

Research Fund

Guidance for Applicants

The following document provides guidance on the eligibility and process for the **30 October 2023 – 4 December 2023** application round of the Research Fund.

Please read these before making an application.

1. About the grant

- 1.1 Up to £5000 GBP will be awarded to the successful applicant to undertake a new chemical sciences research project at a university, higher education institute or research institute.

2. Duration and start of award

- 2.1 Funding is available for a period of up to 12 months.
- 2.2 Grant Holders will be able to request a no cost extension of up to 12 months at any point within the duration of the grant.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 Applicants (and co-applicants, if relevant) must be RSC members (Associate Member or above) at the time of the application deadline and for the duration of the grant period. This will be checked by RSC staff and the applicant's RSC membership must be confirmed at the grant application deadline – it is not sufficient to have a membership application in process.
- 3.2 Applicants (and co-applicants, if relevant) must be employed in a position that allows for independent research at a university, higher education institute or research institute at the time of application and award. Typically, eligible applicants (and co-applicants, if relevant) are:
 - Undertaking self directed research,
 - not employed on a supervisor or Principal Investigator's grant, and
 - not otherwise benefiting from funding from a supervisor or Principal Investigator.

Researchers employed on a Fellowship may apply but should be aware about explaining the need for the Research Fund grant on top of funds already included as part of the Fellowship; part of the grant's assessment criteria is the funding situation of the applicant (please refer to our website for more information).

We typically would not expect postdoctoral research associates (or equivalent) to be eligible under this definition. However, if you believe you should be eligible based on the above definition, please contact us on funding@rsc.org to discuss your situation. If you have any uncertainty, we would also recommend that you get in touch with us before applying in order to ascertain eligibility.

- 3.3 Applications are limited to one per department and must be authorised by the head of that department prior to submission.
- 3.4 Any given activity may not receive more than one RSC grant. Applicants must inform the RSC if an activity is successful in multiple RSC grant applications.

- 3.5 Applicants (and co-applicants, if relevant) must not be currently holding another active Research Fund Grant (i.e. previous Research Fund Grant holders must have completed and sent us their project reports before they can begin another Research Fund Grant application).
- 3.6 A grant will not normally be awarded to the same applicant (or co-applicant, if relevant) for more than three consecutive years.
- 3.7 The applicant is solely responsible for ensuring they are not under any obligation which prevents them from applying for or receiving the funds, whether the obligations are imposed by the home organisation or otherwise.

4. Application timelines

Applications open: 30 October 2023

Application close: 4 December 2023 14:00 UK time

Initial screening decisions: Week commencing 18 December 2023

Funding decisions: early March 2024

5. Application requirements

- 5.1 Applications will be made through our online application system, [SurveyMonkey Apply](#). Before completing the online form, all applicants should check that they comply with the eligibility requirements.
- 5.2 Applicants are required to provide information on:
 - a. Details of the research project they wish to undertake and the scientific results expected to follow.
 - b. The approximate full cost of the research and a breakdown of the manner in which it is proposed to spend any grant that may be awarded. This should include quantities and approximate costs for each item.
 - c. What sources of financial assistance are normally available to the applicant for research, whether these are available in this instance and to what value.
- 5.3 A document of maximum two sides of A4 (at font size 10) on the proposed project should be uploaded.
- 5.4 All applicants will be required to obtain a referee report as a part of their application. This referee should assess the scientific content of the research proposal submitted.
- 5.5 Applications must be approved on the application system by the applicant's Head of Department before the application can be submitted.
- 5.6 Your application will be rejected without review if any part of your application exceeds length limits specified in the application form.

6. Eligible costs

- 6.1 Applicants may apply for costs directly needed for their research project. These can include:
 - Chemicals and/or equipment
 - Consumables

- Licences for specialist software required for the project
- Equipment repairs not covered by University funds
- Equipment access, for example at a synchrotron facility

6.2 Funding should not replace or reduce institutional or funding agency support. Applicants also may not seek funding for the following within their RSC Research Fund application:

- Travel costs
- Salary contributions
- Departmental overheads (including office equipment)
- Costs for the dissemination of work (including conference attendance and publication costs)

7. Inviting a referee to provide a scientific reference.

7.1 Applicants must include a scientific reference as part of the application. Your referee will be asked to comment on the scientific quality of your application and should be working in a similar field of research to yourself. They will be asked to comment on:

- How this work fits in the wider context of the field;
- The novelty/impact of this work in its field of research;
- How reasonable the project is given the resources available to the applicant;
- Are the expenses listed in the application appropriate and essential for the project?

Please note they will not be asked to comment on you as a researcher.

7.2 Once applicants enter the details of the referee, the SurveyMonkey Apply system will send them an email, which includes a link to the application. Clicking this link will allow them to login (or sign up) to write their reference.

7.3 **The scientific reference needs to be completed by the grant deadline.** You will not be able to submit your application form until the status for the task shows 'complete'.

8. Inviting your Head of Department to provide their support of the application.

8.1 Applicants must include confirmation of support from their Head of Department. ***Please make them aware of this before entering their details into the application system.***

8.2 Once applicants enter the details of their Head of Department, the SurveyMonkey Apply system will send them an email, which includes a link to the application. Clicking this link will allow them to login (or sign up) to confirm their support.

8.3 **Confirmation of support needs to be completed by the grant deadline.** You will not be able to submit your application form until the status for the task shows 'complete'.

9. Assessment Criteria

9.1 The assessment criteria are:

a) Quality of science

Reviewers will assess novelty and scientific impact of the proposed project.

b) Feasibility of proposal

Your proposal must be clearly written and costed, and must be feasible to complete in a 12 month timeframe.

c) Situation of the applicant

We will prioritise those with limited access to research funding or a short-term gap in funding which is impacting a specific project.

d) Impact of the funding

Reviewers will assess how completion of your project will benefit your career. Examples include promotion/new position prospects or chances for further funding.

10. Review process

10.1 All applications will undergo an initial screening by RSC staff. Applications will be rejected at this stage if:

- a) You do not meet our eligibility criteria (please see above)
- b) Your application is incomplete
- c) Your application does not adhere to the length limits instructed in the application system
- d) Your funding request exceeds the £5000 limit

10.2 All remaining applications will undergo peer review by members of our Researcher Grants Peer Review Group and final funding decisions will then be overseen by:

Professor Andy Cammidge, University of East Anglia
Dr Vicky Hilborne, University College London
Dr Haresh Manyar, Queen's University Belfast
Professor Gavin Miller, Keele University

11. Successful applications

11.1 Lead applicants will be notified by email of any funding decision.

11.2 The funding offer is conditional on RSC receiving, within fifty (50) working days from the date of the Award Letter, bank payment details and agreement to all of the conditions set out in the Standard Conditions of Grant.

11.3 The grant will be paid in a single payment to the lead applicant's organisation. No funds will be paid directly to individual applicants.

12. Contact information

If you have any questions about this grant please contact funding@rsc.org. Before contacting us please check the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document for the grant in case this answers your question.