

Royal Society Wolfson Fellowships/Wolfson Visiting Fellowships FAQs

Q. What is the main difference between the two awards?

The five-year Royal Society Wolfson Fellowships enable UK universities and not-for-profit research institutions to attract and recruit talented internationally leading researchers to their organisation. The Royal Society Wolfson Visiting Fellowships provide an opportunity for talented international research leaders to undertake a flexible 12-month period of sabbatical leave in a UK university or research institution, to foster international collaborative links and enriching scientific research in the host organisation as well as the wider UK science base.

Q. How many rounds are there per year?

There are three rounds per year for each scheme. Further information can be found here: <https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/royal-society-wolfson-fellowship/> and here: <https://royalsociety.org/grants/royal-society-wolfson-visiting-fellowship/>

Q. Which areas of science are covered by the awards?

Research must be within the Royal Society's remit of natural sciences, which includes but is not limited to biological research, chemistry, engineering, mathematics, and physics. For a full list, please see the [breakdown of subject groups and areas](#) supported by the Royal Society.

Q. Which nationalities are applicable for the awards?

Applicants can be of any nationality and those requiring a visa are eligible to apply for a Global Talent Visa under the fast-track process of endorsement if their application is successful. These schemes support the recruitment of a researcher from overseas to hold the grant in a UK institution who will contribute to the scientific strategy of the host institution. Therefore, the scheme is open to all nationalities.

Q. Do I need to have an existing job offer in the UK to apply?

Applicants to the Wolfson Fellowship should have received an offer of employment from the UK host institution, however, this can be dependent on being awarded the Fellowship. Award holders for the Wolfson Fellowship are expected to hold (the equivalent of) a full-time post at a UK institution as part of this offer. For the Wolfson Visiting Fellowship you must also be based overseas and have received a firm offer from a UK host institution to undertake a sabbatical there to take effect from the start of the award.

Q. Can I move from one UK host institution to another as part of this award?

Nominations will not be accepted for researchers wishing to move between UK institutions.

Q. What is the difference in the two schemes' value and tenure?

For the Wolfson Fellowships the scheme will provide five years of funding. Up to £300,000 can be requested. Funding can be used flexibly by the research fellow and as part of their start-up package to support their research programme and team.

Funding can cover:

Salary Enhancement – The institution may include a salary enhancement for the researcher. This will be limited to a maximum of 20% of the total salary. The Host Organisation will be responsible for meeting the full costs of the award holder's basic salary, including the employer's national insurance and superannuation contributions for the salary enhancement payment. After the award has ended,

the Society expects the Host Organisation to continue employing the award holder at a level equivalent to that provided with the support of the Society's funding during the award period.

Research expenses (100%) – Flexible research expenses including consumables, travel, small pieces of equipment of up to £10k, access costs and undergraduate students.

Research assistance – 80% of the full economic cost of a postdoctoral researcher/PDRA (salary costs and associated indirect and directly allocated costs, including estate costs) and can include contribution to technical support if appropriately justified.

Four-year PhD studentship – The cost of PhD studentship may only be included if the host organisation will commit to underwriting the remaining cost of the studentship and appropriate alternative supervision for the student in the event that the RS Wolfson Fellow leaves the institution.

Other – The funding is intended to be flexible, so other appropriate and justified research costs are also eligible.

For the Visiting Fellowship, these awards can be held for 12 months full time or flexibly over two years (with a minimum stay of three months at any one time during the award period). Candidates can request up to £125,000. Funding can be used flexibly by the Visiting Fellow during the sabbatical.

Candidates can request up to £125,000. Funding can be used flexibly by the Visiting Fellow during the sabbatical and can cover:

Bursary for Visiting Fellows – up to £80,000 per annum full time, although this could be supplemented at the discretion of the host organisation

Research expenses– Including consumables, travel, small pieces of equipment of up to £10,000, and other appropriate and justified costs (including for travel and subsistence).

Q. Are relocation costs possible as part of the application?

Relocation costs normally include transportation for the applicant and their immediate dependants (partner and children) to the country of the host institution, as well as luggage and moving fees, and they need to be consistent with the host organisation's policy on relocation. Reasonable relocation expenses beyond those normally covered through the host organisation policy, including for the Fellow and/or their immediate dependants may still be included but may require further justification to be provided. The Royal Society reserves the right to reduce such relocation costs where they are not considered to be reasonable. For the avoidance of doubt costs must be covered by the host organisations and may be reclaimed through grant. The Royal Society wants to attract the best global talent and does not want to financially disadvantage individuals experiencing high relocation costs. While we want applicants to include relocation costs as part of their grant application, we do not consider these costs as contributing to the total grant value when considering the grant funding caps. In some instances, the inclusion of relocation costs may result in a grant exceeding the maximum grant funding cap. The Royal Society reserves the right to reduce such relocation costs where they are not considered to be reasonable. Relocation expenses will be funded at 100% of the costs incurred.

For the Visiting Fellowships, accommodation and subsistence costs over the lifetime of the award are not considered relocation costs and should not be included within this budget category in the application form.

Q. Are visa costs applicable to be added to the budget?

Fellows requiring a visa to work in the UK are eligible to apply for a Global Talent Visa under the fast-track process of endorsement. Other visa categories are also available. Applicants may request costs to cover visa application fees, including the immigration health surcharge, for the lead applicant and their immediate dependants (partner and children). The Royal Society wants to attract the best global

talent and does not want to financially disadvantage individuals experiencing high visa costs. While we want applicants to include visa costs as part of their grant application, we do not consider these costs as contributing to the total grant value when considering the grant funding caps. In some instances, the inclusion of visa costs may result in a grant exceeding the maximum grant funding cap. The Royal Society reserves the right to reduce such visa costs where they are not considered to be reasonable. Visa cost will be funded at 100% of the costs incurred.

Q. Can I apply for a bursary with the Wolfson Visiting Fellowships if I have an ongoing salary arrangement with my home institution during the sabbatical?

If the candidate's salary is already covered by their overseas host organisation during the period under award, then the Visiting Fellowship funding **should not be used** to supplement their existing overseas salary through the bursary budget line. Candidates receiving less than £80,000 in salary from their home institution over the 12-month period covered by the Visiting Fellowships may use the bursary budget line to top this up to £80,000, after currency exchange conversion. The Royal Society may request that candidates provide evidence of agreed salary arrangements prior to issuing the award letter.

Q. If ineligible for the bursary when applying for the Wolfson Visiting Fellowships, can the full £125,000 grant be allocated to Research Expenses?

Yes, if the costs are all fully justified.

Q. Is there an option to have other miscellaneous costs covered during the award's tenure?

The Society can provide financial support to research fellows for any additional care costs that arise when attending conferences, collaborative research visits or invited talks related to their fellowship. These requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. Award holders may only claim childcare costs up to a maximum of 3 times for the Wolfson Fellowship and 1 time for the Visiting Fellowship during their award period. Each request is limited to a maximum cost of £2,000.

Q. Can the Royal Society assist in finding me a suitable overseas host for my visit?

No, unfortunately, it is not possible to assist scientists in seeking out suitable hosts for their visits.

Q. Can I apply for a Wolfson Fellowship if I have previously had a Wolfson Visiting Fellowship award?

Former Royal Society Wolfson Visiting Fellows are eligible and encouraged to apply for a Royal Society Wolfson Fellowship should they wish to relocate to the UK. Nominated candidates cannot, from the outset of the award, hold an external funded UK fellowship. Nominated individuals must not have previously held a Royal Society Wolfson Research Merit award.

Q. What is the application process?

For the Wolfson Fellowships, the Vice Chancellor, Institute Director (or their nominated representative) will need to contact the Royal Society Grants Office by email (seniorfellowships@royalsociety.org), after which a weblink to a nomination form on the Royal Society's Grants and Awards management system (Flexi-Grant®) will be provided. After the completed nomination form has been considered by the Royal Society, the nominated researcher (applicant) will be sent a link inviting them to complete and submit a full application in that current round on Flexi-Grant®.

For the Wolfson Visiting Fellowship, the initial contact can come from the Departmental Head of the proposed UK host institution.

Q. What information should be included in nominated referee statements?

The nominated referee will have to provide a PDF formatted statement on headed paper, that includes their name, title, and contact details. In that statement they will have to provide an unbiased comment on the field of research, the financial aspects included, and the suitability of the Lead Applicant and host institution. They should comment independently and authoritatively on the application. We do not have guidance on formatting beyond this.

Nominated referees should not be from the same overseas organisation as the applicant or the proposed UK host institution. They should also not be the applicant's former/current supervisor (including PhD supervisor).

Q. Can a Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS) be a referee for my application?

An FRS can be included as a referee for the application, if they are not part of the scheme assessment panel or Council (this information is available on our Council and Standing Committees page on our [website](#))

Q. How do I choose a Host Organisation?

All UK Higher Education Institutions that receive grant funding from one of the UK higher education funding bodies are eligible to receive funds from the Royal Society for research and associated activities, including Research Council Institutes. Look for places that are active in your field and try to find a Host Organisation that will give some help in preparing your application. Find out how the host will support the fellowship in terms of space and resources, and possibly longer-term prospects.

Q. Do you require proof of English competency to apply for grant?

We do not require a certificate or proficiency test to be submitted with your application. The applicant would be expected to have made their own independent arrangements with the UK host institution where this would be assessed. All applications and supporting documents should be submitted in English.

Q. Can I apply for other fellowships at the same time as a Royal Society Wolfson Fellowship?

While we understand that you might apply for other opportunities at the same time as the Wolfson Fellowship, if you were to accept a Fellowship equivalent to this while your application is under consideration, you must inform the Society and you will be required to decide which award to take up if both are successful.

Q. Do you allow resubmissions?

Each application cycle is treated independently; therefore, resubmissions are allowed if the applicant continues to meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme. There is no set waiting period before resubmitting.

Q. I cannot fit all my publications in the application due to the word limit. Which ones should I include?

Please include your most relevant publications. If you are the first author, you can add 'et al' while if you are not the first author, you can include the initials for all contributing. Reviewers will be able to see the full list of your publications through your ORCID ID, which is a part of the application.

Q. Who is responsible for the financial administration of my award?

The Royal Society pays your award to your UK Host Organisation. It is their responsibility to administer the finances of your award.

Q. What happens to unspent funds at the end of my award?

Unspent funds will need to be returned to the Royal Society. At the end of your award a financial statement generated by your Research/Finance Office will be requested. Then if there are unspent funds these will need to be refunded to the Royal Society by the Research/Finance Office.

Q. I have completed all the sections, and the application is at 100% but I cannot see a button to submit my application.

All participants on the participants tab must appear as 'complete' in green before the submit button appears. If a participant appears in orange as 'incomplete' they need to login and select 'Save & Submit' on the application form page or 'Submit your contribution' on the summary page – otherwise you will not be able to submit your application to your host institution for approval. Letters of support from the Head of Department and Nominated Referees are compulsory, while the Research Support is optional and can be revoked if no longer needed.

Q. Can I apply for funds to host a workshop?

Unfortunately, workshop costs (e.g., catering, venue hire, stationary, printing) are not eligible. However, you can use your travel expenses to cover travel costs for your collaborators and members of your research group.

Q: Can I request feedback on my application?

Due to the volume of applications received we are unfortunately not able to provide feedback for applications unsuccessful at the first Panel assessment stage. Applicants can request feedback if their application has completed the independent peer review assessment stage. Details of how to request feedback will be provided when applicants are notified about the status of their application.