

# PDRA Developmental Award

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# Developmental Awards

- Generally, very similar across various funding bodies
- Awarded for:
  - Travel to conferences or conference organization
  - Consumables/equipment for pilot projects
  - Networking and research trips
  - Relevant courses/qualifications/awards
  - New credentials in business/EDI/management
  - Work experience in industry
- Essentially, small amounts of money (sometimes co-funding) for anything related to “personal development”

# SPS PDRA Developmental Award

- Call went out in mid-September 2023 with a month long deadline
- Application involved writing 3 documents:
  - Application form
  - A letter of motivation (max. 1 page A4 describing the impact on their career of the proposed project).
  - The outline of the project (max. 1 pages A4 describing the project, budget, timeline)
- Eventually, 6 people from the whole School applied for a pot of £6000, 4 projects were funded
- I was awarded ca. £1500 for a research trip to National Institute for Materials Science in Japan to work with Mitsunori Kurahashi



# Process

1. Start by having a solid idea of what is to be funded and, if possible, start organising it before the award is announced
  - My experiment involves using hexapolar magnets to affect beams of O<sub>2</sub>, but I have little experience in this
  - Found a researcher in Japan who uses a very similar hexapolar instrument for beams of O<sub>2</sub>
  - Contacted him about visiting his lab to learn the technique, he agreed
  - Make sure that you're not essentially re-doing what you already know!
2. Check if your idea meets funding criteria for the award
3. Budget the idea
  - Usually small amounts of money, so be mindful of the costs
  - Check what can and what cannot be funded by the particular award
  - Be fairly precise, but remember the cost may change (e.g, flights, hotels, etc.)



# Process

4. Write the proposal
  - Concise! Usually a couple of short documents (letter of motivation, project outline, budget list, etc.), sometimes rolled into a single page!
  - Have a title, a clear total award value, and a timeline for the project
  - You **MUST** provide clear way in which your idea actually develops your career (spell it out!)
  - Seek other things that your idea could develop – networking? training? presentation opportunities?
  - If it's science-related, provide relevant references
  - If possible and relevant, put a figure in

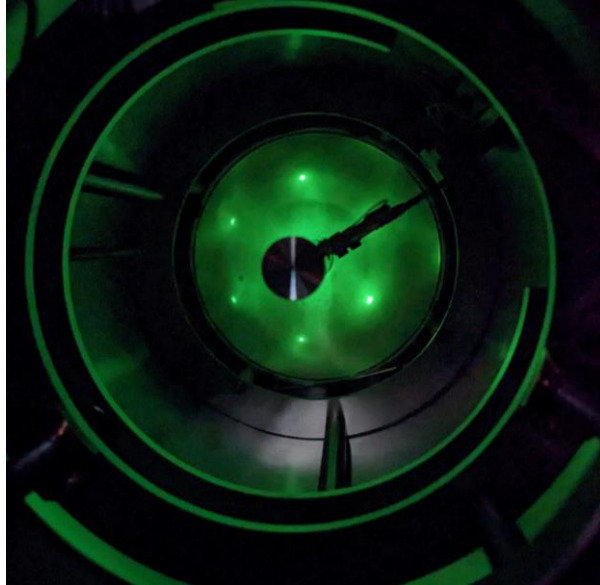
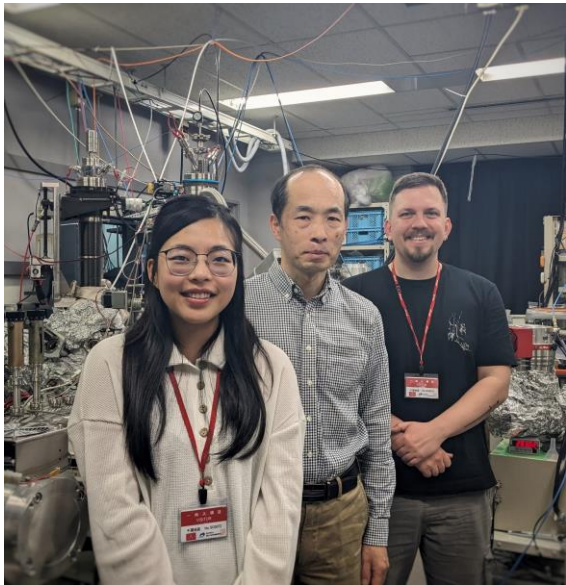
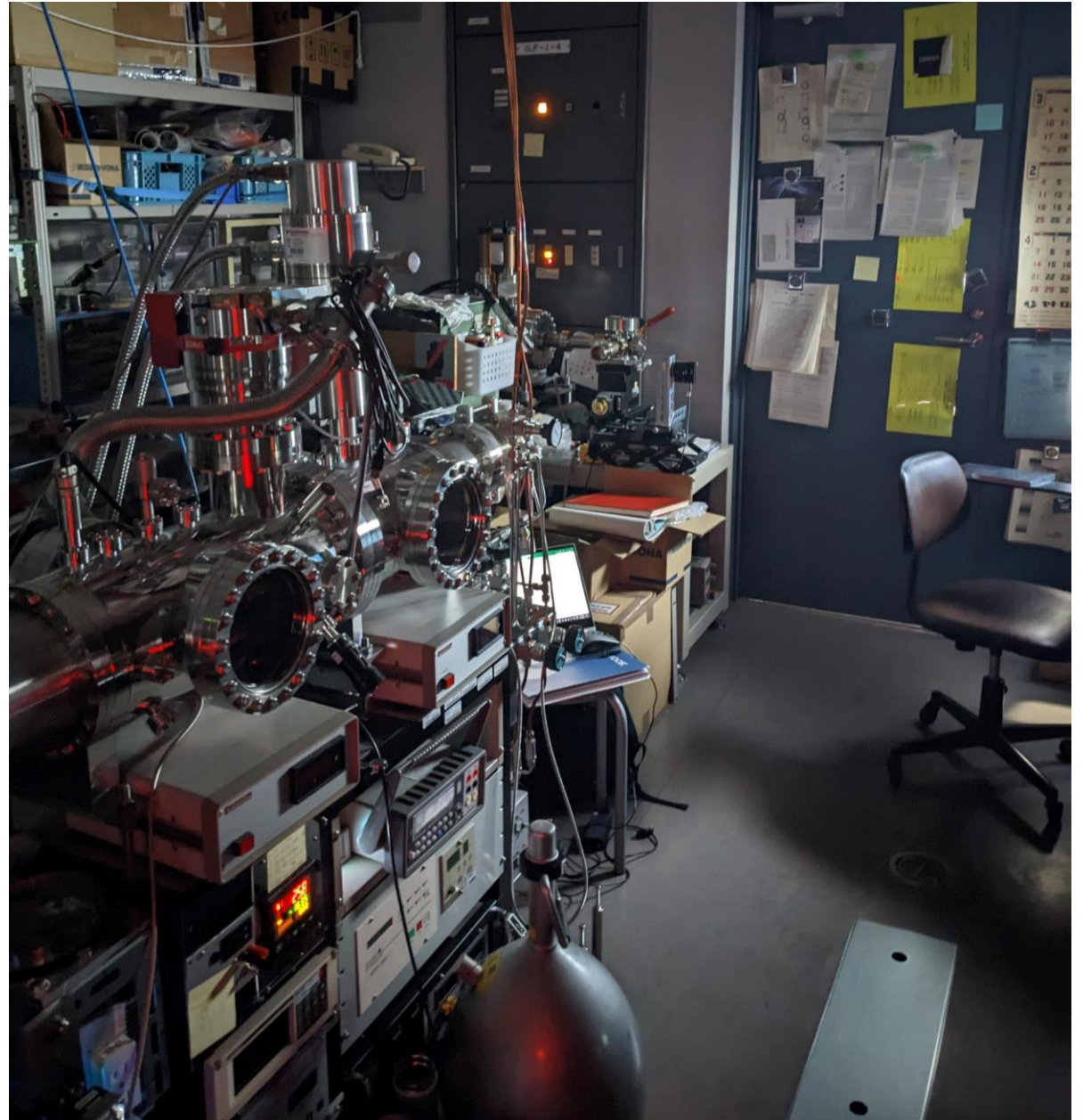
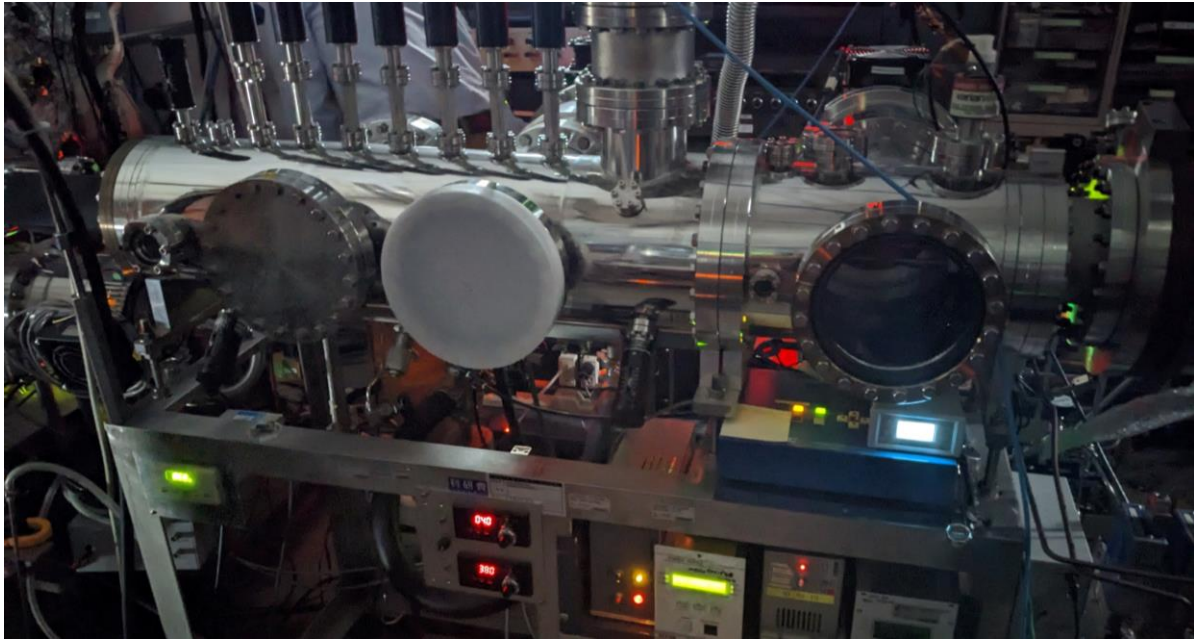


# Process

5. Short on money? Find other funds!
  - In my initial budget, I didn't have enough money for food and travel within Japan
  - Applied for an RSC Career Development Grant for £350
  - Unsuccessful because they had too many applications and drew lots – sometimes you can fail for reasons completely outside your control
  - Applied to British Spectroscopy Association for help
  - Was “left on read”

# Process

6. Make the most out of it – you never know what will turn out useful
  - One of our group's PhD students went with me, it was a great opportunity for her as well
  - When at NIMS, aside from learning about his experiment, I conducted measurements on sticking probability of O<sub>2</sub> on Cu(111) surfaces
  - The results were good and are being written up for publishing right now
  - Because of this study, I attended a recent Stereodynamics conference where I presented poster about it
  - The PhD student had an extra thesis chapter about this study
  - Also, got a nice holiday in Japan







# Strike the iron while its hot!

- Encouraged by the successful application, I applied for further funding
- Applied for the UoL Early Career Researchers and Returners Fund
- Unfortunately, my project was not funded
- After a failure, make sure to read the feedback from the panellists and recognize the mistakes you have done
- Seek out both internal and external funding opportunities!
  - UoL, SPS, IOP, UKRI/EPSRC, ERC, RSC, Royal Society, Leverhulme Trust, various societies and associations, industry, etc., etc...

# Good luck!

- Remember, you cannot get money if you don't ask for it :P
- If you would like to see my letter of motivation or project outline for the research trip, please contact me at [m.j.roman@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.roman@liverpool.ac.uk)