

Quantum Technologies Career Development Fellowship- FAQs

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Summary

This fellowship award is designed to support talented post-doctoral researchers, or those with equivalent experience, looking to lead their own research programme, transition from post-doctoral researcher to independent investigator and develop their research profile within the Quantum Technology sector. All Quantum Technology fields are open for fellowship applications but there will be a small number of fellowships available through this call that will be sponsored by the National Quantum Computing centre (NQCC).

You must be hosted and supported by an eligible UK research organisation during your fellowship.

You must have either:

- a PhD
- or at least 4 years experience in a relevant field by the start of your fellowship

The awards provide funding for an ambitious programme of research and offer opportunities for personalised training and career development.

Fellowship proposals can request funding for between 3-5 years. Applicants can request to spend between 50% and 100% of their time on a fellowship. Fellowships can also be held part-time, at a minimal level of 50%.

Proposals must be at least 50% Quantum Technology and can cover any aspect of Quantum Technology research; e.g. discovery, innovation, device development or quantum software engineering.

For details about EPSRC's Quantum Technology portfolio see:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/ourportfolio/themes/quantumtech/>

There is no limit on how much funding applicants can request but all costs will need to be fully justified. EPSRC will fund 80% of the full economic costs, with the research organisation funding the remaining 20%.

Applications will be sent out for peer review and will then be assessed by a prioritisation panel. Proposals with unsupportive reviews will be rejected and will not be progressed to the prioritisation panel. Following the prioritisation panel successful applicants will be invited to an interview panel.

We are expecting there to be high demand for this award. There is no limit to the number of applications from a host organisation but as this scheme will fund only the highest quality applications, we would encourage organisations to focus their efforts on an appropriate, relatively small number of high-quality applications in order to improve their success rates.

What is a fellowship?

A fellowship grant is a monetary award made through a fellowship competition, providing a contribution to the support of a named individual to conduct a program of research/innovation and enhance their career.

It covers the cost of time dedicated by the fellow to their personal research/innovation programme and their personal development including; receiving mentoring and training, enhancing their opportunities and developing their leadership.

How long can the fellowship funding last?

Fellowships should be for between 3 and 5 years in length.

How is this different to existing Fellowship schemes?

The Quantum Technology Career Development Fellowship is especially targeted at those post PhD (or equivalent experience) who are at the point in their career where they want to transition to being an independent researcher. If you have already been in receipt of significant funding or have been leading in an area of technical development, you may wish to apply for an EPSRC Open Fellowship. Significant funding is usually defined as awards including PDRA time, capital equipment or were in excess of £100,000 full economic cost.

Does the programme of research have to comprise a single defined project or can it involve a number of smaller projects?

The fellowship may be made up of a single programme of work, or multiple consecutive/concurrent interlinked projects, led by the fellow but should present a coherent overall proposal. There is flexibility to alter the program once a project is underway to ensure fellows can react to the changing research landscape, capitalise on advances in understanding or react to changing business needs.

In all cases the work must allow the fellow to fully develop their leadership potential and result in high quality research and/or innovation.

How much funding is available for this call?

We have a fund of £10,000,000 to support this round of fellowships. The NQCC have further funds to sponsor additional fellowships.

Is there a limit to what I can apply for?

No but in practice we expect proposals to be for no more than £1million (80% FEC). Anything above this would need significant justification. EPSRC will fund 80% of the full economic costs with the research organisation funding the remaining 20%.

How many fellowships are available?

The number of fellowships we will fund depends on the scale of the best proposals but we anticipate funding around 10 EPSRC fellows and 3-4 NQCC fellows. We expect these fellowship awards to be highly competitive.

Will the host organisation research office see my proposal?

Research offices at host organisations have to approve which proposals are submitted. You should check with your research office for local submission deadlines.

Will PhD studentships be funded under this fellowship?

No PhD studentships are not eligible costs. EPSRC encourages host organisations to support career development for the fellow by offering opportunities to supervise and mentor doctoral students as part of the host organisation support.

Will the fellowship cover funding for equipment?

Individual items of equipment between £10,000 and £400,000 can be included on proposals for individual research projects if the equipment is essential to the proposed research and if no appropriate alternative provision can be accessed. Additional justification of the requirement for individual items of equipment between £10,000 and £400,000, and details of the proposed contribution to the cost of the equipment, must be provided in the [Justification of Resources](#) (JoR). For any items or combined assets with a value above £138,000 (including value added tax [VAT]) a two-page Equipment Business Case must also be included in the proposal documentation. Guidance on how to prepare an Equipment Business Case is given at [Equipment on research grants - EPSRC website \(ukri.org\)](#). EPSRC will fund 80% of the full economic cost of equipment.

What can I include within my Quantum Technology Career Development Fellowship?

We would welcome innovative approaches to career development which might include secondments, placements, rotational appointments, reverse mentoring and mentors from a variety of backgrounds along with opportunities for professional experience that would complement more generic approaches to training and development. Any training and support required to enable this must be clearly articulated in the career development section of the application, and associated training costs can be claimed.

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

There are no nationality restrictions imposed by EPSRC on who can apply for a fellowship. You will require the support of a UK University and must be resident in the UK. If coming from outside the UK you may be eligible for a Global Talent Visa. Find out more about visas for carrying out research in the UK here [Get funding and visas to do research in the UK – UKRI](#). If you are successful in attracting funding you will normally require a valid visa before starting your work in the UK.

Can I claim visa costs for myself and my family?

Yes, visa costs can be claimed for both you and your family. These funds can be costed into the proposal or, under the TRAC methodology, some institutions provide this support by covering visa costs under the Estates and Indirect headings.

Do I need to have a PhD to apply?

No. Applicants need to demonstrate suitable research/innovation skills, knowledge and experience to undertake the programme of work in the fellowship proposal, but do not necessarily need to hold formal qualifications.

Can I apply for a fellowship to be held on a part-time basis?

Yes, Fellowships can be held on a part-time basis down to 50% FTE in order to combine the fellowship with personal responsibilities. In all cases, the length of the fellowship must be extended accordingly on a pro-rata basis. For example, a four-year fellowship on a full-time basis would equate to an 8-year fellowship with the fellow working 0.5 FTE, but the value of the award would remain the same.

I am planning to return to my research/innovation career following a break – am I eligible to apply?

Yes, applications are welcome from those returning to a research/innovation role from a career break or following time in non-research roles. We also encourage applications from those wishing to work part-time in order to combine the fellowship with personal or domestic responsibilities.

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

Applications are welcomed from candidates who wish to re-establish themselves in academia after a career break or other period of absence.

How do I find a university to host my fellowship?

Fellowships can be hosted at any UK-based organisation currently registered as eligible to apply for funding from UKRI and EPSRC. Details of eligibility and a list of recognised Institutes and Independent Research Organisations can be found on the [UKRI website](#). Cross sector and organisational links, and research and innovation collaborations in both the UK and internationally are encouraged. You must contact the university directly yourself.

What is a project partner?

A Project Partner is a collaborating organisation who will have an integral role in the proposed research. This may include in-kind or cash contributions such as expertise, staff time, use of facilities, etc.

Project Partners cannot receive funding directly from the grant; the only exception to this is where a Project Partner is providing services or equipment that will go through a formal procurement process audited by the host research organisation. The Project Partner cannot receive any other funds from the grant, such as travel and subsistence.

If there are Project Partners collaborating on a research project, EPSRC requires a Letter of Support. Well-written letters can significantly strengthen research proposals by demonstrating the benefits of the collaboration, and the potential impacts of the research. It also allows partners to highlight why they support the proposal, and what they hope to get out of it.

Can fellowships be held at Research Council Institutes?

Yes. An EPSRC fellowship can be hosted by any organisation eligible for EPSRC funding. To check your [eligibility for the Research Institutes and other Independent Research Organisations \(IROs\)](#), visit the UK Research and Innovation website.

Can a fellowship have more than one host organisation?

Fellowships must have one lead host organisation who is the employer of the fellow. The fellow may work closely with other organisations.

What kind of track record do I need to be successful?

You must have either:

- a PhD
- at least 4 years experience in a relevant field by the start of your fellowship

This fellowship is aimed at those looking to transition to an independent research career. Applicants should be able to show how they will develop an independent career based on their own original research ideas and vision.

What is the timeline for processing the fellowship?

Opening date: 4th August 2021

Closing date: 6th October 2021

Reviews during October and November

Prioritisation panel: second week in January 2022

Interview panel (if proposal successful at prioritisation): End of February 2022

Funding decisions: Early March 2022

Fellowship start date: 1st April 2022

Can I apply to other EPSRC and UKRI fellowships schemes in parallel with this scheme?

Generally applicants may only have one fellowship application under consideration by UKRI (which encompasses schemes led by any of the Research Councils and/or Innovate UK) at any point, unless expressly permitted in the Research Council/Innovate UK scheme's call documentation. For EPSRC, applicants cannot apply in parallel to UKRI Future Leader Fellowship and any EPSRC Fellowship schemes. However if you have submitted an application to the Open Fellowship Scheme or the Future Leader Fellowship Scheme, before the announcement of the Quantum Technology Career Development Fellowship, you may still apply for the Quantum Technology Career Development Fellowship as you would not have been aware of the possibility at the time of your first application.

Who should I nominate as a reviewer for my proposal?

All reviews should be independent and objective. EPSRC will seek to avoid selecting reviewers where a conflict of interest is identified. This will include anyone with an identified personal or organisational association with the project to be assessed, and anyone with an identified personal

association with any other proposal in direct competition for funding. Anyone asked to provide a review should check to ensure that there is no reason why they should not do so, and should decline the request citing 'conflict of interest' as their reason if they feel there to be a concern. Where a conflict is identified after a review is submitted that review will be classed as unusable and excluded from the process. For example you should not nominate someone who you have previously published or worked with.

Can I go on a placement or secondment?

You can spend up to 12 months of the fellowship elsewhere. Although caution would need to be taken with costing (in other words, no estates costs for the period of absence).

Would EPSRC pay for staff acting as mentor?

No, we would not pay for internal staff resource acting in a supervisory or mentoring role however we will fund costs for an external mentor. We encourage host organisations to commit to providing an appropriate mentor.

Should inflation be included in the costs?

Inflation should not be included in fellowship costing, as EPSRC 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." We suggest discussing costing details with your University Research Office.

Can Relocation costs be included?

Relocation costs (under Travel & Subsistence) are allowable for fellows (and other named staff on grants) as the [Funding Guide](#) states: "Relocation costs may be included for staff who are named in the proposal form. Relocation costs for un-named staff should be found from the Indirect Cost element of the grant." It would be up to the applicant / host organisation to determine what reasonable cost is in this regard and justify accordingly.

Are publication costs an eligible cost on a Fellowship grant?

General publication costs are not allowed, these are to be paid by the university. Universities receive funding from EPSRC to cover researcher's publication costs via a block grant, hence these are not allowable costs on individual grants.

How many hours of teaching can I do if I am a 100% FTE fellow?

Provided the teaching is related to the research project on which you are currently working, you may, during normal working hours, undertake teaching and demonstrating work, including associated training, preparatory, marking and examination duties, for up to an average of 6 hours a week (pro rata for part-time staff) calculated over the period that you are supported on the grant.

Are there restrictions on the number of Proposals that an Organisation can submit?

EPSRC has not set a limit on the number of proposals that can be submitted by a single Organisation. However, as this scheme will fund only the highest quality applications, we would encourage organisations to focus their efforts on an appropriate, relatively small number of high-quality applications in order to improve their success rates.

To this end, we expect organisations to employ fair and transparent processes to select

and support proposals for application.

How will successful fellows be selected?

Applicants will be assessed by a three-stage review process consisting of (stage 1) written peer review by sector/discipline experts, (stage 2) shortlisting by a prioritisation panel and (stage 3) interview by a panel. Only proposals of sufficient quality will progress from one stage to another.

Am I allowed a Co-I on my fellowship?

The fellowship can include a Co-I if justified. A Co-I is expected to bring complementary and different skills.

As a fellow can I be a PI or Co-I on another grant?

Fellows at 100% FTE are eligible to be a PI/Co-I on a research grant, assuming you meet all of the other requirements. However the required resource cannot be duplicated – salary should not be costed to the new proposal for any overlapping period of time, with the fellowship, estates and indirect costs would need to be reduced accordingly.

You would need to be able to convince peer review that involvement in the grant would not adversely impact the delivery of your fellowship and that the research grant project is feasible whilst having a 0% time commitment to it (as your fellowship is 100% FTE). Where the research grant project is heavily related to the fellowship this becomes practical, meaning the administrative time needed on the grant is able to be covered by the time on the fellowship.

COVID-19 will affect some of my research/innovation plans. Should I write about this in my application?

We acknowledge that it is difficult for anyone to determine the future impacts of COVID-19 while the pandemic continues to evolve. Your application should be based on the information available at the point of submission. If applicable, the known application specific impacts of COVID-19 should be accounted for. Where known impacts have occurred, these should be highlighted in the application, including the assumptions/information at the point of submission.

You are asked NOT to include contingency plans for the potential impacts of COVID-19. Reviewers will receive instructions to assume that changes that arise from the COVID-19 pandemic, post-submission, will be resolved and complications related to COVID-19 should not affect their scores.

Given the ongoing pandemic can I still include plans for travel within my application?

You can still include requests for travel both domestically and internationally in accordance to the relevant scheme guidelines. Note that you are NOT asked to include contingency plans for potential impact of COVID-19.

NQCC sponsored fellowships

Do I need to talk to NQCC before I submit my proposal?

Yes. You must discuss your proposal with NQCC prior to submitting the proposal and gain a letter of support (classed as an “Additional document” in JeS).

Can I be resident at the NQCC the entire time?

Yes, if you have agreed this with the NQCC

Can I apply for a fellowship in quantum computing and not be sponsored by the NQCC?

Yes

What subject areas are NQCC interested in funding?

NQCC fellowship proposals should focus on aspects of quantum computing such as algorithm development, standards, benchmarking and simulation – to support these positions access to prototype hardware will be available through the NQCC. Other areas of underpinning technology such as control systems and theory, materials for quantum computing platforms and device development are also encouraged.

Will NQCC fund equipment?

Yes. Equipment requirements for proposals should be discussed with NQCC prior to submission.