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## **Am I eligible to apply for a Discovery Fellowship?**

Applicants should be able to demonstrate appropriate and relevant research/innovation experience. This could be, for example, through recent completion of a PhD or other higher qualification(s), relevant employment within a research or innovation environment, or a combination of both. Applicants should be able to evidence reasonable scientific and technical skills and competencies, in line with the ambitions of the Discovery Fellowship scheme. Those currently undertaking a PhD are eligible if they are expecting to have undergone a successful PhD viva prior to 30 November 2022.

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. This applies to both fixed term and permanent positions.

Full details on eligibility can be found in the BBSRC Research Fellowships Handbook.

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## **I have previously been included on a BBSRC grant as a PI or Co I – am I still eligible to apply?**

No, applicants to other BBSRC grants and managed-mode schemes must be at lecturer-lecturer level or equivalent. Anyone included on such applications, therefore confirming holding a post of at least lecturer level, is not eligible to apply for a Discovery Fellowship.

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## **Can I apply if I have previously been, or I am currently a Researcher Co-Investigator on a BBSRC grant?**

Yes. Being a Researcher Co-Investigator will not impact on eligibility for Discovery Fellowship, provided that the applicant meets all the eligibility criteria. If successful, the applicant would need to commit full-time to the Fellowship, so may have to relinquish involvement on other programmes.

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## **Can I use the Discovery Fellowship to continue research started as part of my PhD / postdoc?**

The Discovery Fellowship can build on aspects of your PhD / postdoc research, but you will need to demonstrate that you have developed the proposed Discovery Fellowship research yourself, that you have sole ownership of the project and that the proposed research is independent from any projects being conducted or planned by your previous Group Leaders. You need to be able to demonstrate that the research proposed will help you establish your own “research niche”.

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### **Can I carry out a Discovery Fellowship at my current Research Organisation?**

Yes, you can carry out the fellowship at your current Research Organisation, there is no requirement to move. However, you need to demonstrate the independence of your proposed research from that of your current Group Leader and fully justify why the host Research Organisation proposed is the best place for you to be to carry out your research and develop your career.

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### **Can the Discovery Fellowship be held across multiple Research Organisations or departments?**

No. The fellowship must be held in one place, based at a specific research group or department at the host institution. Other groups can be included as collaborators or partners, which must be fully justified in the application.

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### **Can I carry out a Discovery Fellowship at an overseas Research Organisation?**

Periods of research can be conducted at overseas Research Organisations, but the host organisation that employs the fellow and holds the Discovery Fellowship award must be based in the UK. Any period of research away from the primary host must be fully justified and supported by letters from the proposed host Group Leaders at any secondary organisations.

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### **Can I apply for other fellowship and grant awards at the same time as applying for a Discovery Fellowship?**

The BBSRC allows applicants to apply to other organisations (with the same or a different project) whilst applying for BBSRC fellowship funding. However, you should check with other Research Councils/organisations for their rules on applications to other organisations. Your proposed project should be primarily focused on the remit of each organisation you are applying to; **it is not permissible to apply with the same project to two different Research Councils.**

**Note: Discovery Fellowship applicants are not eligible to apply to any additional 2022 BBSRC fellowship competitions. Additionally, applicants for a BBSRC Discovery Fellowship are not permitted to apply to the UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowship call in the same calendar year.**

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### **If I have a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship application in progress can I still apply for a Discovery Fellowship?**

This depends on which UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship (FLF) call you applied to. If your FLF application was submitted in the year preceding the Discovery Fellowship proposal deadline then

yes, you may apply for a Discovery Fellowship. However, you must inform BBSRC immediately should you be awarded a UKFI FLF as your Discovery Fellowship proposal will need to be withdrawn from the round. Please contact BBSRC Office if you are still unsure if you are eligible to apply.

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### **What level of support should my host Research Organisation provide?**

Host Research Organisations can demonstrate support for a Fellow in a range of ways including, but not limited to; additional funding for research expenses, equipment, consumables, reduced cost access to core facilities, support for the fellow to access training courses and events.

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### **Can I include Visa costs in my application?**

Applicants can include the cost of a visa in their proposal but only for themselves, not for any family members. Linked to a visa application are NHS surcharges, however these cannot be included in an application for either the applicant or any family members

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### **Can I use the Discovery Fellowship to purchase equipment?**

No, the fellowship cannot be used to purchase equipment, this includes cameras, laptops, PCs and supporting equipment. It is expected that equipment required for the proposed project be available to you as part of the host Research Organisation's demonstration of support for the fellowship.

Access charges for use of large equipment or facilities are permitted.

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### **Can I use the Discovery Fellowship to request staff support costs?**

Researcher costs (PDRA's, RA's etc) are not permitted. Technician support may be requested if required and only under the Directly Allocated Staff heading. Any requests must be fully justified.

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### **How much should I request for attendance at the conferences detailed in the Handbook?**

Generally, we advise applicants to give an estimated cost for travel from their host organisation to London as venues are not yet fixed. As a guide (pre-Covid) the Fellows Induction has been held in London, the conference (held every two years) has been held in Leeds and Glasgow, and responsive mode meetings have been held in London, Cardiff, and Warwick.

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## **What should my Career Development Plan include?**

The Career Development Plan should be used to identify your training needs and how you will use the support provided by the Discovery Fellowship to address them. It should contain evidence and detail of negotiations held or offers that have been considered from potential hosts that ultimately informed the decision of the chosen location for your fellowship. This should include for example consideration of mentoring schemes, training course and financial support offered.

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## **Are resubmissions allowed?**

Applicants that have previously submitted a Discovery or David Phillips Fellowship proposal can apply to subsequent fellowship rounds with the same, modified or a different proposal providing they still meet the eligibility criteria. Where an applicant is resubmitting the same project, they should ensure that any feedback previously given by the Committee has been addressed.

Other unsuccessful research grant applications **are not eligible to be resubmitted** to the Discovery Fellowship scheme unless the work proposed is substantially different in terms of objectives or work to be carried out. Full details can be found in the [BBSRC research grants guide](#).

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## **Is my project within remit?**

Full information about the science covered by the BBSRC is available on the BBSRC website at [bbsrc.ukri.org/research/science-remit/](https://bbsrc.ukri.org/research/science-remit/). We would strongly advise you to contact us with any queries about our remit before applying, providing a maximum 2-page A4 outline or summary of your proposed research. All remit enquiries should be emailed to [bbsrc.remit@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:bbsrc.remit@bbsrc.ac.uk).

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## **Is there a limit on the number of applications that can be submitted by a Research Organisation or department?**

There is no limit on how many applications can be submitted from a research organisation, department, or host lab, and there would be no disadvantage to applicants. All proposals are assessed separately by the reviewers and the Committee.

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### **What should I put as my expected start date?**

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 indicated in their proposal, so applicants must ensure that they are able to do so. Requests to significantly alter the stated start date will be considered only in exceptional circumstances. All fellowships must commence by 1<sup>st</sup> July at the latest following notification of an award.

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### **How do I upload the Head of Department Statement and Host PI statement?**

The Head of Department and Host Group Principal Investigator statements should be combined and attached as a single document as type 'Head of Department Statement', which should then be attached by your Host RO's Approver or Submitter.

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### **I can't select Committee E in Je-S, what should I do?**

Committee E is not available as a choice, so please select the most appropriate for your research area (A, B, C or D)

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### **What font should I use in my documents and what are the page lengths allowed?**

It is recommended that a standard 'Arial' or 'Times New Roman' font is used. Guidance on the page lengths for the documents can be found in the Je-S Guidance for the Discovery Fellowships.

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### **If I'm awarded a Discovery Fellowship, can I apply for other grants?**

BBSRC Discovery Fellows are expected to devote the whole of their usual working time to the research programme approved by BBSRC and are not permitted to apply for additional funding from other sources, including BBSRC grant funding.

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## **How many teaching/admin hours are permitted during a Discovery fellowship?**

BBSRC Discovery Fellows are expected to devote the whole of their usual working time to the research programme approved by BBSRC. The fellow may also devote reasonable time to activities associated with the protection or exploitation of intellectual property arising from their research, however, should not be undertaking additional teaching duties.

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## **COVID-19 Guidance**

### **Future challenges surrounding COVID-19**

UKRI acknowledges that it is a challenge for applicants to determine the future impacts of COVID-19 while the pandemic continues to evolve. Applications should be based on the information available at the point of submission and, 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. There is no need to include contingency plans for the potential impacts of COVID-19. Requests for travel both domestically and internationally can be included in accordance with the relevant scheme guidelines, noting the above advice.

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.

Where an application is successful, any changes in circumstances that affect the proposal will be managed as a post-award issue

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### ***“I have had major interruptions or disruptions to my career”***

UKRI recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities and are committed to ensuring that individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career(s) such as breaks and delays, disruptive working patterns and conditions, the loss of on-going work, and role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic.

Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts of the impact that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the track record and career development of those individuals included in the proposal and will be asked to consider the capability of the applicant and their wider team to deliver the research they are proposing. Where disruptions have occurred applicants can highlight this within their application, if they wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.

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## **Contact**

## Research and Innovation Funding Delivery – Fellowships

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

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