Researcher Development Grant: additional guidance

The Researcher Development Grants can be used for a wide range of activities that support the development of knowledge, skills or networks for a researcher. The following provides additional guidance on what are suitable activities or costs for applicants to the scheme. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list, so if you have any questions or doubts, please contact us at funding@rsc.org.

This grant can be used for:
- Travel (including visa applications), event registration or accommodation to attend an activity hosted/organised by someone else, including conferences, workshops, training courses, etc.
- Expenses to enable or scientifically enhance an activity organised by the grant applicant, for example, venue hire, equipment costs, catering/refreshments, speaker expenses

This grant should not be used for:
- Direct or indirect research costs (including chemicals/equipment, research visits or article processing charges)
- Salary contributions
- Subsistence costs (food or drink) when travelling. Fees to attend conference dinners are an eligible expense as part of developing your network.
- General social activities

A note about predatory conferences

We advise grant applicants to be cautious when choosing conferences to attend. There are an increasing number of predatory conferences which are expensive and provide little or no scientific benefit for the attendees. This Chemistry World article provides more information about predatory conferences and below is a list of potential warning signs to look for when considering attendance at an unfamiliar meeting.

If you have any concerns or doubts about a meeting, please don’t hesitate to contact us before you apply for a Researcher Development Grant. We will also inform our applicants as soon as possible if we spot an application for attendance at a suspected predatory conference. We are unable to support grant applications for predatory conferences.

Potential warning signs for a predatory conference:
- The conference organiser is holding multiple meetings on the same days and in the same location
- The conference venue does not reflect the supposed size of the meeting (e.g. a “World Congress” that is held in a hotel, rather than a conference centre)
- There is an unusual combination of words and phrases, or loosely related fields of study, in the conference name
- Photos of previous meetings on the organiser’s website only show meetings of about a dozen participants in a small meeting room.
- You are invited to give a talk in a subject matter outside your expertise
- The invitation addresses you in superlative terms
- The conference has an unusually broad subject matter coverage
- The language of the invitation is unusual for your professional practice or has grammatical errors
- The editorial board or conference organisers are not well-known in your research field
- The “business” address of the organiser is unusual (e.g. if Google Street View shows it to be a residential address)
- The registration fee is high
- Invitations are sent to you repetitively
- The conference website does not include subject matter that is at the frontier of knowledge
- The high-level speakers in the programme are listed “subject to confirmation”
- You simply don't recognise the journal, conference or participants