

Fellowship and career progress: departmental support (and beyond)

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Where to start

As a postdoc, you soon start to ask yourself what can be the next step

There are many options, so the first step is to understand what to target

Choose the fellowship schemes that are suitable for your career stage.
The support to seek will depend on that

- If you are **just starting** (ie. 0-2 yrs), or **have one postdoc** but you would like to develop benefiting from the close support of established researchers, junior fellowships are the most appropriate. Some examples: **Newton Fellowship**, **Marie-Curie Fellowships**, **EPSRC postdoctoral fellowship etc.**
- After ~3 yrs from your PhD (note: this is not a rule), you might think it is time to become an independent researcher, and apply for a more 'senior' fellowship. In UK: **Ernest Rutherford Fellowship** (Physics, Theory); **Royal Society URF** and **UKRI Future Leadership Fellowship** (Physics, Math, Chemistry); **EPSRC Open Fellowship** (Physics, Chemistry), **University Tenured Track** etc etc.

Support for junior fellowships

- Junior fellowships focus on work to be carried out under supervision and mentoring of an experienced researcher
- Best support comes then from the academic supervisors and researcher(s) you are approaching, and members of their group (i.e. in physics, we have particle, nuclear, condensed matter, accelerator science groups)
- Make sure that your academic supervisor/lead-contact asks a couple of people in the research area group to review the application
- Of course, reach out Head of Research and Head of Department for any request for which you might need help:
 - E.g. statement about strategic fit within the department, mentoring and tutoring, or if you want an independent assessment
- There is no mandatory internal procedure for junior fellowships from a departmental perspective 😊

Support for independent-researchers fellowships

- The process for an independent-researchers fellowship application might differ significantly depending on the scheme. Among the main UK ones:
 - **ERF**: there is a maximum number of applications per department possible, hence a selection must be done earlier on
 - **URF**: there is no quota
 - **FLF**: there is a university quota and an institutional process which selects (and further support) candidates that are going to final submission
 - **EPSRC Fellowships**: now closed
 - *New from this year*: AI Turing Fellowship – institutional quota, unclear eligibility
 - **University TTF**: process now open, specific topics – oriented to Frontiers
- Once you decide to apply, there is a **mandatory departmental management review process**: this is done to ensure submission of high-quality proposals that are fit well within departmental strategy (*) long-term
 - Successful candidates would be offered a permanent post at the end of the Fellowship, subject to criteria being met, for schemes like the ones listed above

(*) this does not mean it has to be something we already do, but something that we can support you in doing ...

Physics

- Interested candidate contacts the department emailing the dedicated mailing list **Fellowship_Physics@liverpool.ac.uk** that include Head of Department, Head of Research and Heads of each research area to express interest and discuss fit to the Department Research strategy (in doubt, email me).
- Minimum requirement is a **CV plus a draft research plan**
 - Depending on scheme, use relevant forms, ie STFC form “Expression of Interest” which is inclusive of the above
- For popular schemes, such as FLF, ERF, URF, a full panel is established (chaired by HoR or HoD), with additional members depending on scheme and number of applications
- Usually, at least 2-3 reviewers (+HoR&HoD) read and comment each proposal, with at least 1 reviewer from the same research area and 1 not. Cluster leaders are also requested to review and score all candidates in their research area
 - **ERF:** sift meeting in June/July to discuss all candidates with one introducer per proposal (as in the STFC panel) → ranked list defined
 - **URF (but also FLF):** support or not (for FLF, followed by Institutional review)
 - **Similar** (but more ad-hoc) for fellowships open all year

Physics

- Once a decision is taken, this is communicated to the candidate with general and detailed comments
- In case of **positive decision**, candidates are closely followed by their academic sponsor/“mentor”/cluster leader and HoR/HoD. In particular, **we help in:**
 - Host Institution statements, administrative procedure, RSO costings, request for studentships, IP and commercialisation, Data management plan — see also tips in sharepoint
 - Informing on available infrastructure, potential collaborators and synergies, strengthening of strategy fit.
- *Note:* if requested, the new draft is reviewed a second time by the reviewers
- In case of **negative decision**, we ensure to discuss with candidate about reasons, usually:
 - Too early career stage and consequent lack of competitiveness
 - Project not mature / not advanced enough
 - (rarer) lack of strategic fit, i.e. the department cannot support candidate research in long term
- Feedback in this case include redirecting applicant to a different, more suitable scheme, and/or encouragement to plan for the next fellowship, i.e. using the time to fill gaps (in skills, in project planning etc)

Fellowship opportunities

The Physics department supports several fellowship schemes every year, and a list with detailed timelines is given below.

To ensure submission of high-quality proposals, the department runs an internal selection process for all major fellowship applications. Successful candidates would be offered a permanent post at the end of the Fellowship, subject to criteria being met, for schemes like ERF, URF and FLF.

At University of Liverpool, we know diversity fosters creativity and innovation. We are committed to equality of opportunity, to being fair and inclusive, and to being a place where all belong. We therefore particularly encourage applications from candidates who are likely to be underrepresented in our physics workforce. These include people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, LGBTQI+ people, and women.

We advise to get in touch as soon as possible (as early as 3 months in advance) with Head of Department, Head of Research & Impact and Heads of each research area sending an email to Fellowship_Physics@liverpool.ac.uk to express interest and discuss fit to the Department Research strategy. We also recommend to secure, prior application, the sponsorship of a local academic faculty member in the department, who will help to provide a strategic justification for supporting your fellowship within the context of the department's research strategy. Once internally selected, a team of academic experts will be available to work with applicants over extended periods to develop high-quality proposals. This process is particularly relevant for schemes who apply a quota on number of applications for each Department.

STFC Ernest Rutherford Fellowships Opening of scheme for 2025 is expected in late Spring

Show ▾

The Royal Society - University Research Fellowships Opening of scheme for 2025 is expected in late Spring

Show ▾

UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships

Show ▾

EPSRC Fellowships NOW CLOSED

Show ▾

H2020 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Individual Fellowships

Show ▾

European Research Council Grants

Show ▾

Physics: Royal Society example 2025

The deadline is on the 10th of September.

Applicants must not hold a permanent academic position, nor have previously held an independent research fellowship and must have between 3 and 8 year's experience since your PhD at the close of the round.

The scheme is open to applicants of all nationalities. Funding is available for up to 8 years and includes the applicant's salary and funding towards research expenses as outlined in the funder guidance [website](#).

Please read them carefully. Applications are submitted through the Royal Society's application portal - [Flexigrant](#).

While there is no quota associated to this scheme, the department runs an annual internal selection process to ensure that applications are of high-quality and fit well within our departmental strategy. Intention to Submit and Expressions of Interest + other documents as in STFC ERF guidance should be sent to Fellowship_Physics@liverpool.ac.uk (inclusive of HoD, Head of Research, Head of Clusters) with the following timeline:

4th June 2025	Intention to Submit Deadline. Please send us your name, the title of your project and the main areas of research involved.
16th June 2025	Expression of Interest Deadline - The department sets an internal sifting process; following the schedule suggested by STFC, applicants are asked to submit the ERF Expression of Interest to Fellowship_Physics@liverpool.ac.uk . Additional documentation required is a complete 2-page CV. and publication list. External applicants should have (and cc in) their local sponsor if they have one (note: head of research clusters are part of the mailing list above). Note the Eoi form is the same as for ERF for convenience.
Mid-July 2025	Decision Taken - final decision is taken by the Research panel and communicated to applicants. The successful candidates will iterate with their local sponsor and experts in research and impact in the department to further develop their scientific case and a high-quality proposal. We will also offer advice on all costs that will need to be included, and on the support that can be provided by the Department. Support from Faculty team will also be organised if possible.
10th September 2025	Applications are submitted by the deadline.

Note: The UoL offers a voluntary peer review and mock interview at Institutional level. That process is not a replacement for departmental approval (mandatory) but could complement the review process for further support in the final preparation stages. If interested, please let us know asap and we can help liaising with the Peer Review Team.

Support now
coordinated with
Peer Review Team

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/chemistry/research/fellowships/>

Fellowships in the Department of Chemistry

Research fellows are an integral part of the Department of Chemistry research community. We encourage applications from outstanding individuals who would like to develop their research careers at Liverpool. We offer extensive support and mentoring for new fellowship candidates or candidates wishing to move an existing fellowship.

The Department has hosted fellowships funded by ERC, EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, Royal Society, UKRI etc. We have a strong record of recruiting independent fellows into Faculty positions.

The University has recently launched a new [University of Liverpool Research Fellowship scheme](#).

Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants should contact the academic supervisor they are interested in working with, who will provide appropriate support.

Independent Fellowship applicants should send an expression of interest to the theme lead of the area most closely aligned with their proposed research programme:

Chemical Models, AI and Automation

[Professor Alessandro Troisi](#)

Chemistry of World Health

[Professor Paul O'Neill](#)

Chemistry at the Interface

[Professor Richard Nichols](#)

Materials Chemistry

[Professor Frederic Blanc](#)

Synthesis and Sustainable Catalysis

[Professor John Bower](#)

Procedure

- Information on website (left)
- Potential applicant contacts Head of Department (or acting HOD)
- Minimum requirement CV + 2-page research plan
- Considered by HOD + Chemistry Research Director + Cluster Leader and/or other expert reviewer(s).
- Yes/No?
- Proceed with support (blended departmental/RPI):

▼ Pre-application Support

We can offer the following support with your application:

- Support for informal visits.
- Introduction to academic colleagues relevant to your proposal.
- Advice on creating and maintaining an online academic profile.
- Mentoring on which fellowship to apply for.
- Where possible, examples of successful applications for your chosen funding scheme.
- Guidance for administrative processes, including costing a proposal.
- Peer review and feedback on drafts.
- Mock interview panels.

► Post-award Support

- Career Development
- Potential Funding Sources
- Independent Fellowship Case Studies

Math department

Martin Gorbhan (Math/Theory)

- ▶ We ask for Expression of Interest for Fellowships in TP
 - ▶ Advertised on <https://inspirehep.net/>
 - ▶ field: hep-lat, hep-ph, hep-th
 - ▶ Deadline this year 8/July/2024
 - ▶ By email: CV, research statement (max 3 A4), publications
- ▶ Fellowships:
 - ▶ STFC ERF,
 - ▶ Royal Society (URF / Dorothy Hodgkin),
 - ▶ EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie, ERC starting grant
- ▶ TP Panel (3 academic staff):
 - ▶ will shortlist & match with staff that support application

UoL match studentships: how to

- For a 5 year fellowships and significant/strategic bids, you can request a Faculty funded 1x 3.5 year UK PhD studentship (stipend and fees at UKRI rates) + £5k for student travel, training/consumables (total studentship cost about £92k cash contribution from UoL). NIA can request, but no guarantee.
- Intended to improve bid chances and commitment. Only awarded if successful.
- To apply, complete a short online form no less than 15 working days before the application submission deadline.(ref. UoL faculty intranet page). DO THIS ASAP
- If approved, confirmation email from Prof. James Cooper. Then you can write studentship into your application as UoL support:

RESEARCH SUPPORT OFFICE (RSO)

- Research Support provide costings, internal/funder approvals.
Mandatory to go through RSO for all research grant applications
- Approach asap as usually need a few iterations of budget, before agreed
- HoD/HoR signs off all costings/applications in RSO system.
- RSO and HOD also sign off applications in funder systems for most (UKRI included), and will not approve a bid, unless it's been through the RSO process/approvals internally.
- Main RSO homepage: <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/research-support-office/>
- RSO Contacts per department/funder:
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/intranet/research-support-office/staff/>
- Email your relevant RSO person to ask what they need from you (or ask first locally e.g. Gillian McLaren, Jan Wilson, Lesia Swain, Jenny Carthy)

Additional support – Institution: Peer Review Team

- Peer review team provides support for several fellowship schemes. We have now coordinated their voluntary process with the department review process.

The institutional Peer Review College

The institutional Peer Review College (PRC) supports the University of Liverpool's research community to submit high-quality, competitive research funding applications.

The University of Liverpool's PRC is managed and supported by a small team based centrally in Research and Partnerships. We collaborate with colleagues to coordinate a range of peer review activities such as demand management, supportive peer review and mock interviews for specific schemes.



Peer review @ UoL

Read more about the principles behind peer review processes at UoL.

FUNDER IN FOCUS

Schemes coordinated by the Peer Review College

Explore the range of calls supported by the PRC and find information about upcoming deadlines.



Demand Management

Find out what demand management is and how it works at UoL.



Peer Review Resources

Our online resources support both applicants and research-enabling PS staff to navigate peer review at the pre-award stage.



Get involved

Find out more about how you can get involved with both internal UoL peer review exercises and external funder opportunities.

<https://staff.liverpool.ac.uk/research/research-funding-and-outputs-hub/peer-review-college/>

Peer Review College supported calls by funder

The institutional Peer Review College manages supportive peer review and demand management processes for a range of funders.

Please navigate to the funder specific pages below for full information about our internal processes including timescales and internal deadlines for upcoming rounds. The **Institutional Peer Review College calendar** also highlights funder deadlines for future rounds.

Please note, these pages only contain deadlines for internal processes coordinated by the institutional Peer Review College. For deadlines related to schemes managed at faculty or school level, please contact your local research and impact team in the first instance. Contact details for all faculty, school and institute teams can be found in our **Research development around the institution** guide.

AHRC Arts and Humanities Research Council	ESRC Economic and Social Research Council	EPSRC Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
MRC Medical Research Council	NERC Natural Environment Research Council	British Academy
Leverhulme Trust	Royal Academy of Engineering	Royal Society
UKRI wide funding opportunities	AXA Research fund	Rosetrees Trust
UK Space Agency	NIHR	

Deadline is well after dept review and approval to go ahead. Provide non-expert review and organize mock interviews if short-listed

by Monday 4 August 2025, 4.00pm.

How and when?

For non-academic feedback on your draft application:

Not later than Monday 4 August, 4.00pm	Send your draft application to peerrev@liverpool.ac.uk . At a minimum, this must include: - Personal Statement - Research Proposal - Justification for Choice of Host Organisation. Please include in your email the name of the Head of Department who has confirmed that they support your application to this funding opportunity.	A member of the team will contact you to discuss arrangements for sharing your feedback with you.
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For a mock interview:

As soon as you hear from the Royal Society that you have been invited to an interview	Send an email to peerrev@liverpool.ac.uk including a copy of your application and your interview invitation.	We will work with you to organise a panel of academic colleagues to offer you a mock interview.
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The timelines for this support may not suit every applicant, and for this reason, the above opportunities are entirely optional. Anyone wishing to apply for a Royal Society University Research Fellowship, whether they participate in the above or not, must seek advice from their host department (or School/Institute) regarding any mandatory local review (and support) which may be required.

Support from Faculty: ERF

Since 2024, faculty support team provides a 2-day workshop for candidates that have been selected to submit for ERF (Physics, Maths). Provide also feedback from previous successful applicants and panel members

- 1) Details of the scheme, advice and answers to queries & signposting
- 2) Internal funds to support on offer
- 3) Detailed run through of proposal sections and recommendations, including Narrative CV
- 4) Past awardees & Panel chairs/members speaking
- 5) Lay review and sign
- 6) Timeline clarifications and reminders + Teams group

very good feedback overall

(Charles Evans, Faculty Support Office)

Horizon Europe

- ERC starter grants are your potentially natural target
 - Support from department is on a case-by-case basis
 - Support from institution organized by the Horizon Team, with specific deadlines depending on the scheme
 - Watch out for emails from horizon.europe@liverpool.ac.uk
- Opportunities in collaborative bids are possible
 - Recently advertised: [Pump-prime funding](#) sponsored by the British Academy, for diverse career stages

Some tips...

- When you start thinking of a fellowship, make sure to give it sufficient time: developing a coherent and balanced projects, with some technical aspects as well as the big picture is key
- You want to explain **why you and why now, as well as how**
 - A neat set of WPs, Milestones, Deliverables, Objectives might be needed for most fellowships: 5 years are a long time to plan!
 - Risks and mitigation plans must be part of it
- On the CV/capability to deliver, ensure you explain clearly what you have done, and how important that was in your field – do not assume people know! If you have led a group, state how big it was and what you achieved in your role
- Plan it in advance: there are opportunities for small grants or awards, interdisciplinary activities, or collaborative grants → highly valued in panel
- When it comes to plan the future for your team, or describe your public engagement plans, make sure to be concrete, again, plan it
- Be aware of what the university can offer in terms of facilities...

AMBITIOUS
INSPIRING
SPIRITED
CHALLENGING
INSPIRING
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Facilities

- <https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/research/facilities/>



Acoustic Research Unit

Home to state-of-the-art facilities, equipment and software for sound and vibration research and testing.



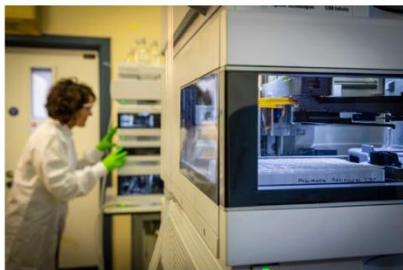
Digital Innovation Facility

Featuring some of the most advanced development laboratories in Europe, dedicated to maximising the possibilities of emerging technologies.



Liverpool Human Ingestive Behaviour Laboratory

One of the largest facilities in Europe dedicated to the study of appetite and ingestive behaviour.



Liverpool Shared Research Facilities (LIV-SRF)

LIV-SRF offer flexible access to world-class equipment and facilities to support research programmes and maximise impact.



Materials Innovation Factory

Exploit cutting edge technology and world class expertise in materials chemistry and formulation, on your own terms.



Virtual Engineering Centre

Our digital laboratories are a state of the art facility where collaborative exploration of emerging research and digital technologies help accelerate innovation.

.. And of New opportunities

University of Liverpool Fellowships

Revolutionising research innovation.

At Liverpool, we nurture world-class research potential and empower the next generation of trailblazers. Our prestigious five-year fellowships cultivate future research leaders, providing the time, resources, and collaborative environment needed to push boundaries, challenge convention, and deliver real world impact.

AI is igniting a seismic shift in research, reshaping not just how we think, but how we explore, discover, and innovate. It's unlocking a new world of possibilities, empowering us to tackle global challenges with smarter, faster, and more sustainable solutions than ever before.

Our fellowship scheme for 2025-26 invites applications from early career researchers who have an AI-focused research idea that could be applied to one of our five [research frontiers](#). Along with two years of protected research time and bespoke career development support from [The Academy](#), a permanent position at the University is also available when the tenure of the Fellowship ends. If you already hold a personal fellowship you are also welcome to apply for a fellowship, but it is not a requirement for appointment.

Do you have an original and compelling vision for harnessing the power of AI for research? Bring it to life at Liverpool.

Please click on the modules below to explore the focus areas for each research frontier and find further details on how to apply.

The closing date for applications is **1 December 2025 at 11.59pm**.



AI for life

Bringing different fields together to advance AI technologies and their applications.



Infection resilience

Breaking down barriers between fundamental science and frontline medicine.



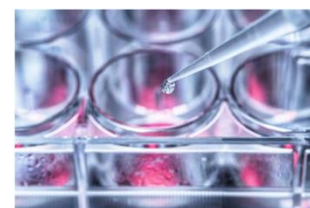
Materials discovery

Redefining the future of materials through cutting-edge AI and digital innovation.



Particle physics

Leading scientific breakthroughs to uncover the deepest secrets of the universe.



Therapeutics innovation

Combining world-class expertise to transform global health and medicine.

Conclusion

- It is not easy nor straightforward to prepare for the next steps in your career, but it is also exciting as it allows you to bring forward YOUR ideas. It is YOUR project!
- Opportunities exist, and support is provided
 - We can always do more, so we are here to listen

Best of luck and happy grants preparation 😊