

Ernest Rutherford Fellowships 2011 Call for Proposals

Closing date: 16:00 12 October 2011

STFC offers 12 Ernest Rutherford Fellowships annually which provide up to five years funding to outstanding researchers at an early stage of their career. The aim is to support future scientific leaders to establish a strong, independent research programme. Successful candidates will have the opportunity to bid for Ernest Rutherford research funding in the form of a research grant.

1. Eligibility

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

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

Applicants must have a PhD and a minimum of five years' research experience from the start of the postgraduate programme leading to the award of a PhD and 1 September 2012 with, normally, a minimum of two years' postdoctoral experience.

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

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

Fellowships may be held at any eligible UK research organisation as set out in the STFC research grants handbook (www.stfc.ac.uk/rgh/rghDisplay2.aspx?m=s&s=10).

2. Host institution

You are advised to contact your proposed host department as early as possible and certainly well ahead of the deadline for submission of applications. Departments may have internal processes to select which candidates to support and the timetables for these vary.

STFC sets a strict limit on the number of applications that each department may submit. Therefore, it may not be possible for a host to support all interested applicants. Any departments who exceed their limit will be required to withdraw the excess applications. **It is therefore very important that you seek assurance from your proposed host department that your application can be accommodated within its limit.**

Two particular points to note are that:

- Fellowship applications associated with the Cockcroft Institute are made through the relevant partner institution but are counted against the Cockcroft Institute limit and should be clearly flagged as such under the “Choice of Host Institution” section of the application;
- Fellowship applications associated with UKATC are counted against the University of Edinburgh School of Physics and Astronomy limit.

3. Career Breaks and Returners

Returner Fellowships are additional fellowships, on top of the normal 12, that are occasionally awarded to outstanding candidates returning from a career break or from working outside academic research.

Applications are welcome from those seeking to resume a research career, following a period of absence from active research of, normally, at least two years. The break may have been due, for example, to long term illness, family or caring responsibilities or working in non-academic employment. The period of absence from research will be calculated from the start of the break until 1 September 2012.

If the break has been less than two years and you do not have the right to return to your previous employer (e.g. due to maternity combined with a fixed term contract) you may still be eligible to apply. Please consult with the STFC Fellowships Office to determine eligibility. The Returner Fellowships may be held for a minimum of one year up to a maximum of 5 years.

Returner applicants will be judged on their track record prior to the break from research.

4. Subject of Research

Applications must fall within the remit of the STFC core Science Programme (astronomy, solar and planetary science, particle physics, particle astrophysics, cosmology, nuclear physics) and afford scope for original work.

5. Assessment Process

The application process for the Ernest Rutherford Fellowship scheme is separated into two stages:

- the submission and assessment of the Fellowship applications to determine the recipients of the 12 Fellowships awarded annually, who will then be invited to submit full research proposals for additional Ernest Rutherford Grant funding;

- the submission and assessment of full research proposals to determine which Fellows will receive additional Ernest Rutherford Grant funding, and how much.

Fellowship applications will be sent to independent reviewers for assessment. Reviewer comments on your application will be made available to you and you will have an opportunity to respond to any factual inaccuracies. Your response should be in A4 format with a maximum of 1 page. As for all attachments, the response should be written in Arial (or equivalent font) 11 point font with a minimum of 2 cm margins around each page.

Your application, reviewers' comments and any response by you will be considered by the Fellowships Panel, operating as four sub-panels: astronomy, particle physics, particle astrophysics and cosmology, and nuclear physics. Your application will be ranked against the others in that area and the top-ranked candidates in each sub-panel area will be invited for interview. Typically, 21 candidates are invited for interview. Unsuccessful candidates will be informed which tercile their application was ranked in. Apart from the reviewer comments, no other feedback will be available.

The 12 highest ranked candidates from the interviews will be offered Ernest Rutherford Fellowships. If any of these candidates withdraw, Fellowships will be offered to the ranked list of reserve candidates.

The successful Fellows will be invited to submit proposals for additional research grant funding. These will be sent to independent reviewers and considered by the Ernest Rutherford Grant Panel. The process will be competitive and not all Fellows will necessarily be awarded research funding. Therefore, you should ensure that the funding requested in your initial Fellowship application is sufficient to enable you to deliver the project outlined. See sections below for further information on the funding which can be awarded as part of the Fellowship and that which can be requested in the Research Grant application.

6. Timetable

Closing date for Fellowship applications

Deadline 16:00 12 October 2011

Call activity	Indicative Timetable
Responses to independent reviewer comments	December 2011
Decision on who to invite to interview	Mid/late January 2012
Interview	Mid February 2012
Awards announced	End February 2012
Closing date for Ernest Rutherford Grant applications	End July 2012
Fellowships start	June 2012 – March 2013
Decision on Ernest Rutherford Grant funding	End September 2012
Research Grants start	December 2012 – March 2013

Fellowships normally begin on 1 October of the year of award unless you indicate a different start date on your application. The earliest a Fellowship may start is 1 June. The offer of a Fellowship will

not be held open for more than six months from the announced start date of the award. All Fellowships must be taken up by the following 31 March.

7. Assessment Criteria

In considering your Fellowship application, the Fellowship Panel will use the following criteria:

- the excellence of the applicant, including the volume and significance of research outputs, their standing in their field and ability to communicate their science effectively;
- the timeliness and quality of the research proposal;
- the potential of the individual, including the capability to fulfil the wider responsibilities of an academic career (teaching, service on committees, public engagement etc) and evidence of leadership ability;
- the appropriateness of the group with whom the individual intends to work;
- alignment with STFC strategic priorities.

For more information about STFC's strategic priorities please refer to the outputs of the STFC prioritisation exercise www.stfc.ac.uk/About%20STFC/11621.aspx, in particular the final report of the Particle Physics, Astronomy and Nuclear Physics Science Committee prioritisation activity.

Ranking of applications will normally be strictly in order of merit as judged against the assessment criteria. However, in exceptional circumstances the Panel may take account of other factors.

If you are not a returner applicant but your application has been affected by an earlier career break or other extenuating circumstances please indicate this so that it can be taken into account in the assessment of your application.

The Ernest Rutherford Research Grant Panel will use the criteria set out in the STFC Research Grant Handbook (www.stfc.ac.uk/rgh/rghDisplay2.aspx?m=s&s=124) to assess research grant applications.

8. How to Apply

Applications for Ernest Rutherford Fellowships are submitted through the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk>). If you have not used the Je-S system to submit an application before, please ensure, well in advance of the closing date, that you have set up an account. Guidance for completion of the application is provided through the Je-S help text, available from the Je-S system front page, and context sensitive help throughout the system.

You are advised to contact your host organisation's Research Administration as soon as possible as you will not be able to submit your application without their help. They will advise you about costing your proposal and internal procedures relating to submitting a research proposal through Je-S. Your Fellowship application must be costed and submitted by the host organisation.

Applicants may submit only one application to one institution. The page limits outlined below will be strictly enforced by STFC. If any of the supporting documents exceed the specified limits, only the

pages within the limits will be considered. The documents must be submitted in 11 point Arial font and have a minimum 2 cm margin.

Together with your application proforma, you will need to include the following pdf attachments:

- **Curriculum vitae** of a maximum of two sides of A4 using our template www.stfc.ac.uk/Resources/Word/CVTemplate.doc.
- **List of publications**
- **Letter of support** (personal reference) from your nominated reviewer who must not be from the host institution, of a maximum length of two sides of A4. This must be uploaded at the submitter stage and will be confidential i.e. not visible to the applicant. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their nominated reviewer knows who to supply their reference to (at their host institution) in order that it can be uploaded and submitted with the proposal.
- **Case for Support for Fellowship**, of a maximum length of three sides of A4 including diagrams and illustrations. See below for further guidance.
- Up to two hundred words on **public engagement** (mandatory). This should outline any activities already undertaken, and give the plans you have for communicating information about your research to the wider public by means, for example of press releases, work with local media, participation in public events, links with MPs or elected members of devolved administrations, training in public communications or media awareness and work with teachers and schools.
- Up to two hundred words on **Pathways to Impact**, if appropriate. This should describe how the potential impacts of this research will be realised by users and beneficiaries of the research who are outside of your immediate academic research community, for example the public sector, commercial private sector, third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals) or the wider public in general. Further information is available in the Research Grants Handbook www.stfc.ac.uk/rgh/rghDisplay2.aspx?m=s&s=166.

8.1 Case for Support

This should be a clear and concise description of your research track record and the vision, aims and context of your research (maximum length of three A4 sides).

The description of your track record may refer to but should not duplicate material given in your CV or publication list. You should focus on your achievements that have the most relevance to your application and the assessment criteria, including your most significant results and their impact, and mention any past or present collaborations. The description of your Fellowship research should describe the context and aims, indicate the approach you intend to take and the timetable for the work, highlight what is novel and explain why it is timely. You should set your programme of research in the wider international context and explain why you are the right person to do the work.

Your Fellowship research programme should be self-contained and not depend on being awarded Ernest Rutherford Grant funding.

8.2 Choice of Host Institution

When selecting an Institution at which to hold the proposed Fellowship you should consider where it would be most appropriate to further your research career. You must provide a clear statement in your application as to your choice of institution. In many cases the Fellowship offers an ideal opportunity to change institution in order to gain wider experience, while in some scientific areas it may be appropriate and, indeed, necessary for you to remain at the Institution where you are currently based. If you are applying to hold a Fellowship at an institution in order to co-locate with your spouse or partner, you should make this clear in your application. Applying to hold a Fellowship at a particular institution because of family constraints will not disadvantage a candidate.

9. Ernest Rutherford Fellowship Funding

Fellowship applications are costed on the basis of full economic costs (fEC). If a Fellowship is awarded, STFC will provide funding at 80% of the fEC requested. The host institution must agree to find the balance of fEC for the proposal from other resources. Universities and other higher education organisations use the Transparent Approach to Costing (TRAC) methodology to calculate fEC. Please refer to the Research Grants Handbook for further information (www.stfc.ac.uk/rgh/rghDisplay2.aspx?m=s&s=141).

For non-university organisations, Research Councils require a validation process to ensure that their costing methodologies are robust. Standard default rates should be used where Research organisations have not developed their own rates (www.stfc.ac.uk/rgh/rghDisplay2.aspx?m=s&s=143).

9.1 Directly Incurred Costs

Costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project are charged as the cash value actually spent and are supported by an auditable record. Ernest Rutherford Fellowships provide funds to cover your salary, the costs of personal travel and some minor equipment costs. These should be requested under the Directly Incurred Costs heading. Returner applicants may also apply for funds for retraining and updating their skills where this can be justified in the context of the proposed research project.

Salary

You are advised to discuss and agree your starting salary with your proposed host institution, before your application is submitted. The agreed salary should be in accordance with the institution's standard recruitment and employment practices. The appointment level on the institution's salary scale should be justified in the application. The salary costs requested should include employer's national insurance and superannuation contributions. Salary increments over the period of the Fellowship should be taken into account, but not anticipated future pay awards.

STFC will award funds on the basis of the agreed salary scales at the time of announcement, with provision for future years increase on the basis of standard RCUK indexation rates. Once announced the grant will not normally be increased to take account of different indexation rates.

Travel

Personal travel is taken to include necessary collaborative visits and fieldwork, and attendance at one conference workshop or symposium during each year of the Fellowship, but excluding fieldwork and visits which form part of the work of a research group with which you may be associated. Fellows must report on the use of travel and subsistence funds in their final report.

If you are associated with an STFC research grant you must ensure that any travel connected with the research project for which the grant was given is claimed from that source.

You should estimate in your application all personal travel and subsistence funds required during the lifetime of the Fellowship. Travel and subsistence costs are expected to be around £2.0k per annum.

Other Costs

Applicants may request minor equipment and consumables up to £5k under Directly Incurred other costs. At the end of the Fellowship any resources purchased will belong to the Institution.

Relocation

Applicants moving to the UK from overseas to take up an award may request relocation costs. These costs should be applied for under the Directly Incurred "Other Costs" heading on the proforma. STFC will award a maximum of £1.2k if moving from within Europe or £3k if moving from outside of Europe.

9.2 Directly Allocated Costs

Estates costs include building and premises costs, basic services and utilities and appear under the Directly Allocated Costs heading. Estates costs are calculated by the research organisation and a single figure will appear on the application.

9.3 Indirect Costs

Indirect costs include the costs of administration, such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services. Like estate costs, indirect costs will be calculated by the research organisation and a single figure will be entered on the application.

10. Terms and Conditions

STFC Fellowships are governed by the grant conditions as set out in the Research Grants Handbook (www.stfc.ac.uk/rgb) unless otherwise stated. Applications are accepted and awards are made on

the understanding that Research Organisations and Fellows agree to observe the terms and conditions and the scheme requirements set out in this document and any amendments issued during the currency of the award. STFC intends its scheme to be flexible and reserves the right to deal as it thinks fit with applications of unusual character and to waive any rule at its absolute discretion.

Research Organisations must appoint Research Fellow employees for the full duration of the award and integrate the Research Fellow within the research activities of the host department, whilst ensuring that he or she is able to maintain independence and focus on their personal research programme. Awards are made on the understanding that the Fellow's work and progress are subject to the same monitoring and appraisal procedures as those of other academic staff within the host institution, and that there are adequate facilities at the host institution for the research proposed.

11. Other Scheme Conditions and Features

11.1 Part Time Working

Fellowships can be held either on a full-time or may be sought on a part-time basis by applicants wishing to combine their Fellowship with caring responsibilities. Part-time award can be held at 50 % or above of full-time equivalent. A part-time Fellow may not hold another part-time position in conjunction with the Fellowship. The period of award for Fellowships held on a part-time basis will be extended on a pro rata basis.

11.2 Extensions

After a fellowship grant has started, the duration may be extended to cover maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave, extended jury service or paid sick leave for a Research Fellow in line with the terms and conditions of the fellow's employment. For staff other than the fellow extensions may cover breaks or delays in the appointment of staff, periods of maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave, extended jury service or paid sick leave exceeding 3 months (or possibly shorter periods of sick leave if the member of staff is disabled for the purposes of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)), or other exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Research Council).

A written request for an extension should be made as soon as the requirement is identified and subject to prior written approval confirmed when the period required is known. All requests for extensions must be made before the grant ends.

11.3 Maternity, paternity and adoption leave

Fellows are entitled to take maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave in accordance with the terms and conditions of the fellow's employment. If requested, consideration will be given to allowing a fellowship grant to be placed in abeyance during the absence of the Research Fellow for maternity, paternity, adoption or parental leave, and the period of the fellowship extended by the period of leave. Consideration will be given to requests to continue the fellowship on a flexible or part-time basis to allow the Research Fellow to meet caring responsibilities.

11.4 Break in Service

You will be allowed a break in service not more than twice during the period of the award, for periods amounting together to not more than two years, to enable time to be spent on another related activity not supported by STFC.

Breaks in service will not normally be permitted during the first or final years of the Fellowship, unless this is on maternity or sick leave, and must be endorsed by your Head of Department. Where STFC agrees to a break in service, the duration of the Fellowship will not be extended and payments to the institution will cease for the period of the break (i.e. a Fellow taking a maximum break in service of two years would receive only three years of Fellowship funding).

Where the Fellow requesting a break in service holds an Ernest Rutherford Grant, STFC will discuss with the Fellow and host Research Organisation to establish whether the research grant should be suspended, terminated or transferred to an alternative Principal Investigator.

11.5 Movement between Institutions

Applicants must take up the award at the host institution identified in the application. STFC will not allow a Fellow to change their host institution prior to taking up an award. Consideration will be given to requests during the course of an award to relocate the Fellowship, together with any Ernest Rutherford Grant held by the Fellow, to a different institution for scientific or domestic reasons. The agreement of the institutions concerned will be required before seeking approval from STFC. Movement between institutions will not normally be allowed during the first year of a Fellowship.

11.6 Teaching

Fellows may undertake up to a maximum of six hours teaching, including preparation, each working week (total 260 hours per annum, pro rata for part-time awards) if the Head of Department considers it desirable and provided it does not hinder progress on research work. Apart from this, managing research and normal holidays, Fellows must devote themselves to research and no other work may be undertaken within usual working hours, although exceptions are made for time spent on public engagement and other STFC-approved business.

11.7 Committee Membership

A Fellowship is awarded to enable the individual to undertake research full-time. Fellows are not, therefore, normally considered for STFC Committee membership, particularly in the initial years of a Fellowship award.

11.8 Progress Reports

Your Head of Department is required to submit a report confirming your progresses during the first half of your award.

11.9 Final Reports and Post-Fellowship Destinations

At the end of the Fellowship you are required to submit a final report within three months of the termination date. STFC requires Fellows to complete a short questionnaire giving details of the post taken up on completion of the Fellowship.

11.10 Career path tracking

STFC is keen to track the careers of its former Fellows and may undertake detailed studies of the career paths followed by fellows several years after their fellowship has been completed. Such studies inform policy decisions affecting STFC's fellowship programme. Fellows should be aware that STFC will maintain their details on a database for the purpose of contacting them to seek their assistance with future career path studies.

Institutions are encouraged to register their fellowship data with the Information Commissioner in a way that will allow it to be released for career path tracking exercises, as this will provide additional help to STFC in tracing former fellows.

11.11 Public understanding of science and media workshops

STFC wishes to encourage holders of its fellowships to participate to a reasonable extent in the public promotion of their subjects and of science in general. Activities such as presentations to school children, briefing science teachers, appearances in the media, participation in science fairs, etc are recognised by STFC as valid in the context of its fellowship programmes. Associated travel costs may be claimed and, while it is realised that such activities can seldom be planned on a long timescale, they should nevertheless be mentioned in the final report required by the conditions of the award.

As part of its programme in public understanding of science and technology, STFC encourages all Fellows to take courses which provide expert help in science communications, especially with the media. Further information and details on how to apply for a place on a course are available from STFC's Science in Society team (email [Jane Butt](mailto:Jane.Butt) or telephone 01793 442030).

12. Ernest Rutherford Grant Funding

Successful Fellowship applicants can bid for research funding in the form of a research grant. Subject to the restrictions set out below, normal research grant rules as set out in the Research Grant Handbook (www.stfc.ac.uk/rgh/) apply. For example, the Fellow can apply for staff, equipment, travel, other costs, project students, estates costs and other directly allocated and indirect costs in the normal way. Funding is on the basis of 80% of FEC. The process is competitive and not all Fellows will be awarded research funding.

Restrictions:

- no additional time for the Fellow can be requested on the grant application.
- the time of co-investigators cannot be requested.

In the first instance, research grant funding will be for three years. Fellows will be able to apply for continuation funding to follow on from the initial three-year period up to the end of their Fellowship in competition with the new Fellows of that year. The research grant will not be extended beyond the end of the Fellowship.

There is no upper limit to the amount of grant funding that a Fellow may apply for. However, applicants should be mindful that the funding for each cohort of 12 Fellows over the five-year period is £600k per annum.

Successful applicants will be contacted with further information once offers of Fellowships have been accepted.