BBSRC Flexible Talent Mobility Accounts (FTMA) - FAQs

Q: Am I eligible to apply? – Please add link and anything specific that we can send to the applicant

A: Standard eligibility rules for UKRI research grants apply: https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-research-and-innovation-funding/

Q: When will I receive an acknowledgement for my expression of interest? This is a common question. Are councils responding to EOIs?

NA

Q: Can we change the Project Lead between the EOI and Full Stage?

NA

Q: Is my organisation eligible to apply, i.e. is this an open call?

A: This is an open funding opportunity, all eligible research organisations are welcome to apply. Standard eligibility rules for UKRI research grants apply: https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/check-if-you-are-eligible-for-research-and-innovation-funding/eligibility-as-an-organisation/#contents-list

In addition, applications must be from partnerships of eligible research organisations (see below).

Q: Is my project within remit of the opportunity (only for fulls)
A: Ask the 'project lead' to provide a 1-2 page summary of the project before forwarding to the respective research council

Q: Will this opportunity open again in the future and when?

A: Considering the three-year duration of this award, we would not anticipate this opportunity opening again before 2027

Q: Where are embedded images allowed and what sections?

A: You can include embedded images in the sections in which it is specified: "Proposed Activities", "FTMA partnership and potential collaborators", "Operations and governance" and "Equality, diversity and inclusion".

Q: How long is the assessment process and when will we receive the outcomes of our application? – should be on funding finder

A: The expected decision date is during March 2024

Q: What funding is available, and do you have a rough estimate per award? – should be on funding finder

A: The Full Economic Cost (FEC) of the awards will be between £337,500 and £412,500 over 3 years (£28,125/quarter - £34,375/quarter). BBSRC will fund 80% of the FEC.

Q: What is the 'Resubmission Policy'?

A: This opportunity follows the BBSRC resubmission policy:
https://www.ukri.org/councils/bbsrc/guidance-for-applicants/unsuccessful-applicants-and-resubmissions/

Q: Can funds for equipment purchase be requested?

A: No.

Q: What is the minimum and maximum time length the award should be?

A: The duration of the award is three years.

Q: Does the opportunity allow for more than one application from one research organisation?

A: No. Only one application per research organisation is allowed.
An eligible RO cannot be in multiple FTMA partnerships for this funding opportunity and therefore must only submit one application.

Q: Can a Project Lead make multiple applications for one opportunity?

A: No, see previous question.

Q: Which is the rationale behind having to apply in partnerships?

A: Applicants should apply in partnerships or consortia of eligible Research Organisations (ROs). These must consist of a minimum of 2 partners. With this approach we aim to maximise the impact and enhancing new collaborations with different ROs sharing their existing collaborations and expertise.

Q: Who can be part of the partnerships?

A: Applications must be from partnerships or consortia of eligible Research Organisations (ROs). These must consist of a minimum of 2 partners. There is no maximum limit on the number of partners. An eligible RO cannot be in multiple FTMA partnerships for this call and therefore must only submit one application. The partnership shall have a lead partner, who will be in charge of submitting the application. Only the lead partner's project lead will be able to access the application site.

Q: What is the difference between a partner and a collaborator?

A: Partners are the RO eligible to apply for BBSRC funding that are applying for the award and that will contribute to its delivery and governance.

Collaborators are other organisations and institutions that might be involved in the activities of the grant, for example, as a host for a placement, through providing personnel for an exchange, or delivering training. Examples of possible collaborators include UK and international businesses and academic institutions, the public sector and the third sector. Collaborators do not need to be eligible to apply for BBSRC funding.

Q. Can the same institution participate in more than one FTMA application?

A. A RO can only be part of one partnership and therefore one application, regardless of whether they are involved as a Project Lead or Project Co-lead. There is not a limit to the number of FTMA applications in which an institution can participate as a collaborator. One RO participating in an FTMA application as a partner can participate in other applications as a collaborator.

Q. What kind of due diligence of partners do the BBSRC expect to be outlined in the application?

A. Partners need to be eligible for BBSRC funding

Q. What is expected with regards to project partner contributions? And collaborators?

A. Project partners must be involved in the governance and management of the award. There are no requirements on the role the collaborators.

Q. How does the BBSRC envisage that co-leads should add value to an FTMA? Would it be expected that ideal co-leads would provide extensive cross-sector/interdisciplinary exchange and learning opportunities with the lead organisation, or could they be in the same sector/discipline and provide other types of benefits that are materially distinct and undertaken with a different set of collaborators than those undertaken with the co-lead?

A. Project co-leads (PcL) ("partners", in the opportunity text) shall contribute to the delivery and governance of the project. The panel will assess how the award will benefit from the RO partnership applying to this opportunity. They will also evaluate the governance of the project (i.e. who is responsible for delivery within the partnership). There are no prescribed criteria for expected benefits brought about by the partnership. However, benefits could include, for example: providing new collaborators leading to a greater breadth of exchange activities or providing expertise in the management/administration of the grant.

Q. Are authorities and national government departments in scope as hosts for placements?

A. Yes. Placements can be in a range of institutions, including academic, business, public sector and third sector organisations, both in the UK and overseas.

Q. Do networks count as independent ROs?

A. Networks do not count as independent ROs. However, we do encourage applicants to consider how the FTMA award could be used to support existing investments, and networks are

a good example of such investments. Therefore, while networks cannot be in direct receipt of funding, we would expect them to be able to participate in FTMA activities of awards held by ROs within their network.

Q. If a KTP applies, is this counted as a submission from the member universities of that KTP, making their universities ineligible act as a partner on another award? Or is that counted as the KTP submission allowing the member universities to act as partners on another application?

A. Applications can only be submitted by research organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. Therefore, a KTP wanting to submit an application, would have to do it through the organisation in which they are employed. This organisation would not be able to be listed as a partner (project lead or project co-lead) at any other application for this opportunity.

Q. Can we include letters of support from likely collaborators?

A. Letters of support from collaborators cannot be uploaded. Applicants may want to include in the application that they count with the support of potential collaborators.

Q: Can my proposal cover two priority areas?

A: At application stage, applicants must select only one priority area. If the proposed activities might fit across multiple priority areas, the applicants must select which of them better relate to the proposal. The panel will assess how the application aligns with the selected priority area.

Q. How will awards be distributed across the different priority areas?

A. The proposal with the highest score in each priority area will receive an award (subject to quality threshold), while the remaining four awards will be granted based on the overall quality of the proposals.

Q: What activities are eligible within the award?

A: The FTMAs are very flexible on the range of activities they can be used for. The ambition of these awards is to enhance sector porosity and allow movement between fields as well as providing professional development opportunities for bioscience research staff, and supporting staff, at all career stages. This should primarily be achieved through secondments and placements, although other activities are also eligible (see below).

Placements/Exchanges

Placements/exchanges of up to 6 months duration are permitted. Funds can be used to support outgoing or incoming research professionals to undertake an exchange. The activities should aim to establish or further develop partnerships between academic, business, public sector and third sector organisations. Activities could include:

- exchanges between academic institutions and businesses, public sector and third sector organisations
- interdisciplinary academia-academia exchanges
- international placements/exchanges
- placements/exchanges with policy makers

- shorter placements (e.g., day releases)
- longer placements (up to 6 months maximum)
- secondments (up to 6 months maximum)
- technology transfer and knowledge exchange development opportunities

Training

Training courses for eligible individuals are permitted. Funds can also be used to develop your own training courses.

Related Activities

Where there is a clear benefit to individual participants or the development of the award, other related activities can also be funded. This could include, for example, hosting a small conference for FTMA participants to share their learnings or covering small travel costs associated with scoping or establishing collaborations for further FTMA activities.

Q. Can one application capture multiple projects, even if all partners are not involved in all activities?

A. Yes

Q: What costs are eligible under FTMAs?

A: Funds can be used to cover the direct costs of mobility activities (e.g., travel, accommodation, reasonable subsistence, training, consumables, salary). Capital (equipment) costs are **not** eligible under this call. Activities (placements/exchanges/training) for students (including PhD students) are **not** eligible under this call.

Funding can also be used to support secondary activities which are associated with the primary mobility activities (e.g., hosting conferences for those involved in the placements/exchanges to share their knowledge with their wider network).

Funds can be used to support non-UK nationals to undertake short-term placements and research collaborations that are hosted within a UK research organisation, subject to UK visa requirements.

Funds can be used for training courses and producing training materials.

Funds may be used to support costs associated with the administration of the short-term mobility activities. Administrative costs must be included within the overall award value, noting the maximum permitted (£15,000 FEC, of which BBSRC will fund 80%). Justification of these costs must be included in the Justification of Resources and will be considered as part of the assessment.

Disability-related costs may be included in the grant in the following circumstances:

- if a person benefitting from an FTMA is already employed at the organisation before working on the grant:

- o   the employer should absorb the costs for disability related costs if these do not increase as a result of the person working on the grant.
- o   if the individual has disability related support for their day-to-day activities, but this increases as a direct result of them working on the award, for example, having an assistant travel with them for fieldwork, then these <u>additional </u>costs can be charged to the project.
- o   if the individual does not normally require disability related support in their day-to-day activities but will require this support as a direct result of their work on the project, for example, having an assistant travel with them for fieldwork, then this would become an eligible cost.

- if the person is employed by the organisation specifically to work on the award:
  - o   Disability related costs can be charged to the grant; however, these costs should be attributed at the FTE % they are working on the award for.

Q. Would conference registration costs be an eligible cost if one is attended as part of an exchange activity?

A. Yes.

Q. Assume that travel and consumables also at 80% FEC

A. Yes, BBSRC will fund 80% of the Full Economic Cost (FEC) of the proposal.

Q: Would you expect to see any staff time costed on an FTMA?

A: Funds may be used to support costs associated with the administration of the short-term mobility activities. Administrative costs must be included within the overall award value, noting the maximum permitted (£15,000 FEC, of which BBSRC will fund 80%). This may include staff time from the partner ROs.

Funds can be used to cover the direct costs of mobility activities (e.g., travel, accommodation, reasonable subsistence, training, consumables, salary).

Q: Can administrative costs exceed 15,000 GBP?

A. If administrative costs exceed 15,000 GBP BBSRC will only fund them partially, with BBSRC funding up to 80% 15,000 GBP.

Q: Can the award be used to support existing investments?

A: Yes, the award can be used to support existing investments (for example, established research networks or Impact Accelerator Accounts) however, the focus of any FTMA funding should be on the exchange, development, and training of individuals.

Q. Who will receive the funding?

A. The lead FTMA partner will be the RO in receipt of the funding.

Q. Will activities undertaken by collaborators be able to receive costs from partners?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you have advice for how partner institutions share the 20% funding shortfall?

A. Project partners should agree on how to share the funding shortfall. There are no BBSRC requirements on how to do it.

Q: Who can directly benefit from the award?

A: Any research staff, or supporting staff, working within the biosciences or pursuing an FTMA activity within the biosciences, including but not limited to

- Postdoctoral researchers
- Research technical professionals
- Principal Investigators
- Knowledge exchange and commercialisation professionals
- Professional services staff
- Staff from non-academic organisations

This extends to international and UK staff.

Q. Can students directly benefit from the award?

A: No. Students, including doctoral students, cannot directly benefit from the award.

Q. Do staff have to be in post already, or can an award be used to appoint someone who is not already in post?

A. The awards are intended to support employed staff.

Q. Can awardees run internal calls for exchanges/funding using FTMA funding?

A. Yes. Note that the application must include how the individuals directly benefitting from the award will be selected.

Q: How will the post-award reporting work?

A: Yearly, the BBSRC office will ask the awarded project leads to complete a monitoring report form with the information related to the activities undertaken, including:

- Activity type (for example, "outgoing placement to business")
- Primary FTMA objective (for example, "supporting the mobility of early career researchers")
- Short description of the activity
- Number of people supported/involved in the activity
- Other organisations and institutions involved in the activity
- Funds allocated to the activity and justification of the resources
- Outcomes and impact of the activity

The report will also include some EDI data related to the people directly benefiting from the award (see question below) and an outline of the activities for the following year.

Q: Which EDI data will you be collecting?

A: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) data of the people supported across the award. At a minimum this should include the number of supported individuals with the following characteristics:

- Ethnicity (Asian/Black/Mixed/Not disclosed/Other/White)
- Gender (Female/Male/Not disclosed)
- Age (29 or less/30-39/40-49/50-59/60+/Not disclosed)
- Disability (Disabled/Not disabled/Not disclosed)
- Role (postdoctoral researcher/research technical professional/KEC staff/other research staff/other professional services staff)

EDI information provided will be used in part of a broader assessment by BBSRC to understand the effectiveness of our policies and procedures in eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting opportunities. This information will be treated in confidence by BBSRC.

Q: How will awardees have to report the EDI data?

A: Successful applicants will need to provide the aggregated EDI data for all the staff directly benefiting from the award.

Q: How do I apply

A: Only the Project Lead can access the online application. We therefore suggest that applicants work on a shared application offline and have the Project Lead submit this via TFS when ready.

Q: Can my application include figures and tables?

A: Yes. Figures and tables can be embedded into your answers. Figure captions can be included and will not contribute to the word count. However, excessive use of text within figures and captions should be avoided.

Q. Do the RTPs and ECRs benefiting from the call need to be employed in the partners ROs?

A: No, they do not need to be employed by the partners ROs. They can for example be staff from a different institution (i.e. collaborators).

Q. What does ECR mean in the context of this opportunity?

A. We define ECRs as postdoctoral researchers yet to establish independence. This would not include new lecturers, for example.