UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Fellowships and Funding for Postdocs and Early Career Researchers in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

A Brief Guide

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Schools of Arts and Humanities and the Humanities and Social Sciences

Last updated: October 2024

www.ahssresearch.group.cam.ac.uk

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With thanks to Dr Ruth Smith, Careers Advisor for AHSS postdocs for the section on JRFs, and to Dr Katherine Boyle, Research Facilitator at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, for the work on Marie Curie Fellowships. Many thanks also to Dr Eleanor Robson for sharing her insights on application writing and to Dan Jones for his contribution to the section on Grant Application Process.

Introduction

This guide is a general introduction to postdoctoral fellowships and research funding opportunities for early-career researchers in arts, social sciences and humanities. The information on the various schemes outlined here has been mostly gathered from the funding institutions' websites, and is intended to be a starting point for your own research on the topic. **Funders often change their eligibility criteria, application processes and deadlines, and even well-established annual competitions may be changed or even discontinued. Given this, *we would advise you in all instances to check the relevant institution's website if you are intending to make an application***.

Fellowships and grant funding require institutional support, which means that you will need to **talk to your head of faculty/department at an early stage**, in order to discuss the type of support the faculty/department can provide. It is important to make sure that whoever is hosting you is aware of what kind of support the funder is expecting the host institution to provide. This is especially important in the case of replacement teaching (which must be discussed and agreed with your head of faculty/department before the application is made) or where a financial contribution of the university is required.

This guide also gives a basic indication as to whether the fellowship or grant is intended to cover all the research project's costs (this is usually labelled 'full economic costing' – fEC), or whether it will only cover them in part (such as the Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship, which funds up to 50% of salary costs).[1] Of similar importance is the information relating to the level of overheads that can be expected from the different schemes. If your head of faculty/department is in any way unsure about the financial implications of grants, he or she is advised to contact the University's Research Operations Office, whose staff would be happy to explain these implications on a case-by-case basis.

Fellowship or grant?

This guide focuses on postdoctoral fellowships and research grants. Postdoctoral fellowships are often thought of as short-term posts designed to help with the development of an academic career. In the case of research grants, the focus is on the research project and usually a team of researchers coming together under a Principal Investigator (PI), although several of the schemes listed here are designed to give early career researchers their first opportunity to play a role in research leadership. Another possible option is to link up with an established researcher and apply as a named researcher on her or his grant. You could be named as either a Co-Investigator, Research Associate or Project Coordinator. This would open up funding avenues that are only usually available to those on permanent contracts. In addition to the experience gained while working on such funding applications, you might also be able to substantially shape the project and enhance the chances of funding success. This can be of considerable mutual benefit.

The type of post or grant which will be best for you depends on your needs and priorities. Do you want a year or two to write up your PhD and begin establishing a publication record? Are you ready to develop a new research project? Do you want experience leading a team of other researchers? Given that competition is fierce, it is always advisable to keep several options open and not only to apply to a single scheme.

[1] Full Economic Costing is explained at: What is Full Economic Costing? | Research Operations Office

Subject-specific

This guide focuses on some of the major fellowship and funding competitions, but is by no means exhaustive. The research website for the arts, humanities and social sciences provides a growing resource of background information about funding opportunities, schemes and available support [www.ahssresearch.group.cam.ac.uk]. One specific source of information about opportunities in your subject area is the *Research Professional*[2] database of funding opportunities that is freely available on campus (off campus only after registration on the website). The database allows subject-specific searches for funding options and schemes (such as grants or fellowships), as well as funding for conferences and travel. Each faculty has set up their own subject-specific email funding newsletter which can be accessed via your Departmental Administrator. Other sources of information may include subject-specific email lists and discussion groups in your research area that link researchers nationally, as well as through networking at academic conferences.

It is also worth looking for smaller amounts of funding which can cover research expenses, conference or seminar costs, or short-term visits to archives and libraries abroad. *Research Professional* is a very useful tool for finding these which is intuitive and easy to use. Online training is available through the website and also by your Departmental Administrator or Research Grant Administrator on how to use the database.

General guidance and support

Apart from formal applications for funding, many job and research opportunities can emerge through personal contacts. Apart from participation in academic conferences and workshops, it is therefore useful to build up a network of people at Cambridge. Possible avenues for sharing research ideas are CRASSH fora, reading groups, seminars and lectures in faculties, research centres and colleges. Initial information on seminars and similar activities can usually be found either via your Faculty/Departmental Administrator or through the university website. Informal networking with peers and senior colleagues should not be underestimated and is a common way of exchanging ideas at Cambridge. These avenues can often help you develop new research ideas, broaden your research perspective and agenda, as well as germinate new collaboration and funding ideas.

When you have decided which funding schemes you would like to apply to, then there are a range of support structures that can be of help to you. The research website for the arts, humanities and social sciences is building up a growing repository of useful information for applicants. Your faculty/department is the primary source of advice for fellowship applications but where applying for a research grant advice can also be sought from the School Research Facilitators. They can offer information on the funding bodies and their schemes and can provide support with writing grant applications and offer feedback on draft applications. Whenever possible, they can also provide examples of successful applications. They work primarily on large grant applications where the prospective host institution is Cambridge

In terms of more general advice on how to approach writing your application, the ESRC has developed a helpful guide on how to go about funding applications (see Appendix 1). See also the comments by an experienced researcher on how to write a successful application (Appendix 2).

Each faculty/department also has dedicated Research Grant and Departmental Administrators whom you

[2] http://www.researchprofessional.com/

should contact. They are there to offer expert help and advice with the financial/budgetary aspects of applications. All funding applications need final clearance from the Research Office Operations team. Their role is to check issues of eligibility, as well as the financial and contractual side of your application. Should you need guidance on contractual arrangements, for example as a College Teaching Officer, please contact your subject-relevant contact at the Research Office.

For large grant applications and particular funding schemes, the University operates an informal peer review process composed of members of staff sitting on official peer review panels. This peer review is currently in place for the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Peer review of your application takes, at the longest, four weeks, but is often quicker. If you have a well-developed draft of your application and would like to submit it to the peer review panel, please contact the Research Facilitators.

If you would like to know how a postdoctoral fellowship or research grant might fit within your overall career plan, or even whether either option is the right one for you, then you may want to consult Careers Services. Diane Caldwell-Hird is the dedicated Careers Adviser for research staff in the arts, humanities and social sciences, offering information and guidance whatever your career aspirations. Check out the Postdoc Careers Service Blog which is curated by Careers Advisers from the Cambridge University Careers Services. It provides up-to-date insight into the climate of early career research, aids for exploring next career steps, guidance on job applications both within academia and beyond.

The Grant Application Process: Six Key Steps

1. Find a scheme

Your Faculty or Department will alert you to many of the major funding schemes via email, but it's also worth doing your own research. The AHSS research website (ahssresearch.group.cam.ac.uk) is a good starting point; here, you can find the funding scheme calendar, which gives an overview of upcoming funding calls.

It's also worth keeping an eye on the major funder pages for updates: UKRI, Leverhulme, ERC, and the British Academy are good places to start. Third-party resources, which compile lists of funding sources, are also available, such as the Research Professional database (free for members of the University). Bear in mind that all schemes will have specific eligibility criteria that you will need to meet in order to apply.

2. Check your eligibility

Common eligibility criteria for candidates include nationality/residency, employment status, and years of postdoctoral experience, but others may apply. Project eligibility criteria may entail restrictions on the types of expenses that can be claimed and the type of activities that can be carried out. Make sure you understand and fully meet these before you start preparing your proposal. You'll find a guide to scheme eligibility by postdoctoral experience on page 8, below. If you're unsure about your eligibility, do get in contact with one of the School's Research Facilitators, your Departmental Administrator, or your Faculty's Research Grants Administrator, who may be able to help.

3. Prepare your proposal

Contact your Faculty's Research Grant Administrator as early as possible to discuss the project. Research Grant Administrators require at least one-month notice before the funder deadline of your intention to submit. They will be able to provide support with producing the budget and filling out the application forms, and to advise how complete an application will have to be before it can be assessed for departmental approval. Contact a School Research Facilitator to discuss your project ideas – and how they fit with funder priorities and requirements – and to obtain feedback on proposal drafts. All funders will provide details of the application process, what the scheme will fund, and their requirements for proposals on their websites. You should read through the relevant documents for each scheme carefully before you begin writing. Discuss the costing of the proposal with your Research Grant Administrator, who will compile the 'Worktribe' costings required by the Research Operations Office.

4. **Seek as much feedback as possible**

Seek internal peer review either informally by approaching individuals or by using the formal peer review structures where applicable. Ask your academic mentor or other colleagues for feedback. Contact Research Facilitators about use of the university's peer review procedures (for large grants only). Send proposal drafts to Research Facilitators for feedback.

5. **Obtain departmental approval**

Hosting research always entails a departmental commitment in terms have of space, human resources, and risk. It's therefore essential that you obtain departmental approval before submitting any grant application. In cases where approval has not been properly sought and given, it may be necessary for a successful award to be declined. University approval is also required for many schemes; this will not be confirmed until departmental approval is received. The approval process varies somewhat across differing Departments and Faculties, but, in general, it is a good idea to seek approval or discuss it with your Research Grant Administrator as early as possible.

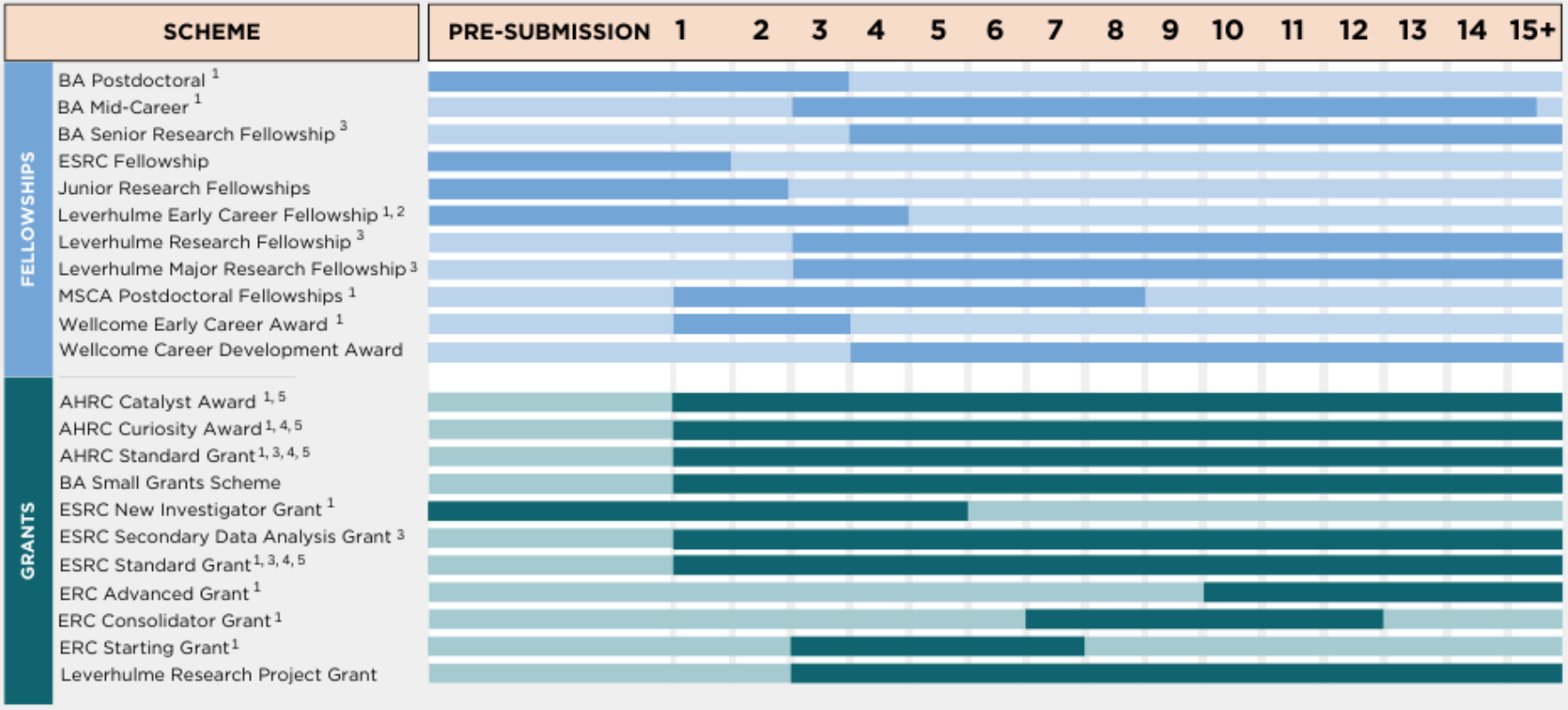
6. **Submit – on time and with institutional approval**

Most funders will require you to complete an online application form, but some will have a specific email address to which application documents must be sent. Where an online portal submission is required, clicking 'Submit' will usually forward the application to the Research Operations Office first so that they can check it against the Worktribe costing and provide institutional approval. Where there is no portal, completed application documents must first be sent to the Research Operations Office manually (via the RGA) so that they can be checked and approved before final submission.

The ROO will ensure that the department's expectation of the project matches what is being submitted and check for errors to identify any issues that could cause the application to be rejected. Full applications must be submitted to the ROO at least five working days ahead of the final deadline. Extended checks of application content will be provided if the proposal is submitted to the ROO **at least seven working days** in advance of the funder's deadline.

Funding Eligibility Chart

Years since PhD



The overview is just indicative. Please check the eligibility criteria of each scheme via the scheme website for complete and current information. Please note that there are likely to be additional subject-specific funding schemes in your research area. These tend to be less competitive and can be found via Research Professional alongside all other funding options for UK researchers.

1. Career breaks such as maternity cover and illness or time outside academia can be taken into account.
2. Only unestablished staff can apply (without permanent contract).
3. Only established staff can apply (or with commitment of University to employment over the course of the grant, plus 3-6 months). See scheme funding guide for specific details.
4. Junior academics can apply as Co-I/Co-lead with a more senior researcher as PI/Lead-Investigator.
5. Eligibility is determined on the basis of funding history. Years post-PhD and job title are not considered markers of career progression.

Section One:
Postdoctoral Fellowships – Annual or rolling programmes

British Academy

Scheme title: **BA Postdoctoral Fellowships**

Discipline: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Timetable: Annual Competition.

Deadline for submission of outline proposals:	Early October (internal selection in August)
Results of outline stage expected:	January (invitation to submit full application)
Research beginning on or after:	1 September.

Please check the website for the yearly deadlines.

Please note that internal selection according to the University's restricted calls policy in operation to manage demand for this call. Please contact the faculty or Department you are applying through for more information.

Duration: 3 years

Costing: Salary, directly allocated and indirect costs at full economic costing

Eligibility: Applicants have to be within three years of the award of their doctorate. Up to 45 fellowships awarded. British citizens and any national from the EEA are eligible, regardless of where their doctorate was obtained. Anyone of any nationality who has a doctorate from a UK university is eligible.

Purpose: This scheme is designed to enable outstanding early career researchers to strengthen their experience of research and teaching in a university environment, which will develop their CV and improve their prospects of obtaining permanent lecturing posts by the end of the Fellowship. Applicants are expected to apply within three years from their successful viva voce examination.

Scheme website: British Academy

Leverhulme Trust

Scheme title: **Early Career Fellowships**

Timetable: Annual Competition for all disciplines

Deadline is in February/March of each year. Application materials can be accessed from the Trust's website from January. The Trust will report results to applicants by the end of May.

(Note: for Cambridge-based applications, there is a pre-selection competition run by the Isaac Newton Trust, which will provide the matching funding for successful applicants. You must apply to the Newton Trust before submitting your application to the Leverhulme Trust, and you need to secure the support of a host department before approaching the Newton Trust. The Newton Trust deadline for applications is in November and

potential applicants are strongly advised to check details with the Newton Trust[3] directly.)

Duration: Three years (may be held part-time)

Costing: The Trust will contribute 50% of each fellow's total salary costs up to a maximum of £28,000 per annum, with the balance to be paid by the host institution. Given the prestige of the awards each fellow may request annual research expenses of up to £6,000 to further his or her research activities.

Eligibility: Applications are invited from those with a doctorate who had their doctoral viva not more than 4 years before the application closing date. Career breaks will be taken into account. They may not currently hold, or have already held, a full-time established (i.e. permanent) academic position in a UK university or comparable institution in the UK or a fellowship of equivalent duration for independent research. This excludes current holders of British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships or Junior Research Fellowships of three years duration. There are approximately 145 fellowships available in 2024 (that includes the Sciences).

Purpose: Early Career Fellowships aim to provide career development opportunities for those who are at a relatively early stage of their academic careers but with a proven record of research. It is anticipated that a Fellowship will lead to a more permanent academic position. Fellowships can be held at universities or at other institutions of higher education in the UK.

Please note: The Leverhulme Trust strongly encourages applicants for its Early Career Fellowship scheme to change institution away from the university where they received their PhD or otherwise to provide a very robust justification for why this would not be beneficial.

Scheme website: Leverhulme Trust

Scheme title: Study Abroad Studentship

Timetable: Annual competition

Deadline: January of each year

Purpose: The scheme allows time for training, network building, etc. and is aimed at postdocs but can even be used by pre-doctoral students. The scheme covers travel expenses, a salary of £23k per annum and an additional £7k for dependents. The scheme is currently highly undersubscribed.

Website: Leverhulme Trust

European Commission: Horizon Europe

Scheme title: Marie Sklodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships

[3] http://www.newtontrust.cam.ac.uk/

Discipline: All disciplines

Costing: The fellowship value is calculated by the funder according to the country's coefficient and includes: living allowance, mobility allowance, maintenance allowance, family allowance, research expenses, management and indirect contribution.

Timetable: The calls for Individual Fellowships tend to be launched in April of each year with a September deadline for submissions.

Purpose: Individual Fellowships support the mobility of researchers within and beyond Europe - as well as helping to attract the best foreign researchers to work in the EU. The grant usually covers two years' salary, a mobility allowance, research costs and overheads for the host institution. Individual researchers submit proposals for funding in liaison with their planned host organisation. Proposals are judged on their research quality, the researcher's future career prospects, and the support offered by the host organisation. Fellows can also spend part of the fellowship elsewhere in Europe if this would boost impact, and those restarting their career in Europe benefit from special eligibility conditions. European and Global Fellowships available. Strict mobility criteria apply.

Website: Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions

Section Two:
Postdoctoral Fellowships – Individual institutions (including JRFs)

Postdoctoral Fellowships funded by individual institutions including universities, colleges and specialist research centres are also available. Some are linked to broad subject areas or disciplines, others are more specialised. Institutions will advertise through websites such as www.jobs.ac.uk, the media (*The Guardian*, *Times Higher Education Supplement* etc), and their own websites.

Cambridge and Oxford Colleges regularly advertise Junior Research Fellowships (JRFs) in a range of subjects for varying numbers of years. They are advertised in *The Reporter* as well as in some instances on jobs.ac.uk. They vary from college to college as to subject area, number offered, number of years of tenure, pay, obligations, and method and timing of application; but some colleges now share an online application system. Timing of the announcements also varies from college to college and year to year, so it is difficult to predict exactly when they will be advertised. For good information and advice from current JRFs about the nature of such fellowships and applying for them, see https://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/junior-research-fellowships-jrfs.

Many large research projects involve the creation of postdoctoral research fellowships. These fellowships usually involve working with collaboratively with the projects' PI and usually last for the duration of the project. EURAXESS lists many such postdoctoral fellowship opportunities available across Europe: https://www.euraxess.org.uk/united-kingdom/find-job

Section Three:
Research Grants

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) New Investigator Grants

Duration: The funding allows for about 2.5 years of full- time employment. Please consult your RGA for details, as the figures change depending on your career stage and time commitment.
Funding: Up to £350,000 funded at 80% full economic costs (fEC).
Timetable: no deadlines at ESRC; assessment is three times per year in March, July and November with 10-12 awards at each round.

! The scheme operates under a Cambridge internal selection with three internal deadlines in March, June and November. Calls for expressions of interest will be circulated through departments and faculties!

Eligibility: There is no "years from PhD" limit for this call. Applicants are required to provide a statement explaining why they consider themselves to be "early career researchers". Applicants can apply from anywhere in the world but need the agreement of a UK university to host them. Applicants cannot have been previously PIs on an ESRC or other UK Research Council grant. Please check the eligibility criteria BEFORE applying as these may have changed in the meantime.
Applicants need to find a potential mentor at the University (not normally your former PhD supervisor) who commits between 1 and 3 hours per week to supporting the PI in leading the project. The relevant host department needs to approve your application from the outset. For interdisciplinary projects, a Co-Investigator from another discipline is desirable.
Number: ESRC aims to make around 30-35 awards per annum.
Applications can be for 'blue sky', strategic or applied research. Proposals are assessed for their originality, contribution to knowledge; research design and methods; value for money; outputs, dissemination and impact. Consider also the appropriateness of your mentor, career and skills development and, where appropriate, mobility plan.
Website: ESRC New Investigator Grant

ESRC Standard Grants

Funding: Grants range from £350,000 to £1.0m funded at 80% full economic costs (fEC).
Duration: Up to five years
Timetable: Applications may be submitted at any time – allowing time for processing. The majority of decisions are announced within 26 weeks of submission.
Eligibility: Applications can be for 'blue sky', strategic or applied research, and the ESRC is keen to encourage fresh ideas from new researchers. At the time of application, applicant PIs must either have a contract of employment with their research organisation in place for the duration of the award, or an assurance from the submitting institution that, *if the proposal is successful*, a contract of employment will be given that covers the period of the award plus an additional 3-6 months. This scheme lends itself for un-established researchers particularly to apply as co-investigator or postdocs.

Website: ESRC Standard Grant

ESRC Secondary Data Analysis Grants

Funding: £15k-£300k funded at 80% full economic cost (fEC).
Duration: Up to 24 months
Timetable: no deadline
Eligibility: No present UK university affiliation is required but need agreement of a UK university to host applicant.
ESRC welcomes proposals that aim to exploit secondary data from a range of UK and international data resources funded by ESRC and by other agencies. ESRC strongly encourages non-academic collaboration and expects research to aim at non-academic impact.
ESRC strongly encourages applications that include a named early career researcher as principal investigator or co-investigator and/or applications that seek to use one or more ESRC-funded data resources.
Number: ESRC aims to make around 10-15 awards per year.
Website: ESRC Secondary Data Analysis Grant

AHRC Catalyst Award

Funding: £100,000 to £300,000 funded at 80% full economic costs (fEC)
Duration: The grant will cover about 2 years of full-time work. Please consult your RGA for details, as the figures change depending on your career stage and time commitment
Timetable: Applications may be submitted at any time – allowing time for processing. The majority of decisions are announced within eight months of submission.
Eligibility: Catalyst awards support researchers without prior experience of leading a significant research project to accelerate their trajectory as independent researchers, unlocking their potential and building leadership and convenor experience through the delivery of ambitious or complex projects.

Development is at the core of this scheme; projects must clearly articulate how the funding will contribute to the development of all those involved through the way that the project has been designed and will be managed, with appropriate support structures in place.

The principal investigator cannot be a current or former principal investigator on research grants or fellowship grants from any other funder, with the exception of:

- Doctoral training awards (any)
- Early career fellowships (any)
- AHRC Research Networking (or equivalent)
- AHRC Curiosity Awards

Eligibility is determined on the basis of funding history, and not on the number of post-PhD years or job title. The PI must have either a contract of employment with their research organisation in place for the duration of the award, or include a letter from the Faculty that agreed to host and support them. The template of the letter can be requested from the School Research Facilitators.

Website: AHRC Catalyst Award

AHRC Curiosity Award

Funding: Up to £100,000 funded at 80% full economic costs (fEC)

Duration: The grant will cover about six months of full-time work. Please consult your RGA for details, as the figures change depending on your career stage and time commitment

Timetable: Applications may be submitted at any time – allowing time for processing. The majority of decisions are announced within five months of submission.

Eligibility: The scheme is intentionally flexible. An indicative list of examples of the activities we will fund are provided below. You are encouraged to request and justify costs for activities that best meet the aims of your project. This may include:

- idea generation
- seed corn funding
- high risk / high potential concepts
- novel research
- networking activity
- partnership building
- knowledge exchange
- public engagement
- international collaboration
- scoping and piloting, e.g., early-stage proof of concept for ideas or change of direction
- pivots in research focus at any career stage
- mentoring for members of the research team

Eligibility is determined on the basis of funding history, and not on the number of post-PhD years or job title. The PI must have either a contract of employment with their research organisation in place for the duration of the award, or include a letter from the Faculty that agreed to host and support them. The template of the letter can be requested from the School Research Facilitators.

Website: AHRC Curiosity Award

AHRC Standard Grant

Funding: £50,000 to £1.5 million funded at 80% full economic cost (fEC)

Duration: Up to five years.

Timetable: Applications may be submitted at any time – allowing time for processing. The majority of decisions are announced within 30 weeks of submission.

Eligibility: Applications is for any type of 'blue-sky' or applied research. At the time of application, applicant PIs must have either a contract of employment with their research organisation in place for the duration of the award, or an assurance from the submitting institution that, *if the proposal is successful*, a contract of employment will be given that covers the period of the award plus an additional 3-6 months. **This scheme in particular lends itself to un-established researchers to apply as co-investigator or postdoctoral research associate.**

Website: AHRC Standard Grant

European Research Council Starting Grant

Funding: Up to €1.5M per grant

Duration: Up to 5 years

Timetable: The call for proposals deadline in 2024 was October. Please check the website for updates.

Eligibility: Candidates can be any age and of any nationality, though must have obtained their PhD more than two years but less than seven years before the 1st January of the Work Programme year. For researchers who are seven-twelve years post-PhD, the ERC runs the Consolidator Grant scheme.

Purpose: ERC Starting Grants are designed to support outstanding early-career researchers in all disciplines who are beginning to create their own independent research team or programme. The aim is to fund projects carried out by individual teams which are headed by a single Principal Investigator (PI) and, as necessary, include additional team-members. The constitution of the research team is flexible.

A competitive Starting Grant Principal Investigator must have already shown the potential for research independence. For example, it is expected that applicants will have produced at least one important publication without the participation of their PhD supervisor. Applicants should also be able to demonstrate a promising track-record of early achievements appropriate to their research field and career stage, including significant publications (as main author) in major international peer-reviewed multidisciplinary journals, or in the leading international peer-reviewed journals of their respective field. They may also demonstrate a record of invited presentations in well-established international conferences, granted patents, awards, prizes etc.

Website: ERC Starting Grant

Wellcome Trust Early Career Award

Funding: Up to £400,000

Duration: Up to 5 years

Timetable: There are three rounds a year in February, May and October. Please check the website for

updates.

Eligibility: At the point you submit your application, you must have completed a substantive period of research training relevant to your discipline. You must have completed a PhD or an equivalent higher research degree or at least four years' equivalent research experience (for example, in the humanities and social sciences).

You may also have some postdoctoral experience in your proposed field of study, but no more than three years unless you can demonstrate how other factors have impacted on your research career.

You should be able to demonstrate a good understanding of research methodology and evidence of project delivery and analysis.

Purpose: This scheme provides funding for early-career researchers from any discipline who are ready to develop their research identity. Through innovative projects, they will deliver shifts in understanding that could improve human life, health and wellbeing. By the end of the award, they will be ready to lead their own independent research programme.

Website: Wellcome Trust Early Career Award

Section Four:
Small grants – some suggestions

Many of the small grants schemes that formerly existed with Research Councils have now ceased to exist. Some examples of funding schemes are below, but please check Research Professional for relevant schemes in your subject area, which are usually less competitive and therefore offer a better chance of success.

British Academy Small Grants Scheme

Funding:	£500-£10,000
Duration:	up to two years
Eligibility:	You need to have completed your PhD but do not need to be presently in employment at a University. Applications can be for funding of individual or collaborative research projects but not exclusively for conference organisation or attendance.
Timetable:	There are two rounds each year with deadlines in early April and early November.
Website:	British Academy Small Grants

Cambridge Humanities Research Grant Scheme

Newton Trust Small Grants, Tier 1 of the CHRG scheme

Funding:	Up to £1,500
Duration:	Up to 12 months
Eligibility:	All Cambridge staff on research contract (including Senior Research Associates, CTO, JRF but not visiting or other affiliated researchers). Approval to apply from home Faculty or Department needed.
Purpose:	Short-term support for initial/experimental research, or to expedite a research output. Preference for funding junior-level research assistance. Costs relating to (i) conferences and (ii) the direct costs of publishing outputs will not be considered and applicants may not apply for their own salary costs or other direct personal support.
Timetable:	Michaelmas and Lent
Website:	CHRG Tier 1

Section Five:
Other sources of funding – some suggestions

The following is a list of some examples of government and charity funding:

Government departments

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
Research Development International development funding - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Research portal for FCDO. FCDO does not accept speculative proposals, but issues research calls inviting proposals.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
http://www.defra.gov.uk/evidence/funding/
Research portal for DEFRA. DEFRA does not accept speculative proposals, but issues research calls inviting proposals and also has an email newsletter with funding calls.

Charities, trusts, and foundations

Nuffield Foundation
Children and Families, Law in Society, Education and Open Door research on topics, which support the Foundation's objectives to 'improve social wellbeing'. Relevance to policy and practice would be desirable.
More details: http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/
On Research funding opportunities see http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/grants-research-and-innovation-projects

The Gerda Henkel Foundation
Gerda Henkel offer funding for Research Projects and Research Scholarships in the historical humanities (History; Prehistory and Early History; Archaeology; Art History; Historic Islamic Studies; Legal History; History of Science). They also have thematic calls that have recently focused on Islam and Security and the State.
More details: http://www.gerda-henkel-stiftung.de/grants

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung
Support of projects by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation focuses on scholars in the humanities, social science and biomedicine fields. Applications can be made in the fields of:
History, Language & Culture
The interdisciplinary field "Image and Imagery"
State, Economy and Society
The interdisciplinary field "International Relations"
Medicine and the Natural Sciences
Interdisciplinary projects are also welcomed by the foundation.

More details: http://www.fritz-thyssen-stiftung.de/funding/types-of-support/?L=1

Appendix 1 ESRC guidance on writing a good proposal

1. Allow yourself time

Preparing a draft proposal and consulting on it, preparing the project costings and getting advice on these, as well as reading the regulations of the grants scheme to learn what is and what is not permissible, are all time-consuming parts of the process of application.

2. Study your funding source

All funding agencies will have their own criteria for deciding on allocation of their resources. It is worth while taking time to familiarise yourself with these and ensuring that your proposal clearly addresses your targeted source of support.

The ESRC is an agency funded by the government and its mission is "to promote and support by any means, high quality, basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training in the social sciences; to advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists which meets the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the UK, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and the quality of life; and, to provide advice on, and disseminate knowledge and promote public understanding of, the social sciences".

Four characteristics of all successful ESRC research grants are constant. They must:

- promise excellent research
- be of value to potential users outside or within the research community
- convince of the ability to deliver research
- demonstrate value for money (not necessarily the same as cheapness).

3. Read the rules

...and the guidance notes attached to the application form which are designed to help you through the 'filling in' process. This cannot be over-stressed; familiarising yourself with the content of the ESRC Research Funding Guide may seem tedious but will help you to avoid basic mistakes which at best will require clarification with office staff and at worst may prejudice chances of success. Make sure you are using the current versions of the application form and Research Funding Guidelines. If in doubt check with the office staff at the Council. (More information on electronic applications to the ESRC.)

4. Discuss your proposal

...with peer groups, colleagues and, if you are a relatively new researcher, with senior and more experienced researchers. Experienced collaboration or supervision rarely goes amiss. If you have never sent in a proposal to the ESRC before try to get the advice of someone who has already been successful. Contact the people you intend to nominate as referees and make sure they know what you are doing. It is not uncommon for nominated referees to be unaware of the substance of the work they are asked to comment on, have little knowledge of the applicant or his/her work, or give a very poor grading. Some have even been known to decline to comment!

5. Justify your costings

...which should be considered with care and close reference to the ESRC Research Funding Guide. A maximum of 1000 words is allowed on the compulsory justification in the application. Be realistic - lavish costings are unlikely to find favour with Panel Members and a proposal which promises the earth at remarkably low expense will be regarded with caution. Applicants should think carefully about the time and resources needed to complete the research successfully within the specified period. Awards will be based on the eligible costings included in proposals and will be subject to standard indexation and cash limited at the time of announcement so it is important to get costings right when applying. A well thought out financial plan helps to create confidence in the proposal generally. Give as detailed a breakdown of costs as possible so that the Panel can properly assess the case for support. Do make sure that what you are asking for is allowed within the regulations. Bear in mind that ESRC is looking for value for money.

6. Content and Presentation

The research proposal is the means by which you will be trying to convince the Panel that your proposal is worth funding so think carefully about what information you are going to give and how it is presented. Make sure you think your plan through and cover all stages.
Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I clearly formulated the problem, have I put it in context of contemporary scientific and theoretical debates, demonstrated the way in which my work will build on existing research and make a contribution to the area? Is there a clear and convincingly argued analytical framework? What will the research do, to whom or to what, and why?
- Have I established appropriate aims and objectives? Are they clear and concise, do they reflect intellectual aims and practical, attainable objectives?
- Have I provided a well-thought out research design in which there is a reasoned explanation of the scale, timing and resources necessary? Am I being realistic about these? Am I using the most relevant approach and the most appropriate methods? How will it relate to and deliver the objectives?
- What will my research design allow me to say in the interpretation of anticipated results?
- Have I given a full and detailed description of the proposed research methods? Is there any innovation in the methodology I am planning to use? Am I developing any new methods or using established methods innovatively?
- If I am using data collection have I considered already existing data resources? Have I contacted the ESRC Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS)? Am I sure that access will be given where necessary, and do I have written confirmation of this? Am I convinced of its quality, validity, reliability and relevance? Have I considered the costs of cataloguing and preparing data for archiving?
- Have I demonstrated a clear and systematic approach to the analysis of data and how this fits into the research design?
- Have I thought about the ethics of what I am planning to do? Are there any sensitive issues or potential problems which need to be addressed? Have I fully consulted on these issues and obtained the approval of an ethical committee where required.
- Have I recognised and planned for the skills and competencies that will be required to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion?
- Have I anticipated potential difficulties? Have I shown that I recognise these and discussed how they would be handled?
- Have I provided a bibliography? This will be used in the selection of referees and will indicate your

familiarity with the theoretical grounding and current state of the art of your subject. Where there is genuinely little or no relevant literature, explain this fully. Panel members and referees will not assume your erudition, they want evidence.

- This proposal will be subject to the critical appraisal of my peers. Am I satisfied that I have fully defended my chosen research design and made it clear why others are not appropriate?
- Have I identified potential users of this research outside of the academic community; have I involved/consulted them in my planning? Have I arranged for their continuing involvement in the research process in an appropriate way?
- Have I considered the possibility of co-funding of the research, with ESRC being asked to provide only a proportion of the project funding?
- Have I provided a clear dissemination strategy for the research demonstrating how the research outcomes will be communicated to all interested parties including potential users of the research outside of the academic community?

Convey to the Panel your genuine interest, understanding and enthusiasm for the work. Keep the following questions in mind as you plan:

- what is the story you are telling?
- who is the audience?
- why does it matter?
- why now?
- why you?

On proposals under £1 million, the proposal divides into three main sections: Vision (500 words), Approach (2500 words) and Applicant and Team Capability to Deliver (1500 words). It is also important to make sure that you devote enough space in the proposal to describing the research you intend to conduct and the research design and methods - Panels find it very frustrating when applicants devote space to explaining why their proposed research is exciting but then provide only a short and inadequate explanation of how they propose to explore this in practice.

Write in plain English. Your proposal is likely to be seen by many people, including some who will not be familiar with your particular specialisation. Detail and specification may necessitate the use of disciplinary or technical terminology and this will be clear to peer reviewers, but the ideas you wish to convey and your reasons for doing so should be apparent to a wide audience. By the same token, do take the trouble to check spelling, grammar and punctuation. These are all part of the quality of presentation and presentation matters!

7. Dissemination and Impact

Our mission places emphasis on ensuring that researchers engage as fully as possible with the users of research outcomes. These may be other academics, government departments, public bodies, businesses, voluntary organisations or other interested parties. Try to consult with and involve people who could make a valuable contribution to the research and who could provide support and interest.

In line with the common position on Excellence with Impact adopted by RCUK, the ESRC expects that the

researchers it funds will have considered the potential scientific, societal and economic impacts of their research. Applicants should actively consider how these can be maximised and developed through the Case for Support. The ESRC Impact Toolkit includes information on developing an impact strategy, promoting knowledge exchange, public engagement and communicating effectively with your key stakeholders. This will form part of the peer review and assessment process. Opportunities for making an impact may arise, and should be taken, at any stage during or after the life-course of the research. It is important that researchers have in place a robust strategy for maximising the likelihood of such opportunities arising and their own capacity for taking advantage of these.

8. Check the details

Once you have completed the application form make sure that all the required information is provided. Some of the most common omissions and problem areas are:

- an unrealistic start date
- missing details of previous/current proposals with reports on current projects or end-of-award reports where required. The University will not process new proposals if an End of Award Report is overdue
- no covering letter in the case of resubmissions

9. What happens next?

For the Research Grants scheme:
Proposals receiving an average score of **at least 4.5** (out of 6) from **external academic reviewers** are forwarded to the Panel Members (Introducers) for a funding recommendation. Proposals receiving a **lower average score are rejected** as not meeting the requisite scientific standard. In this case, the referee comments may offer some helpful guidance but you really need to think carefully about the quality and value of the work you have proposed.

At the **full Panel** meetings a **proportion of proposals** will be recommended for funding, or unsuccessful due to lack of funds, or in some cases due to not meeting the requisite scientific standard. This is stiff competition by anyone's standards! A ranked list of recommendations is then considered by the Grants Delivery Group for a final funding decision.

Anonymous comments will be sent with your decision letter, and the feedback may be helpful if you submit a new proposal in the future.

We have amended our resubmissions policy to accept **only invited resubmissions**. We no longer allow the resubmission of any previously unsuccessful proposals, unless applicants have been specifically invited to do so.

10. If you are successful...

Congratulations, and we hope your project goes well.
However, if difficulties arise such as delays in recruitment, staff illness, replacements, or changes to the work plan then please let us know immediately. Under the Research Funding Guide rules you will not need to notify

us of virements of funds between headings and no supplementation will be allowed

We hope you have found these notes useful and wish you success with your proposal.

Appendix 2 How to Write a Successful Research Proposal:

Ten Golden Rules

By Dr Eleanor Robson

0. Shop around

- The big funding bodies' themed calls usually have fewer applicants than open ones; can you target your application to one of those?
- Ask a trusted permanently employed colleague if she will act as your nominal PI within schemes you are not eligible to apply for yourself.
- Look beyond the big funding bodies, especially for smaller grants: subject- or area-specific learned societies, British Academy country-specific agreements, etc.

1. Sell your proposal

- Surprisingly enough, your fascinating research topic isn't self-evidently interesting. Above all, you will need to justify why anyone else should care about it.
- Explain the topic. Why is it interesting? Why is it novel? Why does it matter? Imagine you are addressing a reader who's constantly asking, 'So what?'
- A useful strategy is to present it as a case study, or a way into examining a much bigger issue, so that your project becomes about much more than just itself.

2. Focus on *research*

- For funding bodies research means activity that will lead to the creation of new knowledge. Assembling primary data, editing books, and organising conferences may all be valuable stages in the research process but should not be presented as ends in themselves.
- Formulate the project around a particular question or problem that you want the answer to, not around a body of material you want to work on.
- Limit yourself to a single project! We all have side-projects on the go, but don't give the impression you're spreading yourself too thin to fulfil your core commitments.

3. Explain yourself

- Choose a clear and engaging title that says what the project is going to accomplish.
- Jargon and technical terminology are part of the rhetoric of persuasion and authority — but so is the ability to explain that jargon succinctly and unpatronisingly.
- Write for an intelligent but non-expert readership, and try out drafts on non-expert friends. Rewrite until they get what you're on about!

4. Sound convincing

- A research proposal is not a legally binding document; it doesn't matter if you change your mind between now and the end of the research project. In other words it doesn't have to be *true* but it does have to be *plausible*.
- What approach(es) will you take to the subject and why is it/are they appropriate? Do you have the requisite skills (e.g., languages, statistics) already; and if not how will you acquire them?
- Be as concrete as you can. Examples are good; quantification is good; relevant pictures are good.

5. Situate your work

- Who has worked on the topic before? Are there any good articles or books you can draw on—or bad ones you can kick against? Are there useful approaches, theories, methodologies from other subjects or disciplines that you can apply to it?
- What sources and resources will you need, and where are they located? If appropriate, do you have permission to work on them and are there any extra costs involved?
- Why work in the place you have chosen? Facilities, infrastructure, research groups, colleagues?

6. Plan appropriate output(s)

- The funding body will expect something to show for your research. Who will want to know about it? Explain who your audiences will be, both academic and non-academic.
- How will you communicate your results most effectively to them: through conferences, articles, a monograph, online publication, websites, and/or other media?
- Address the current hot issues of impact and outreach proportionately.

7. Justify your time and costs

- Can you show that this is an appropriately-sized topic and not just an undergraduate supervision essay—or an entire lifetime's work?
- You may have to budget for equipment, support staff and/or travel. Be reasonable but realistic
- —don't skimp on time allocation in particular! Work takes longer than we like to think...
- Consider applying to other funders for conference grants, etc., and make a virtue of it if you do.

8. Follow the guidelines

- Read, reread and highlight the guidelines and follow them to the letter. Make sure you use the recommended headings in the project description, for instance, in the right order.
- If you are not explicitly asked to follow a particular structure, the British Academy's old instructions to applicants for their Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme are sensible ones to follow: *the proposal should clearly specify the context and research objectives of the study, describe the methodology to be used, and set out a realistic research programme for the duration of the fellowship*.
- Respect the rules about what is an eligible expense and what is not.

9. Look professional

- Write to the word limit. You want plausible detail, but no-one expects you to have done exhaustive research at this stage. Nor should you bore your readers with unnecessary waffle.
- Show that you have given serious consideration to ethical issues (e.g., interview consent) and data preservation (if appropriate) and are working within recognised disciplinary standards.
- Pay attention to the appearance of the proposal on the page or screen. Proofread repeatedly and ask others to proofread too: few writers catch all of their own typos.

10. Ask for help

- Don't just ask your supervisor, referees and/or immediate colleagues to read through the proposal but try it out on friends and family too.
- Use your departmental/school grants administrator effectively: book her time in advance, and plan ahead for internal committee and submission deadlines.
- Ask the funding body's support staff for advice on eligibility, handling online applications, etc. This *cannot* disadvantage you!

Appendix 3: ERC Starting Grants: Tips for Applying

For further details visit https://erc.europa.eu/funding/starting-grants. The UK Research Office also have a wealth of resources available online, including webinars and factsheets http://www.ukro.ac.uk/. The ERC Courses are available on YouTube. These are bite sized clips that offer some insightful advice on developing a strong ERC application.

General points

- The scheme funds 'frontier research', so the application must demonstrate the cutting-edge nature of the proposed project. The scheme is potentially a good place to apply for:
    - Interdisciplinary proposals
    - Proposals in new and emerging fields
    - Proposals which develop new techniques
    - Proposals which are 'high risk / high gain'
- Do not be put off by the references to "science" – applications can come from any area of scholarship, not just from the sciences.
- This scheme specifically wants the PI to direct a team in which they will play the leading role. It is designed to give early career researchers the opportunity to build their own research teams. If the proposed team includes colleagues with more experience and/or academic seniority than the proposed PI, then those team members would still be under the PI's direction.
- You must demonstrate that your project will have a significant impact on your academic field (*not* on policy).
- Use B1 as an opportunity to pique the reviewer's interest – make them want to read your B2! Construct a narrative that demonstrates your expertise and passion for your area of research.

Eligibility criteria

- 2-7 years post PhD. This period can be extended for periods of maternity leave, parental leave, or national service.
- Applicants do not need to be currently employed by the proposed host institution, but the host institution needs to commit to hosting you for the duration of the project. The host can be any legal entity, not just a Higher Education Institution.

Costing

- Up to 100% of salary can be funded. A minimum of 50% of your time should be spent on the grant.
- 4-5 years is the general length of grants and the overall figure is pro-rata with 5 years as the baseline.
- The Resources section and the detailed budget table are now part of the online submission form (Part A, Section 3 - Budget). Do not leave this to the last minute. Completion of this is the PI's responsibility in conjunction with their relevant Research Grant Administrator.
- Don't forget to budget for inflation in your salary
- Include audit costs, Open Access costs.

Submission and evaluation

- This is a single stage application, but peer reviewers will look at different parts at separate stages. Part B1 of the form will be assessed at stage one and should be written for a more generalist audience. Part

B1 and B2 will be looked at during stage two. B2 will be reviewed by remote reviewers who are experts in the field and should be written to this audience. Minimise copy and pasting between B1 and B2.

- Save your application on the EU portal early and save it often. The timing of the deadline is always 1700 Brussels time (i.e. 1600 UK time).
- The ERC has set up peer review panels which judge submissions on alternate years. Previous panels are published so it's worth seeing who has been on your panel previously.
- Upload a scan of your PhD certificate early on as you cannot apply without it.
- 50% of the assessment judges the quality of the project, 50% the quality of the PI.

Your track record

- Show that you are recognised by others as an excellent researcher (are you a peer reviewer or consultant, for example? Who noticed your publications?)
- Don't just write a list of your achievements – add explanations. You don't have to list all your publications, you could include a link to your webpage.
- Assessors do look at personal websites – make sure yours has nothing on it you wouldn't want the panel to see.
- Use the ERC's own language (by using 'science' in the broad sense meaning scholarship, as they do).
- Make sure to explain how your work relates to the state-of-the-art in the expanded synopsis.

Appendix 4: Thoughts on Applying for British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships

By a British Academy Assessor in 2010

Postdoctoral Fellowships (PDFs) are increasingly seen as a stage on the normal career-path of academics. The young academic now tends to go from PhD to Postdoc and then (hopefully) into a permanent academic position. The trouble is that there are not enough PDFs to go round. Still, any PhD who has a chance of an academic career nowadays should be able to make a credible application for a PDF.

The following notes focus on one part of this process, namely how British Academy PDFs are assessed. They focus specifically on the experience of one assessor, who has been involved in making assessments for a number of years. What do I look for? What makes me assess a proposal highly? Understanding this bit of the process may be helpful in shaping your application by showing you the elements to highlight. But always bear in mind that there are no tricks or sleight of hand that can turn a weak proposal into a strong one. There is no way you can give a proposal substance simply by slick presentation. However, I've grieved too often over potentially strong proposals that were ruined by being poorly argued. I would stress that this little paper represents the views of only one assessor. Although all assessors work to a standard pro-forma, and in my experience are very conscientious, there is inevitably an element of subjectivity. You might get a slightly different picture from another assessor. I am always impressed, however, by the degree of consensus that emerges from the assessment, which does suggest the system has integrity.

I look for the following absolute basics in an application, which it has to meet if it is to get off first base:

(1) The proposal has to be clearly set out, and argue a good case.

"Argue" is important here. I need to be convinced that it is worth doing, and that means that it adds in a useful way to the sum of human knowledge. There are all sorts of things that can be researched that haven't been researched before, but that in itself doesn't make them worth doing. I've seen too many proposals which offered to rescue some thinker from well-deserved obscurity, or which were the academic equivalent of train-spotting (candidates for an Ignobel Prize), or which proposed some clever bit of intellectual gymnastics which left me thinking, "So what?" The emphasis on the wider usefulness of research and its wider impact is being increasingly stressed, and I believe rightly so. After all, we're spending tax-payers' money, and society has a right to expect some sort of payback.

Don't try to be clever or complicated or try too hard to "scintillate" or to "blind the assessors with science". Avoid jargon, however fashionable. If I read an application which I struggle to understand, I don't think that's because I'm dense. I think that the applicant has fallen down on the job of making themselves clear to me, and suspect they don't really know themselves what they're talking about. The single most important factor for me is the quality of the proposal: it over-rides all other considerations (e.g. ambivalent references, PhD still not examined, poor institutional statement, lack of publications). Tell me a good story which explains exactly what you are going to do, convinces me it is well worth doing, and shows me exactly how you will get to the desired goal, and I'll give you a second hearing.

(2) The proposal has to go beyond the PhD.

It's a balancing act. If the proposal looks too close to the PhD then I mark it down. It is instant death if it looks

like you are applying for a PDF simply to revise your doctorate for publication. This, by the way, doesn't apply to all PDFs. Some are actually intended to support you to write up your doctorate for publication, but the British Academy PDFs are meant to help you move beyond your doctoral research, to find your next research topic. One comment I've heard again and again from assessors when discussing a proposal is: "It looks too like the doctorate". In my experience the biggest challenge an early career researcher faces is finding a fruitful and viable research subject beyond the doctorate. On the other hand I've seen proposals that were so far away from the doctorate that I'm left wondering how the candidate thinks they are qualified and trained to tackle the topic. I'm looking on the one hand for an organic link, yet at the same time a clear push into new fields.

(3) There has to be a good institutional match.

In other words I need to be convinced that the candidate is going to hold the PDF at an institution that can support well their particular line of research. Believe me, I have absolutely no prior disposition in favour of particular HEIs, but I need to see a case made that the institution chosen is a good place to do the research. HEIs are very keen to have PDFs because they contribute to their research profile (as well as subsidize their teaching). A candidate with a real chance of an award can, to a degree, pick and choose where they go, so it is important to choose somewhere where your research will be well supported. I am sometimes surprised where candidates choose to study particular subjects. I can think of much better places (e.g. where there would be senior colleagues working in cognate fields, or where the library resources are much better in the chosen field of research).

Assessors have to grade applications on a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high) on a proforma, which has the following fields:

(1) Scholarly importance: this covers the intrinsic merit of the topic and its potential impact on the immediate and cognate fields. It is not just a question of the assessor recognizing the importance: they may or may not. You've got to demonstrate it.

(2) Ability: this relates to the applicant's ability to carry out the proposed research. It has to be clear that your previous study and research have thoroughly equipped you to do the work you propose. Note in this regard the section on the application "Language competence (if applicable)". This is not just for decoration. I have seen applications in which candidates proposed detailed exegesis of texts in a foreign language which they didn't seem to know!

(3) Feasibility: is the programme feasible both in terms of its methodology and its timescale? As far as I am concerned you don't have to have a sophisticated methodology, only one that is sound, appropriate and able to deliver the results. Early career researchers sometimes seem to think that they can give greater credibility to their research by grabbing some fashionable methodology and applying it to their topic. These methodologies may indeed be useful, but don't drag them in uncritically or for effect. "Timescale" comes down to whether you can do what you propose to do in the time allotted. There is a tendency to promise too much, perhaps in a desire to impress -- to give good value for money! And some applicants produce over- detailed work-plans which would have them working like automata nine hours a day for the duration of the fellowship. Nobody works like that! It is a balancing act: some proposals promise too little, others too much. It might be useful to get

a senior colleague to cast an experienced eye over this part of the application.

(4) Specificity: how well defined is the proposed research programme? This is common sense. You have to have a very clearly defined research topic, which is original and important, which you are qualified to do, and which you can complete with substantial outcomes in the time allotted. All the bits have to fit together to argue the case.

(5) Publication record: This is glossed: "Is the applicant's publication record to date appropriate to their current stage of career development?" I find this a tricky one. Applications in my experience differ widely on the number of publications cited, from a major monograph and a few articles in ranking journals at one end of the spectrum to maybe a book review and an article submitted for publication at the other. Each may be appropriate to the stage of career development! So how does this criterion work? Let me make two points. First there is a growing trend towards early publication for early career researchers. Increasingly doctoral students are being encouraged to try and get something published or accepted for publication before they have finished the doctorate: it might be a few book reviews, or a short article (maybe in a middle-ranking journal, or in a conference proceedings), and more and more seem to be achieving this.

Second, publication tends to weigh with me in marginal situations. Say I am pondering two proposals which are very much on a par, substantial publication may tilt the balance. The same goes for completed v. uncompleted doctorate. This strikes me as completely logical. An applicant with a completed doctorate and a monograph with a major academic press has had their work validated by experts in a way that one with an uncompleted doctorate and no publications has not. Promise is not enough. I have seen immensely promising students who never realized their potential.

(6) Academic quality. This is glossed: "Please indicate if the applicant has demonstrated clear knowledge of how their research fits into their field, and how original and innovative it is". Knowledge of the relationship of your research to the wider field in which you work is a long-standing criterion for most doctorates, which will often be probed in the viva. It becomes even more important at post-doctoral level. So make sure you show you can see the bigger picture. Originality is obvious: you've got to be saying something new. "Innovative" is more tricky. For me this relates fundamentally to methodology: the application of new techniques of analysis. I feel I can't demand innovation. Splendid work can be done with very traditional methodologies, but a really innovative methodology (provided it is sound!) may indicate that the research has potentially wide impact across its field, and even beyond (see under (1) above).

(7) Intended outputs/outcomes. Glossed: "Is the applicant's intended output(s) appropriate? Please include a characterisation of this as unrealistic, weak, plausible, strong, or outstanding." Here I would recall the point made under (3) above about not promising too much or too little. There is another point, however, to bear in mind. In my particular field the obvious outcome is academic publication (a monograph and/or articles). This is fine, but it becomes a bit predictable, and it may be worth thinking of "non-standard" ways of disseminating your results (popular talks, websites, workshops, the media

etc). Bear in mind the growing emphasis within universities and academia on "knowledge transfer". Don't drag in non-standard dissemination needlessly, just to tick a box: only propose it if it is appropriate; but it's worth thinking about, since it might make this part of your application stand out.

Assessors are asked to assess applications in each of these fields on the 1-7 scale, with comments justifying their scores. Then they are asked to give an overall grade again on the scale 1-7. This is not an average of the other grades, but a fresh judgement in the light of scores for the various fields. A final box on the pro- forma allows them to add any other comments that might clarify their assessment. Filling in PDF applications can be a time-consuming and stressful business (as can assessing them!), but if you aim for an academic career it is a fact of life, and I would argue it is a valuable exercise, because it is all about achieving clarity of thought and clarity of purpose. A good proposal is the key, but don't forget the other parts of the application. In my experience, most applicants under-work these. And remember these are not official pronouncements but personal reflections of an "old hand".

Good luck!