



Birmingham-Wellcome Trust Career Development Hub

Funding guidelines

Background and principles

In partnership with the Wellcome Trust (via their Institutional Strategic Support Fund), the University has established a **Life Sciences**-focused Career Development Hub, [mirroring the broad research remit of the Wellcome Trust](#) in terms of support and funding eligibility.

UoB has played a pivotal role in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, rapidly and collaboratively driving innovations from diagnosis (UK's first academic-NHS campus to establish end-to-end "pillar two" testing capabilities) through to clinical care (establishing clinical dashboards supporting UK's largest hospital to manage COVID-19 patients and track local clusters of infection, through infrastructure part-funded via ISSF). However, the period has also been extremely challenging for many of our researchers, who have faced common challenges such as adjusting to home working, reduced social interaction and increased caring responsibilities (well-documented to be particularly acute in female staff), but also face unique sectoral challenges in terms of access to specialised laboratory space and equipment to undertake their core work; increased pressures of teaching responsibilities; and a major downturn in funding availability – and therefore career sustainability – following severely reduced income to medical research charities and the issues caused by cuts to ODA funding and Horizon Europe demands on UKRI budgets. Beyond the early and mid-career researchers who need support to weather and re-emerge from these changes, there have been significant impacts on postdoctoral fellows (whose contracts rely on outputs and new funding); PhD students (particularly those in their second years, who may or may not benefit from funding extensions but may be struggling with regard to data production); and even the prospects of graduates who would previously have been entering research career pathways through Masters, PhDs or technical roles.

With these challenges in mind, and building on our previous funding schemes, we have provided a new and enhanced series of schemes in order to help address some of the issues faced by researchers whose careers have been setback by the Covid-19 pandemic, or may be facing other acute personal challenges in research momentum. Our objective remains to fund excellent research and excellent researchers, but we intend to do this in a more compassionate and flexible way through Wellcome's support.

What does the Career Development Hub cover?

This approach covers a range of career stages within the Life Sciences, most importantly:

- **Doctoral students**, particularly those who have faced significant challenges accruing data during the pandemic;
- Transition from **PhD to post-doctoral** Fellowships;
- **Postdoctoral fellows and early-career researchers** looking to secure their first major Fellowship or personal award as lead investigator;
- **Mid-career researchers** (typically those with an established track record, at or below Senior Lecturer level) facing challenges to maintain career trajectory when moving from externally-funded Fellowships and/or adapting their research direction.

Funding options available

Applications are reviewed by a panel at a series of panel meeting held during the academic year:

Autumn 2021 Round: Opens Thursday 1st July 2021
Closes Friday 31st July 2021

Funding calls with details of the application process will be published on the intranet at <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/RSS/research-development/internal-funding.aspx>



Pilot data Awards:

Excellent researchers across any of our highlighted career stages can apply for funding awards of up to £25,000 to deliver key experiments or other research work which provides compelling pilot data for a specified external application. Applications are expected to clearly demonstrate why the specific data is required as an enabler – for underpinning external funding applications this will be strengthened by feedback from internal (outside the applicant's own research group) or external grant review.

High-impact publications

In order to support researchers at any career stage, we are providing funding of up to £25,000 to address reviewer comments on key articles by the collection of new data. Applications are expected to clearly demonstrate why the specific data is required as an enabler – for publications, this should include review comments from the journal.

Mobility:

Collaboration and experience is essential to deliver world-leading research, and the ability to forge new collaborations has been particularly impacted by the pandemic. Excellent researchers at any of our highlighted career stages are therefore encouraged to apply for Mobility awards (covering travel, accommodation, subsistence and if well-justified a level of research consumables) of up to £25,000. These may establish new partnerships both in the UK and overseas, define critical research questions or learn new skills and techniques which can be brought back to Birmingham. Evidence of support from the partner site is required and requests for overseas visits must be able to demonstrate that their trip is feasible given any travel restrictions in place at that time. **Whilst we are hopeful of supporting a number individuals through this stream, please note that awards will recognise the limited likelihood and risks of international travel, which your application should clearly mitigate.**

Expectations of applicants:

All award types are critically dependent on evidence of a strong career trajectory; a clear mentoring and support plan from your host environment (School/Institute); and clarity on expected next steps in terms of external funding application(s). We particularly want to understand how the pandemic or other unanticipated circumstances may have affected your personal trajectory, and a clear plan for such an award to mitigate specific issues you may have faced or expect to face. Award holders will be required to provide regular reports, and play a key role in annual events which will directly involve the Wellcome Trust as our major partner funders.

Please note that all successful applicants will now also be required to indicate their willingness to host a short 'ISSF Inclusive Internship' for under-represented (e.g. POLAR quintile 1) individuals in summer 2022.

Application Process

All applications must be submitted via the online application form available on the intranet:
<https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/finance/ris/research-funding/Internal-Funding.aspx>

The following attachments must be uploaded at the end of your application form

1. **CV:** A CV of no more than 2-pages (including employment history and markers of esteem)
2. **Key Publications:** Up to 1-page listing key publications
3. **Preliminary Data (if applicable):** Data which justifies why your project should be supported
4. **Gantt Chart:** A Gantt chart which provides clarity regarding design and expected outcomes

To assist in the completion of your application please see below for a list of the questions included within the application form:



Heading	Question
Funding Pitch	<i>Please briefly outline your request for funding, including the specific immediate need for the investment and how it will make a critical impact to your career. [Max. 2000 characters]</i>
Personal Trajectory	<i>Please provide details of your current career stage and plans for the immediate future. Why are you a good choice for investment, and how likely are you to succeed? A CV must be attached to your application. [Max. 2000 characters]</i>
Unanticipated Challenges	<i>Please outline any specific issues arising through either the pandemic or other personal/ external factors which have impacted on your research momentum of which you think the panel should be aware when making a decision. Note that all applications are confidential, and if there are circumstances which you would rather not detail here we are open to direct discussion prior to or immediately following application. [Max. 1000 characters]</i>
Scientific Rationale:	<i>Please provide details on how your proposed project fits with both institutional and Wellcome Trust strategy; the specific scientific background to the proposed project; any pilot data you have obtained; and critical data or developments needed to progress towards external funding. Preliminary data can be submitted via email. [Max. 4000 characters]</i>
Partners:	<i>Please detail any planned partners, and what specific expertise they bring that will support the project. [Max. 4000 characters]</i>
Delivery Plan and Outputs	<i>Please outline your intended approach i.e. what you will do and by when. A Gantt chart must be attached to the application. [Max. 4000 characters]</i>
Outcomes and Next Steps	<i>Please clearly detail the list of expected outputs, and how these will benefit the institution as well as yourself. You should also outline the specific next grant or Fellowship you are applying for subsequent to this award, including details of any discussions with local College-based Research Support teams, external collaborators/partners and funding bodies themselves. [Max. 4000 characters]</i>
Funding Request	<i>Please provide details on the required funding, including a justification for why costs are needed. This question is broken down into costs which fall under the following headings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Directly Incurred salary costs</i> • <i>Other salary costs</i> • <i>Consumables</i> • <i>Travel and Subsistence</i> • <i>Other Costs</i> • <i>Total</i>

Queries and questions

Project specific questions should be directed to your College Research Support Office:

College	Link to contacts
Arts & Law	https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/arts-law/i/rkt/research-support.aspx
Engineering & Physical Sciences	https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/eps/research-support/Research-Support-team/research-support.aspx
Life & Environmental Sciences	https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/les/college-services/crso/index.aspx
Medical & Dental Sciences	https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/mds/college-services/rkto/contact.aspx
Social Sciences	https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/social-sciences/college-services/crso/Index.aspx

If you have any questions or queries about the technicalities of applying for the Birmingham-Wellcome Trust Career Development Hub please contact: wellcomeissf@contacts.bham.ac.uk

We particularly encourage discussions around personal circumstances which you may struggle to articulate as part of your application, or for which you do not feel the proposed funding provides effective coverage.