

ERNEST RUTHERFORD GRANTS – FAQs

How much funding is available?

£600k pa. This is the total for all the Ernest Rutherford grants to be awarded this year (not per grant!).

How much should I request?

There are no constraints on the amount you can request. You should provide realistic costs for the resources you require.

What is the likely success rate?

Probably around one in four, depending of course on what is funded and the quality of the proposals.

How different should the project be from the Fellowship application?

The project should be a distinct stand-alone project, enabling you to pursue research that would not otherwise be carried out within the Fellowship. The work may be related to the topic of the Fellowship, in which case it should be clear how the grant will enable you to enhance and further develop the research programme set out in the original Fellowship application; or it may be completely distinct from the Fellowship, in which case the proposal would need to make clear that you have the expertise, track record and capacity to take this on alongside your Fellowship.

Can I apply for a number of separate projects?

There is nothing to prevent you applying for a number of separate projects. You would need to make clear that this did not risk spreading your time and expertise too thinly. You would also need to set out a specific work plan for each project.

Will the proposal be considered on an all-or-nothing basis, or might parts be funded?

There are no specific constraints. If the proposal contains a number of distinct elements the assessment panel may recommend that some of these are supported and others not. The panel may also recommend that some of the requested resources are funded, but that for others insufficient justification has been provided and so they should not be supported. The advice is to make the strongest possible case for the research and resources you wish to be funded.

Can I just apply for travel money?

Yes, but this would have to be in support of research that was distinct from the Fellowship (as you already have travel funding for that) and, without additional staff resources, there would need to be a strong case for how such travel funding would enable additional high-quality research. A request merely for additional travel funding in support of the Fellowship would not be supported.

How much detail is needed about what a requested research assistant would do?

The case for support should contain a clear description of the specific work that the requested staff will carry out, with a broad indication of timelines (for example, what would be done in each year), how you will manage this work and how it relates to any work you are proposing to do yourself on the project.

Do I need to include a Gantt chart?

No.

Can I put another academic on the grant as a co-investigator?

You may name another academic with whom you plan to collaborate, if appropriate, but we will not fund any academic time on the grant.

How much time should I indicate that I will be working on the grant, in addition to the time on my Fellowship?

This is a matter of judgement. The important thing is that there is a viable and well thought-out management plan, involving sufficient time to supervise the research properly. However, the time commitment should not be so much that it would detract significantly from the Fellowship.

How much detail is needed about what I will do, particularly with regard to supervision?

The proposal should clearly set out the research that will be conducted by any research staff funded on the grant and by yourself, and should provide a brief description of how you will supervise the work of the research staff.

Can I defer the start date of a research assistant until October, when it will be easier to recruit?

We will aim to be flexible with start dates, but need to balance this against the profile of funding available. We would prefer to keep to the timescales stated in the guidance, but will discuss any particular issues with successful applicants once the outcome is known.

Should I include contingency plans in case the research assistant leaves the project?

No, this is not necessary.

What is the appropriate approximate salary level for a postdoctoral research assistant?

Requests for unnamed postdoctoral research staff should be costed at the normal entry level rate for the host university. It will be able to advise on what this is.

How can a studentship be accommodated within the grant period?

We recognise that funding for a studentship would typically need to start in autumn 2015, later than the planned early-2015 start date for the grants. Where necessary, therefore, the grant would be awarded on this basis, either with a start date deferred until after that time, or with the end date extended to accommodate the studentship.

If I am applying for a studentship, and LTA will be needed, should this be included in the proposal, or would it be funded through other routes?

This should be included in the grant proposal.

How do I balance providing technical detail against making the proposal accessible to non-specialists?

The proposal should contain sufficient detail to enable those expert in the topic (such as the external reviewers) to provide a proper assessment of its feasibility and merits; but be sufficiently accessible to the non-specialist members of the review panel for them to appreciate its objectives and importance. This is a somewhat delicate balancing act, but you should follow the successful approach you took with your Fellowship application and interview.

What has to be included in the data management plan?

Proposals for projects that would result in the production or collection of scientific data should include a brief data management plan. The data management plan should explain how the data will be managed over the lifetime of the project and, where appropriate, preserved for future re-use. See the full guidance at: <http://www.stfc.ac.uk/1930.aspx>

What should go in the impact summary, as distinct from the impact plan?

The impact summary should address two questions: who will benefit from this research and how will they benefit? The pathways to impact plan should describe how the potential impacts of the research will be realised. It should continue on from the two questions addressed in the impact summary by addressing what will be done to ensure that potential beneficiaries have the opportunity to engage with the research. See the full guidance at <http://www.stfc.ac.uk/rgh/rghDisplay2.aspx?m=s&s=166>

Where do I go to for extra help?

Senior faculty members of your department are best placed to provide advice on how to prepare the best possible case for support. The Je-S helpdesk JeSHelp@rcuk.ac.uk can provide assistance for technical problems when completing the proposal. For questions about your application or any of the attachments contact fellowships@stfc.ac.uk or Clare Heseltine 01793 442043, Elaine Poole 01793 413195 or Nina Cox 01793 442017.