

Faraday Discovery Fellowships Briefing Document

About the scheme

The Royal Society Faraday Discovery Fellowships are prestigious long-term awards that will support emerging research leaders to undertake high-quality, original research.

The programme is aimed at outstanding mid-career STEM researchers and will provide grants of up to £8m over a ten-year period to support the development of world-leading research groups in UK Universities and Research Institutes.

Key Points

- The scheme is supported through a new Fund of £250m provided by DSIT to the Royal Society.
- The Fellowships will provide up to £8m per fellowship over 10 years.
- The Fellowships will support mid-career PIs and their research group.
- We anticipate that there will be seven rounds over the next seven years, and we expect to make seven awards per round, although this may be subject to changes so please see the website in the year you intend to apply.
- The first round will launch in August 2024. There will be a two-stage application process (similar to Royal Society Research Professorships).
- Further information including the scheme notes for applicants will be available on the RS website from early May. Please register your interest on the Royal Society website at this [link](#).

Aims

The aims of the Faraday Discovery Fellowships are to:

- **Support emerging research leaders to be based in the UK** – Both attracting outstanding mid-career researchers from overseas and retaining outstanding researchers in the UK, as well as their groups/teams.
- **Fund high-quality original research** – Providing long-term funding to enable talented mid-career researchers to focus on their research vision and address the most challenging research questions (including supporting translation or commercialisation where those are part of their long-term vision for their research).
- **Develop world leading research groups/teams in the UK** - Providing long-term, stable levels of support to enable UK-based Principal Investigators to establish world-leading groups/teams and pursue their research.
- **Train the next generation** – Supporting the development of the next generation of research leaders in their field through a programme of training and support for members of the research group (including early career researchers, PDRAs, PhD students and technicians) funded on the grants.

The Royal Society recognises that diversity is essential for delivering excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The Society wants to encourage applications from the widest range of backgrounds, perspectives and experiences to maximise innovation and creativity in science for the benefit of humanity. We regularly review and revise policies and processes to embed EDI principles in all aspects of the grant making process and ensure all talented applicants have an equitable chance to succeed as per the assessment criteria.

Who can apply for this scheme?

This Fellowship is for mid-career researchers. This means that we would expect applicants to have 10-20 years research experience post-PhD or equivalent experience (exceptional candidates with fewer years' experience will be considered). Candidates who have had changes in discipline or research direction, or time working on industrial research, will be welcomed. As standard, career breaks and non-linear career paths will be taken into consideration.

Candidates will be expected to meet the following criteria:

- **Be a recognised research leader** within their field with experience of managing significant research grants as the Principal Investigator. Candidates should hold a permanent academic post or be in the latter stages of a recognised long-term research fellowship (such as a Royal Society University Research Fellowship or an equivalent externally or university funded fellowship) or have equivalent research experience. We would expect candidates to have experience of managing a research group, including training and supervising PhD students and junior staff, or equivalent examples of relevant leadership activities.

- **Demonstrate significant and original research contributions** - The Principal Investigator should have an exceptional track record of outputs commensurate with their research experience and be able to demonstrate significant research contributions in the last 10 years.
- **Be well-established internationally** – Candidates should have well-established international networks and plans to consolidate their independence to become international research leaders in their field.
- **Demonstrate wider contributions to research, research impact and research culture** – for example public engagement, schools' engagement, knowledge exchange, industry collaboration, team leadership, commercialisation or broader business activity, peer review and committee membership.

The Faraday Discovery Fellowships **does not operate thematic priorities**, as with all Royal Society funding, we will consider applications from all areas of science (STEM) that are covered by [the Royal Society's remit](#). This may include, although is not limited to, the following examples:

- **Frontiers of Science** – examples might include research into quantum, materials, earth observation, engineering biology and understanding the microbial world.
- **Science for Resilience and Prosperity** - examples might include research into waste, future telecoms, scarce resources, protecting planetary life support systems, life in extreme environmental conditions, science and engineering of cutting-edge technologies, AI, batteries and Net Zero.

As with all Royal Society funding, we will consider applications from all areas of science and assess applications purely on the track record of the candidate and the quality of the proposed research.

Where the research is cross-disciplinary or requires collaboration with other teams outside of the remit of the Royal Society, for example in social sciences, the costs for such collaborations may also be included. Full details of eligibility including details of all eligible costs, will be available in the scheme notes, to be published on the Royal Society website in May.

Host Organisation commitments

As the host for a Faraday Discovery Fellowship, organisations will be required to make the following commitments in their statement of support:

- **Protected research time** – funded PIs must spend at least 80% of their time on research activity, with the other 20% of their time being used to contribute towards other duties such as teaching and contact with students, administration, departmental leadership etc. Where innovation or translation activity, including working with industry, is part of the agreed programme of the fellowship, that time can also be considered as “research”.
- **Consider Diversity & Inclusion** – The Society is committed to increasing diversity in the scientific workforce recognising this is a key part of ensuring scientific excellence. Host organisations are expected to provide supportive workplace structures to ensure diversity, this includes consideration of the diversity of applicants that they support to apply to the scheme. Holders will be required to consider diversity when recruiting and supporting staff into their research team.
- **Duplicate funding** - Funding provided through the grant must not be duplicated through other sources. Staff costs allocated to the grant must reflect the amount of staff time devoted to the grant.
- **Replacement funding** – As part of the host organisation's commitment, where the holder was already employed at the host organisation, the host is required to commit to providing like-for-like replacement research posts of equivalent value within the department. This may include posts of equivalent seniority to the PI in the department or multiple more junior research posts of equivalent value (PRDAs or PhDs).
- **Concordat for Research Career** – The host organisation is expected to adhere to the principles of the Concordat to support the development of research careers. The host organisation is also required to commit to providing appropriate training and development for early career researchers funded through the grants.
- **Training for Early Career Researchers** – The host organisation is required to commit to providing appropriate training and development for members of the PI's research group (including early career researchers, PDRAs, PhD students and technicians) funded through the grant.

Contact

If you have further questions regarding the scheme, please contact the Grants team on faraday@royalsociety.org or visit our [contact us page](#).