching the UK's research and innovation workforce and enables the holder to be both adaptable and flexible during their research in the UK.

Read more about the Global Talent route in the [guidance on how to get funding and visas to do 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. Please contact [globaltalentvisa@ukri.org](mailto:globaltalentvisa@ukri.org) for further details.

### Information for economic area applicants

EU applicants should refer to guidance on the UKRI website regarding the [effects of EU exit](#).

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## What we're looking for

Aimed at researchers who want to conduct their own independent research within a host laboratory and will have strong evidence of working toward this. Applicants will have demonstrated high potential to become future research leaders.

Awards are for three years and it is expected that up to 15 fellowships will be awarded, each of a value of up to £400,000 (80% fEC). Please note: BBSRC will provide funds of up to £400,000 (80% of the full economic cost). The total costs (100% full economic cost) requested may be up to £500,000.

This investment can be used to support personal salary as well as travel and subsistence, training activities, and research consumables, but not equipment. In addition to this investment, it is also expected that a substantial demonstration of support for the fellow be made by the host research organisation (see value for money). Proposals from candidates seeking flexible working arrangements (for example part-time) are encouraged; see the [Fellowships handbook \(PDF, 333KB\)](#) for further information.

## Value for money

Applicants and host organisations should note that value for money is an essential criterion against which fellowship proposals will be assessed, alongside excellence and other key criteria. For this competition the reviewers and Research Committee E will be looking for evidence that the host organisation will contribute significantly, with financial and/or in-kind support if an award is made. Proposals that do not provide clear evidence that the research programme is highly competitive in terms of value for money, and in providing additional commitments, are unlikely to be successful.

To reflect this, the proposal now requires a template which must be completed by the host organisation Head of Department. This gives detail of the support the host commits to provide and should be attached as the Head of Department statement, see supporting documents below. In previous rounds, host organisations have offered significant additional financial support, items of equipment or access to additional staff members or students to our fellows. It is expected at a minimum that hosts should provide support in terms of access to facilities, training courses and support for career development.

In addition, the justification of resources attachment must clearly show why the resources requested are good value for money and why it is in BBSRC's interests to provide investment. Also, letters of support from all parties contributing financial or other support should be uploaded to the proposal under the Letter of Support attachment type giving full and accurate details of the commitments to be made.

## Research areas

Your project must be within the remit of BBSRC. We encourage projects that fit BBSRC's strategic priorities:

- [animal health](#)
- [bioenergy: generating new replacement fuels for a greener, sustainable future](#)
- [combatting antimicrobial resistance](#)
- [data driven biology](#)
- [food, nutrition and health](#)
- [healthy ageing across the lifecourse](#)
- [integrative microbiome research](#)
- [new strategic approaches to industrial biotechnology](#)
- [reducing waste in the food chain](#)
- [the replacement, refinement and reduction \(3Rs\) in research using animals](#)
- [sustainably enhancing agricultural production](#)
- [synthetic biology](#)
- [systems approaches to the biosciences](#)
- [technology development for the biosciences](#)
- [welfare of managed animals](#).

If you are unsure whether your project is within BBSRC remit, please contact the office ([postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk)).

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## How to apply

Log in to [Joint Electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#).

- select Council: BBSRC
- select Document Type: Fellowship Proposal
- select Scheme: Fellowship
- select Call/Type/Mode: Discovery Fellowships – 6 May 2021
- click Create Document.

Proposals will require the following mandatory attachments (see also [DF Je-S help text \(PDF, 685KB\)](#)):

- CV. You should complete the standard [CV template \(Word, 45KB\)](#). This now includes a section to list applicant publications. We do not accept standalone CVs or publication lists
- case for support and track record
- diagrammatic workplan
- data management plan
- head of department statement (BBSRC has now introduced the use of a [template for the head of department statement \(Word, 20KB\)](#). BBSRC will not accept a standalone statement)
- statement from host group PI (the PI of the proposed host laboratory should hold their post for the duration of the fellowship and be of at least lecturer level or equivalent)
- justification of resources
- career development plan (this must be attached to your proposal as type 'workplan' to allow submission).

A pathways to impact plan is not required as a separate attachment for this call. This is in line with the UKRI announcement regarding the removal of the requirement for applicants to submit a pathways to impact plan for all its schemes, effective from 1 March 2020.

Read the [UKRI announcement removing the requirement for pathways to impact](#).

Completion of the impact summary section of the Je-S application form is also not required. Applicants should describe the impact of their planned work within the case for support attachment. Further guidance regarding changes to the Je-S application form will follow in due course.

## Animal usage mandatory requirement

For proposals with overseas animal use, please refer to our [grants guide \(PDF, 377KB\)](#), paragraph 4.18, for details of the additional information for specific species that must be provided with the proposal. All applicants carrying out research involving the use of pigs, whether overseas or within the UK, are required to address the [NC3Rs standardised pig questions \(PDF, 27KB\)](#) within the body of the application. For more information please see the [Je-S helptext document \(PDF, 685KB\)](#).

Fellowships are awarded under full economic cost (fEC). Support for proposed research should be costed in line with the grants guide.

Detailed guidance on how to complete proposal forms and attachments, including the career development plan, can be found in the [DF Je-S help text \(PDF, 685KB\)](#) and in the [fellowships handbook \(PDF, 333KB\)](#).

Please do not use the fellowship help text in the Je-S system.

We do not accept late proposals.

Important: applicants should ensure proposals are submitted to their host institution's Je-S submitter or approval pool well in advance (a minimum of five working days) of the published deadline. This enables institution checks to be carried out before final submission to BBSRC.

Please also refer to the full UKRI terms and conditions, our grants guide and fellowship handbook.

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## How we will assess your application

### Assessment criteria

In assessing proposals Committee E will consider an applicant's research proposal, personal track record and future plans, and the research environment in which the fellowship will be held.

As such, the research proposal should be sound and of a novelty and timeliness that will add to the understanding of the research area. The applicant should have an excellent track record (accounting for their research experience) and have considered their training needs (as detailed in the career development plan (to be uploaded as type 'Workplan'), and the research environment should be supportive and the best place for the applicant to carry out their research project and advance their career.

Each proposal will therefore be assessed based on the project, person and research environment. Further details of assessment criteria can be found in the [fellow's handbook \(PDF, 333KB\)](#).

Applicants will be given the opportunity to provide a PI response to reply to comments made by reviewers prior to the assessment meeting.

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## Contact details

[postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ac.uk)

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## Additional info

### Supporting documents

[Fellowships handbook \(PDF, 333KB\)](#)

[CV template \(Word, 45KB\)](#)

[Head of Department statement template \(Word, 20KB\)](#)

[Guidance \(PDF, 97KB\)](#)

[PI response guidance \(PDF, 67KB\)](#)

[Reviewer guidance \(PDF, 205KB\)](#)

[Frequently asked questions \(PDF, 159KB\)](#)


[Je-S guidance and summary of information to be submitted \(PDF, 685KB\)](#)

[Top submission tips for applicants \(PDF, 34KB\)](#)

[Equality, diversity and inclusion assessment \(PDF, 192KB\)](#)

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## Timeline

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- 9 February 2021**  
Opening date
  - 6 May 2021**  
Closing date
  - June to September 2021**  
Reviewing stage
  - October or November 2021**  
Shortlisting for interviews
  - November or December 2021**  
Interviews
  - December 2021 or January 2022**  
Award notification

## Related content

[BBSRC research](#)

**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](#).