

# **A brief guide to fellowships and funding for early career postdocs in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities**

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With thanks to Ruth Smith, Careers adviser for ASSH postdocs for the section on JRFs.

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## *Introduction*

This guide is a basic introduction to postdoctoral fellowships and research funding for postdocs in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. The information on the various schemes outlined here has been gathered from the funding institutions' websites, and is intended to be a starting point for your own research on this topic. Funders change their eligibility criteria, application processes and deadlines frequently, and even well-established annual competitions may be discontinued, so please check the relevant institution's website if you are intending to make an application.

Fellowships and grant funding require institutional support, which means that you need to start finding established colleagues who will argue your case within the department or research centre which is going to host your project well in advance of any funders' deadlines. It is extremely important to make sure that whoever is hosting you is aware of what kind of support the funder is expecting the host institution to provide. This guide gives a basic indication as to whether the fellowship or grant is intended to cover all the research project's costs (this is usually labelled 'full economic costing'- FEC), or whether it will only cover part of them (such as the Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship which funds up to 50% of salary costs).

## *Fellowship or grant?*

This guide focuses on Postdoctoral Fellowships (which are often thought of as short-term posts designed to help with the development of an academic career), and Research Grants (where the focus is on the research project, although several of the schemes listed here are designed to give early career researchers their first opportunity to play a role in research leadership). It does not cover appointments as research fellows or research associates on other people's projects.

The type of post or grant which will be best for you depends on your needs and priorities. Do you want a year or two to write up your PhD and begin establishing a publication record? Are you ready to develop a new research project? Do you want experience leading a team of other researchers? Given that competition is fierce, it is always advisable to keep several options open.

## *Subject specific*

This guide focuses on some of the major fellowship and funding competitions, but there are many opportunities beside those listed here. One source of information about opportunities in your subject area is the *ResearchResearch* database of funding opportunities (contact the Cambridge Research Office for details). Others include subject-specific email lists and discussion groups, conferences, and publications.

It is also worth looking for smaller amounts of funding which can cover research expenses, conference or seminar costs, or short-term visits to archives and libraries abroad. *ResearchResearch* is a very useful tool for finding these, and opportunities will also be advertised via networks in your subject area.

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## Section A

### Postdoctoral Fellowships – Annual or rolling programmes

Funding provider: ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council)

Scheme title: Postdoctoral Fellowships

Discipline: Social Sciences, Economics

Timetable: No fixed dates, apply online

Duration: 1 year full-time (2 years in Economics) – award may be held part-time

Costing: Full Economic Costing

Eligibility: Applicants should have no more than **three years' active postdoctoral** experience when they take up the award. Applicants must have submitted their thesis prior to the beginning of the grant. Established members of staff are not eligible, but contract researchers will be eligible if they meet the submission of Doctorate criteria and their contracts are due to come to an end before the commencement of the fellowship.

Number of fellowships awarded: ESRC currently expect to support up to 85 Postdoctoral Fellowships each year.

Purpose: The awards are designed to enable the following:

- to produce publications in order to help establish a track record in their chosen specialisation and secure opportunities for long term employment in the HEI sector;
- to disseminate their research findings that have come out of previous doctoral work to both academics and non-academic audiences;
- to further improve their research and related skills through additional specialised training; and
- to carry out further limited research based on their PhD work and related work through developing proposals for further funding.

#### Scheme website:

<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/opportunities/earlycareer/postdocfellowships/>

**The ESRC particularly encourages applications for fellowships in the following subject areas:** Economics, Education, Management and Business Studies, Social Work, and Socio-Legal Studies. Up to ten fellowships have been allocated for applications in macroeconomics for 2009/10. Check the ESRC website for updates to these targeted calls.

Funding provider: AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council)

Scheme title: Fellowships – route for early career researchers

Discipline: Arts and Humanities

Timetable: No fixed dates

Duration: 3-9 months

Costing: Full Economic Costing

Eligibility: At the time of application, applicants must have either a contract of employment with their Research Organisation in place for the duration of the award or an assurance from the submitting institution that, *if the proposal is successful*, a contract of employment will be given that covers the period of the award.

You need

- to be within eight years of the award of your PhD or equivalent professional training; *or*
- to be within six years of your first academic appointment

**Purpose:** Early Career Fellowships are aimed at supporting applicants to take forward new avenues of research which they have developed since completion of their PhD or to pursue new research directions which have evolved from their PhD research.

**Scheme website:**

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Pages/Fellowshipserc.aspx>

Funding provider: British Academy

Scheme title: Postdoctoral Fellowships

Discipline: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Timetable: Annual Competition. *Deadline for submission of outline proposals:* 26 November 2009 / *Results of outline stage expected:* January 2010 / *Research beginning on or after:* 1 September 2010 / A smaller group of the most outstanding applicants will then be invited to submit second-stage applications for a deadline in March 2010, final decisions in May.

Duration: 3 years

Costing: Full Economic Costing

Eligibility: Applicants are expected to be at an early stage of their academic career.

Purpose: This scheme is designed to enable outstanding early career researchers to strengthen their experience of research and teaching in a university environment, which will develop their curriculum vitae and improve their prospects of obtaining permanent lecturing posts by the end of the Fellowship. Applicants are expected to be at an early stage of their academic career.

Number of fellowships: Up to 45 awards to be made in 2010.

**Scheme website:** <http://www.britac.ac.uk/funding/guide/pdfells.cfm>

Funding provider: Leverhulme Trust

Scheme title: Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships

Discipline: All disciplines

Timetable: Application materials for the 2010 competition will be available from 4 January 2010; the closing date will be 4.00pm on 11 March 2010. (Note: for Cambridge-based applications, there is a pre-selection competition run by the Isaac Newton Trust, which

will provide the matching funding for successful applicants. You must apply to the Newton Trust before submitting your application to the Leverhulme Trust, and you need to secure the support of a host department before approaching the Newton Trust. )

Duration: Two or three years (may be held part-time)

Costing: The Trust will contribute 50% of each Fellow's total salary costs up to a maximum of £23,000 per annum and the balance is to be paid by the host institution. Given the prestige of the awards each Fellow may request annual research expenses of up to £6000 to further his or her research activities.

Eligibility: The applicant should normally be under age 35 and hold an awarded doctorate or have equivalent research experience at the time of taking up the award. May not currently hold, or have already held, a full-time established (i.e. permanent) academic position in a UK university or comparable institution in the UK.

Purpose: Early Career Fellowships aim to provide career development opportunities for those who are at a relatively early stage of their academic careers but with a proven record of research. It is anticipated that a Fellowship will lead to a more permanent academic position. Fellowships can be held at universities or at other institutions of higher education in the UK.

Number of fellowships: Approximately 70 Fellowships will be available in 2010.

Scheme website:

[http://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/grants\\_awards/grants/early\\_career\\_fellowships/](http://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/grants_awards/grants/early_career_fellowships/)

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## **Section B**

### **Postdoctoral Fellowships – Individual institutions (including Junior Research Fellowships – JRFs)**

Postdoctoral Fellowships funded by individual institutions including universities, colleges and specialist research centres are also available. Some are linked to broad subject areas or disciplines, others are more specialised. Institutions will advertise through websites such as <http://www.jobs.ac.uk>, the media (*The Guardian*, *Times Higher Education Supplement* etc), and their own websites.

Cambridge and Oxford Colleges regularly advertise Junior Research Fellowships (JRFs) in a range of subjects for varying numbers of years. They are advertised in *The Reporter*, <http://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/reporter>. They vary from college to college as to subject area, number offered, number of years of tenure, pay, obligations, and method and timing of application; but some colleges now share an online application system. Timing of the announcements also varies from college to college and year to year, so it is difficult to predict exactly when they will be advertised. For good information and advice from current JRFs about the nature of such fellowships and applying for them, see <http://www.careers.cam.ac.uk/sectors/academia/roles.asp>.

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## Section C

### Research Grants

#### ESRC

Scheme title: First Grants

Limit of funding: Applications may be up to three years in length, and up to £400,000.

Costing: 100% of Full Economic Costs (fEC).

Timetable: Annual call – The deadline for the submission of Outline proposals in 2009 was 26 November, successful applicants being informed by email and letter by 22 February 2010.

Eligibility: The Competition is open to all staff at Research Organisations (ROs, i.e. universities and research institutes) eligible for Research Council Funding, who have not previously been Principal Investigators (PIs) on Research Council awards. It is imperative that applicants are within six years of the completion of their PhD or equivalent professional standing; this will be assessed on a case by case basis by the ESRC. This time limit excludes any period of formal career breaks taken for family care responsibilities, health or other personal reasons; in such cases evidence must be provided.

Scheme title: Small Grants

Limit of funding: £100,000

Costing: Full Economic Costing

Timetable: Rolling programme – the ESRC says decisions are made within 14 weeks.

Eligibility: “Applicants for research grants who are not established members of a recognised RO [Research Organisation i.e. university or research institute] must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research.” Researchers without a continuing contract, or even an existing contract at their proposed host institution, are not excluded from applying, provided that the host provides a “covering statement on the research proposal form to the effect that, in the event of a grant, it will provide accommodation and facilities for the applicant such as would be provided for established members of staff.” This is not a competition specifically for early career researchers.

Detailed funding guide:

[http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC\\_Research\\_Funding\\_Guide\\_tcm6-9734.pdf](http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/ESRC_Research_Funding_Guide_tcm6-9734.pdf)

#### AHRC

The AHRC’s Research Grants scheme does have an ‘Early Career’ route, but most postdocs would not be eligible for funding through this competition, because it excludes those already employed on “research contracts that relate to specific projects and grants (e.g. Research Assistants). Additionally, it is not permissible for someone to be both a

Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator and a research assistant on the same project.” In addition the applicant’s “contractual arrangement with the host Research Organisation must be in place at the point of application and must cover both the period of the award and the monitoring period (three months after the end of the award).”

Detailed funding guide:

<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/FundingOpportunities/Documents/Research%20Funding%20Guide.pdf>

## **European Research Council**

Scheme title: ERC Starting Independent Researcher Grant

This scheme funds research in any field of science, engineering or scholarship, including humanities and social sciences.

- Principal Investigator: candidates can be of any nationality, and must have obtained their PhD (or [equivalent degree](#) more than two years but less than ten years prior to the opening date of the relevant call for proposals (justified extensions of this period may be accepted, see [ERC guide for applicants - grant Schemes](#)
- Host organisation: legally recognised public or private research organisation situated in an [EU Member State](#) or an Associated Country. The Associated Countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Iceland, Israel, Liechtenstein, FYR of Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Montenegro, Serbia, Switzerland, and Turkey.
- Funding: up to € 2.0 M per grant (normally up to € 1.5 M per grant)
- Duration: up to 5 years
- Calls for proposals: published annually in summer (normally late July each year) with deadlines in autumn

Scheme website: <http://erc.europa.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=65> (a detailed funding guide is available for download at the bottom of the page).

## **British Academy**

New postdocs can apply for the Small Grants scheme (and the website says that they are encouraged to do so), but this competition is suitable for securing small amounts of funding for research expenses (up to £7,500 over two years, maximum), rather than staff costs. More experienced postdocs could potentially apply for a BARDA (British Academy Research Development Award), but this competition is aimed at mid-career researchers and applicants with 5+ years postdoc experience will be given priority.

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## Section D

### Other sources of funding – some suggestions

*Government departments...*

Such as the Department for International Development

Research4development

<http://www.research4development.info>

Research portal for DFID. DFID does not accept speculative proposals, but issues research calls inviting proposals.

*Charities...*

Nuffield Foundation (sciences and social sciences)

<http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/>

- New Career Development Scheme and Small Grants scheme (up to £12,000) currently under review, but it would be worth checking later in 2010.
- Research and Innovation Grants for beneficial social change  
[http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/go/grantprogrammes/page\\_580.html](http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/go/grantprogrammes/page_580.html)  
(not for 'routine academic research')

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation

<http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/about-us.html>

A charity which funds research

*European academic institutions...*

European Science Foundation (including Social Sciences)

<http://www.esf.org/research-areas/social-sciences.html>