



Webb Fellowship using the James Webb Space Telescope

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC)
Funding type:	Fellowship
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Closing date:	18 March 2021 16:00 UK time

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[Start application ►](#)

Apply for a fellowship to:

- do your own research programme using the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)
- enhance community use of the JWST, and increase its impact.

You must have a PhD in astronomy, astrophysics, physics or similar.

An eligible research organisation must host you during your fellowship.

Around 70% of your time must be spent on your research programme, and the rest spent on community use and impact. You must coordinate your activities with the UK JWST team.

We will fund your proposal at 80% of its full economic cost. Your host research organisation must agree to fund the rest.

The fellowship is up to five years long.

Two fellowships are available.

Who can apply

Candidates must have a PhD in astronomy, astrophysics, physics, or equivalent, at the time of starting a Webb fellowship.

Webb fellowships are intended for early career researchers who do not have a permanent academic position. You are not eligible if you currently hold a permanent academic position or the equivalent in institutions other than universities.

If you secure a permanent position prior to the offer of a fellowship you will be ineligible to hold the fellowship.

Applicants should not be in receipt of duplicate funding for the same or similar proposal from more than one funding agency. Details of similar proposals that have been submitted to other funding agencies must be added in the 'Other Support' section of the STFC application and advise STFC if a successful funding decision is made by the other funding agency.

STFC does not define eligibility for Webb fellowships in terms of a minimum number of years of experience. Instead, applicants should read the competency profile to determine if you have the skills, knowledge and experience to apply for a Webb fellowship.

See the competency profile in the [Webb Fellowships 2021 Guidance \(PDF, 538KB\)](#).

International applicants

Fellowships are open to applicants of any nationality. Where applicable, you will need to comply with Department of Employment requirements and hold a work permit prior to taking up the fellowship. Work permits are a matter for direct negotiation between the institution, the Department of Employment and the Home Office.

In line with the highly prestigious nature of the award, this visa route is designed for people who are internationally recognised as world leaders or potential world-leading talent in the fields of science and the arts and enables the holder to be both adaptable and flexible during their 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.

Applications are welcome from candidates who intend to use the fellowship as a means of re-establishing themselves in the UK following a period overseas.

Research organisation

Fellowships may be held at any eligible UK research organisation as set out in the STFC [research grants handbook](#).

Career breaks

Fellowships can be awarded to outstanding candidates returning from a career break or from working outside academic research.

Applications are welcome from those seeking to resume a research career, following a period of absence from active research of, normally, at least one year. The break may have been due, for example, to:

- long term illness, injury or disability
- family or caring responsibilities
- parental leave
- personal reasons
- working in non-academic employment.

What we're looking for

The role of the fellows will be to undertake their own research programme utilising the capabilities of the JWST (around 70% of their time) and to enhance the UK community use and wider impact of the JWST (around 30% of their time).

Fellows will be expected to liaise with the Mid Infrared Instrument (MIRI) principal investigator (PI) (based at the UKATC in Edinburgh) to coordinate with other post-delivery functional activities being undertaken by the UK JWST team.

In detail, the roles that the JWST fellows will be expected to undertake include:

- an active research programme with a goal of exploiting JWST observations
- at least one visit of 2-4 weeks per year to STScI to collaborate with the ESA Webb Mission Office and assist with calibration and operations development activities for MIRI or NIRSpec, and to foster scientific interaction
- liaison with the UK Space Agency and with MIRI post-launch support in the UK to foster a coordinated UK programme
- ambassadorship in the UK community to highlight the capabilities and early science results from Webb, including organising or supporting workshops and conferences
- development of post pipeline analysis tools for analysis of data in your science programme, and distribution of these with the community
- outreach and general science communication activities for the UK's public education campaign (for example, WebbTelescopeUK).

Subject of research

Applications must fall within the remit of the following STFC core science programme areas and afford scope for original work:

- astronomy
- solar and planetary science
- particle astrophysics
- cosmology.

The science proposed in the research programme should be at least partially based on JWST observations and demonstrate a credible plan to access relevant data early in the mission through participation in the current GO cycle-1 call and/or intended use of early public data and/or in association with the (UK roles in) approved ERS and GTO programmes.

Funding available

STFC is offering up to two Webb fellowships which provide up to five years (three + two) of funding to outstanding researchers at an early stage of their career.

The initial appointment will be for three years, with a possible renewal for up to two more.

Fellowships will begin on 1 October of the year of award unless you indicate a different start date on your application. The offer of a fellowship will not be held open for more than six months from the announced start date of the award. All fellowships must be taken up by the end of 2021.

Fellowship applications are costed on the basis of full economic costs (fEC). If a fellowship is awarded, STFC will provide funding at 80% of the fEC requested. The host institution must agree to find the balance of fEC for the proposal from other resources. Universities and other higher education organisations use the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology to calculate fEC. Please refer to the [research grants handbook](#) for further information. For non-university organisations, research councils require a validation process to ensure that their costing methodologies are robust. Standard default rates should be used where research organisations have not developed their own rates.

Read more about the funding available in the [Webb Fellowships 2021 Guidance \(PDF, 538KB\)](#).

How to apply

All applications must be submitted through the [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#).

Before you apply, please read the [Webb Fellowships 2021 Guidance \(PDF, 538KB\)](#).

We recommend you start your application early including contacting the host institute. You can save completed details in Je-S at any time and return to continue your application later.

When applying select 'New document' then:

- council: STFC
- document type: Fellowship Proposal
- scheme: Webb Fellowship
- call name: Webb Fellowship 2021.

You can find advice on completing your application in the Je-S handbook.

If you experience difficulties using Je-S or have questions regarding its use, please contact the Je-S help desk.

Email: jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org

Attachments

Your application should include the following attachments:

- curriculum vitae
- list of publications by year
- letter of support
- case for support for fellowship
- data management plan.

See the full guidance on preparing your documents in the [Webb Fellowships 2021 Guidance \(PDF, 538KB\)](#).

Career breaks

If your application has been affected by an earlier career break or other extenuating circumstances, please indicate this so that it can be taken into account in the assessment of your application.

Applicants should make clear any substantive periods of absence from research within their application and CV. Further details on the nature of the absence and how it has affected track record, productivity and career progression may be provided, if desired. Information provided will be used only to make appropriate adjustments when assessing an individual's track record, productivity and career progression.

How we will assess your application

Fellowship applications which satisfy an initial sifting threshold will be sent to independent reviewers for assessment.

Reviewer comments on your application will be made available to you and you will have an opportunity to respond to any factual inaccuracies. You should address your response to the fellowship panel and not the reviewers. Your response should be in A4 format with a maximum of half a side per reviewer. As for all attachments, the response should be written as per STFC specific requirements. Please complete and submit your response by the due date stated. This is normally five working days after receipt of the invitation.

Your application, reviewers' comments and any response by you will be considered by the fellowship panel and will be ranked and the top-ranked candidates will be invited for an interview. Apart from the reviewer comments, you will also receive feedback from the panel.

The highest ranked candidates from the interviews will be offered Webb fellowships. If any of these candidates withdraw, fellowships will be offered to the ranked list of reserve candidates.

Assessment criteria

In considering your fellowship application, the fellowship panel will use the following criteria:

- the excellence of the research achievements of the applicant
- the potential of the individual to lead their research discipline
- the capability of the applicant to fulfil the wider responsibilities of an academic career
- the quality, timeliness, feasibility, novelty and vision of the research proposal
- the potential impact on STFC strategic priorities with a clearly achievable and project-specific proposal to realise both the immediate scientific and wider impact goals
- the quality and scope of the proposal for public engagement potential.

The competency framework gives an additional indication of how your application can provide evidence of the level of experience and abilities expected.

See the competency profile in the [Webb Fellowships 2021 Guidance \(PDF, 538KB\)](#).

If you've had a career break

The fellowship panel will take into account time spent outside the active research.

In assessing the effects of career breaks, the panel will note the applicant's career trajectory and potential at the beginning of the break, relative to the stage of the applicant's career.

The panel will recognise that the effects on productivity of a career break may continue beyond the return to work. Examples of areas that may be affected are:

- presentation and publication record
- patents filed
- track record of securing funding, including time to obtain preliminary data

- maintaining networks of research or innovation contacts and collaborations
 - time required for training
 - the ability to take up opportunities in different geographical locations
 - the ability to take up courses, sabbaticals, 'visits', placements and secondments.
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Contact details

Email: chloe.woodcock@stfc.ukri.org

Additional info

Supporting documents

- [Webb Fellowships 2021 Guidance \(PDF, 538KB\)](#)

The JWST is the next generation flagship space telescope, due for launch in October 2021. The UK has been a large contributor to the overall mission, with participation in many of its components, including leadership of the MIRI and significant contributions to the ESA led NIRSpec instrument. STFC is soliciting applications for early-career researchers to enrich the UK's contributions to early science with the observatory, both in terms of using the data and promoting its use within the UK community.

The aim is to support future scientific leaders to establish a strong, independent research program based around the JWST and engaging with the UK JWST community whether through post-pipeline data analysis or through direct engagement.

Terms and conditions

STFC fellowships are governed by the grant conditions as set out in the research grants handbook unless otherwise stated. Applications are accepted and awards are made on the understanding that research organisations and fellows agree to observe the terms and conditions and the scheme requirements set out in this document and any amendments issued during the currency of the award. STFC intends its scheme to be flexible and reserves the right to deal as it thinks fit with applications of unusual character and to waive any rule at its absolute discretion.

For further information applicants should refer to:

- UKRI fEC grant standard terms and conditions of grant
- UKRI fEC grants standard terms and conditions of grant guidance.

Research organisations must appoint research fellow employees for the full duration of the award and integrate the research fellow within the research activities of the host department, whilst ensuring that he or she is able to maintain independence and focus on their personal research programme. Awards are made

on the understanding that the Fellow's work and progress are subject to the same monitoring and appraisal procedures as those of other academic staff within the host institution, and that there are adequate facilities at the host institution for the research proposed.

See more conditions and features in the [Webb Fellowships 2021 Guidance \(PDF, 538KB\)](#).

Timeline

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- 1 February 2021**
Opening date
 - 18 March 2021 16:00**
Closing date
 - Late April 2021**
Responses to independent reviewer comments
 - Early May 2021**
Decisions on who to invite to interview
 - May 2021**
Interview
 - Mid-June 2021**
Awards announced
 - 1 July 2021 to 1 January 2022**
Fellowship start date

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](#).

