

## Faraday Discovery Fellowships 2025 FAQs

This list is not exhaustive. You may be able to find the answer to your question in the Scheme Notes for the round. Please check all round documents before contacting the Grants Team.

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## APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

**1. Q: How is “actual research experience post PhD” calculated when considering eligibility?**

**A:** This is calculated *from* the date when you received formal notification of your PhD thesis being accepted in its final form and approved by the Board of Graduate Studies *to* the closing date for Stage 1 applications.

Gaps between contracts are taken into account when calculating research experience.

Part-time research contracts are also taken into account. For example, if you have held a research contract at 0.5 FTE, your research experience will be pro-rated accordingly. For details of how to account for career breaks due to maternity, paternity, shared parental leave, adoptive leave and sick leave please see p7 of the scheme notes.

**2. Q: How is time spent in Industry considered when calculating “actual research experience post PhD”**

**A:** This would be considered on a case-by-case basis, as some roles in Industry are just as “research active” as academic roles, while others are not. If the role in Industry was completely non-research (no research outputs, no design of experiments or analysis of experimental data) then it would not be included in the calculation of “actual research experience post PhD”. Please see question 3 below for how to confirm this.

**3. Q: Can I contact the Royal Society ahead of the deadline to confirm my eligibility for the scheme?**

**A:** The scheme notes provide guidance regarding eligibility for the scheme based on actual research experience. You should contact the Society where you:

- Are unsure if your work would be considered as actual research experience, for example time spent in Industry.
- Have taken complex career breaks and are unable to calculate the time you have taken out of research since completing your PhD.

If you do need support in determining your eligibility based on years of research experience, please contact the Faraday Discovery Fellowships team ([faraday@royalsociety.org](mailto:faraday@royalsociety.org)) with the date of when your PhD thesis was accepted in its final form, dates of your employment history and details of any non-research positions, career breaks or periods of leave. Please provide dates in the format of DD/MM/YYYY (days may be omitted if unknown).

**4. Q: I have over 20 years of “actual research experience post-PhD” but switched research disciplines and have fewer than 20 years’ experience in my current field, am I eligible to apply?**

**A:** If you are in this situation, please email a CV and justification for why you consider yourself to be within 20 years of actual research experience to the Faraday Discovery Fellowships team ([faraday@royalsociety.org](mailto:faraday@royalsociety.org)) **before** starting an application. The Faraday Committee Chairs and Deputy Chairs will review the information you provide and determine whether you are eligible to apply for the scheme. The review will be on a case-by-case basis and the decision of the Committee is final. Please ensure that the information you provide includes the date of when your PhD thesis was accepted in its final form, dates of your employment history and details of any non-research positions, career breaks or periods of leave. Please provide dates in the format of DD/MM/YYYY (days may be omitted if unknown).

Any applications submitted by applicants with more than 20 years’ research experience (taking into account career breaks) who did not go through this process and receive approval to apply will be made ineligible and excluded from the round.

- 5. Q: Do I need to have a permanent position at my Host Organisation already?/Will applicants with a permanent post already be ineligible?**  
**A:** Applicants do not need to hold a permanent position at their organisation, however candidates who do hold a permanent position are still eligible to apply.
- 6. Q: Do I need to hold a particular title, e.g. Professor, to be eligible?/Will applicants with a title of Professor already be ineligible?**  
**A:** No, titles will not be taken into consideration during eligibility.
- 7. Q: Are joint appointments held across two UK-based Universities subject to the same limits as Joint International appointments?**  
**A:** The award will be paid to one UK Host Organisation in the first instance, so applicants in this position would need to select one organisation as the Host.
- 8. Q: Do Host Organisations need to guarantee a permanent post after the Faraday Discovery Fellowship ends?**  
**A:** No, the Host Organisation does not have to guarantee a permanent post for the award holder after the end of the award, however there is an expectation that award holders would be strong candidates for permanent academic posts at the end of the awards.
- 9. Q: Can I apply for the Faraday Discovery Fellowship if I hold a permanent post in industry?**  
**A:** Yes you can apply to hold a Faraday Discovery Fellowship at an eligible host organisation. Faraday Discovery Fellowships cannot be held by organisations in industry.
- 10. Q: Can I apply for the Faraday Discovery Fellowship if I hold a current Royal Society Fellowship, e.g. if I am a current University Research Fellow?**  
**A:** Yes, if you are eligible based on years of research experience. If successful, you would need to resign from your URF to hold the Faraday Discovery Fellowship as award holders will not be permitted to hold other fellowships at the same time as the Faraday Discovery Fellowship.
- 11. Q: What percentage of time is it expected that the award holder will commit to the proposed research?**  
**A:** It is expected that the award holder will commit a minimum of 80% of their time to research, and a minimum of 50% of their time to the Faraday Discovery Fellowships programme of research specifically. So, for example, an award holder could commit 50% of their time to their FDF research, 30% to research on other grants, and 20% to teaching and admin duties. No more than 20% of the award holder's time may be committed to teaching and administrative duties.
- 12. Q: Can I apply for other fellowships at the same time as the Faraday Discovery Fellowship?**  
**A:** We understand that you might apply for other opportunities at the same time as the Faraday Discovery Fellowships. Please include any active fellowship applications in the "Applicant Research Funding" question of the application form. Award holders are not permitted to hold other fellowships at the same time as the Faraday Discovery Fellowship, so if both applications were successful you would need to choose which award to accept.
- 13. Q: Can an applicant who already holds a similar Fellowship apply for an FDF?**  
**A:** Yes you can apply for an FDF if you already hold another fellowship, but if successful you would need to resign from the other fellowship in order to accept the FDF offer.
- 14. Q: Can successful FDF award holders hold other Fellowships, grants and award concurrently with the FDF?**  
**A:** FDF award holders cannot hold other Fellowships (*i.e.* personal awards that cover salary) concurrently with the Faraday Discovery Fellowships. Other, non-Fellowship, grants and awards (for example an ERC consolidator grant or UKRI grant) can be held provided that they do not conflict with the terms of the FDF award.

Faraday Discovery Fellowship awardees are expected to commit 50% of their time to their FDF research programme, so awardees would only be permitted to hold other grants which did not conflict with this commitment. If you held another large grant at 50%, your institution would need to release you from all teaching and admin duties to allow you to use your time in this way. If your institution does not commit to releasing you from all teaching and administration duties at the point of application, you would have to give up your other award if successful in being awarded a Faraday Discovery Fellowship.

**15. Q: Do you allow resubmissions?**

**A:** Yes, as long as an applicant continues to meet the eligibility criteria.

**16. Q: How will the Royal Society consider the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on my application?**

**A:** The Royal Society appreciates the impact of the coronavirus pandemic is complex and varied. As such, we have a specific question in the application form for applicants to outline the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their research.

### **APPLICATION FORM - GENERAL**

**17. Q: Does research need to fall under one of the themes mentioned in the scheme notes to be eligible?**

**A:** No, the topics listed are examples only. Research can be within any area covered by the Royal Society [remit](#), and applications that do fall under the subjects highlighted in the scheme notes will not be prioritised in any way.

**18. Q: How ambitious/risky are proposals expected to be?**

**A:** The Faraday Discovery Fellowships are 10-year awards, so the Committee will expect ambitious, adventurous and creative research proposals. There should be a clear vision for the research, and the expertise and experience within the team to maximise the likelihood of success. We understand that research plans may change during the term of the award. The flexible funding and long timelines of FDF awards allow for research into challenging, open-ended problems, and provide the opportunity to pivot the research into new areas as interesting results arise.

The FDF Stage 2 application will include a section where applicants can upload additional documents and information to support their proposal. This section could include project planning information such as contingencies, milestones, and discussion of key risks and potential mitigation steps.

**19. Q: Interdisciplinary costs outside of the Royal Society's remit are allowed on the grant up to 25% of the award total – does this include costs for clinical/medical researchers?**

**A:** Yes, the salaries of collaborators in disciplines outside of the RS remit are an eligible research cost. All costs must be fully justified, the value that the collaborators bring to the research proposal and how they will contribute to addressing the key research questions should be clearly outlined.

**20. Q: Is it possible to hold the Fellowship part-time?**

**A:** Yes, it is possible to hold the Fellowship part-time due to personal circumstances such as caring responsibilities, although the award date will not be extended to reflect this. Instead, the funds saved from the award holder being part-time should be used to resource the research group appropriately so that the research programme can be undertaken within the 10-year timeframe of the grant.

**21. Q: Are Co-Investigators allowed?**

**A:** Co-Investigators are not included on the grant, however collaborators are allowed. Please see the scheme notes for details on how the finances should be included for different types of collaborator.

**22. Q: Do images and references need to be included within the page limit of the research proposal or are they in addition to?**

**A:** All images and references have to fit within the page limit of the research proposal document.

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

**A:** 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 (Stage 1) and the pro-VC for Research (Stage 2) are compulsory, while the Research Support is optional and can be revoked if no longer needed.

**24. Q: Is there an institutional limit on the number of applications that can be submitted?**

**A:** No, there are no restrictions on how many applications can be submitted. However, as only a small number of awards (approximately 7) are available in each round, we would expect Host Organisations to only put forward applications that are likely to be competitive.

**25. Q: Are Host Organisations expected to provide replacement funding for an award holder?**

**A:** Where the award holder was already employed at the host organisation, the host is expected to commit to providing replacement research posts of equivalent value within the department. This may include posts of equivalent seniority to the award holder in the department or multiple more junior research posts of equivalent value (PDRAs or PhDs).

## **APPLICATION FORM - FINANCES**

**26. Q: How many years should costs be provided for in the Stage 2 application form?**

**A:** Please provide costs for all 10 years of the Fellowship. There is no annual cap and costs may be profiled to best suit your research programme, although the Royal Society reserves the right to amend spend profiles as necessary. When completing the budget table in Flexi-Grant® please ensure to provide values at cost, including inflation if appropriate. For more information, please see the [Royal Society Grant Funding Guidance](#).

**27. Q: What happens if my plans or budgets change during the 10 years of the award?**

**A:** There will be opportunities during the course of the award to review and update budgets as plans change within the value of the award

**28. Q: Do I need to request £8 million if my research is in a less expensive subject area?**

**A:** No, applicants may request any amount up to a limit of £8 million. Applicants should only request the resources needed to conduct the proposed research. All resources must be fully justified within the Stage 2 application.

**29. Q: How do I add my salary if I am planning to spend X% on time on the Faraday research?**

**A:** Salary costs should be added at 100% for the percentage of time that you intend to commit to the research, excluding teaching and admin duties up to 20% of your time. For example:

- 1) You have a salary of £100,000 per annum and are based at a UK University. You intend to spend 80% of your time on the FDF research, and the rest on teaching and admin at your University. You should enter £100,000 per annum, which would be paid at 80% due to fEC.
- 2) You have a salary of £100,000 per annum and are based at a UK University. You intend to spend 50% of your time on the FDF research. You should enter £50,000 per annum, which would be paid at 80% due to fEC. Any teaching and admin duties would need to take place outside of this time, as 50% is the minimum time commitment to the FDF research.

3) You have a salary of £100,000 per annum and are based at a UK University. You intend to spend 80% of your time on the FDF research and 20% of your time on another research grant which also covers salary. You should enter salary costs for the 80% of time committed to the FDF research, £80,000 per annum, which would be paid at 80% due to fEC. The remaining 20% salary costs should be drawn from the other grant. Within the 80% covered by the FDF funding, you can spend up to 20% of your time on teaching and admin as long as the time dedicated to the other grant is used entirely for research.

**30. Q: Is the salary/salary contribution for the lead applicant or collaborators capped?**

**A:** No, the host university should request an appropriate salary for the role. The salary should be consistent with other equivalent roles in the organisation. All costs including the salaries must be fully justified. The Society reserves the right to offer a salary lower than that requested in the application.

**31. Q: Are lab refurbishment costs eligible?**

**A:** The Society will not cover general laboratory refurbishment costs. However, where there is a specific case (for example a lab requires some limited refurbishment to accommodate a specific piece of equipment bought on the grant) then the Society will allow some limited refurbishment costs. The Society reserves the right remove such costs that it does not consider appropriate.

**32. Q: Which costs are eligible for collaborators?**

**A:** The costs depend on where the collaborator is based.

- **UK Collaborator (HEI)** – same costing principles apply as for the UK host organisation. Please see [Grant Funding Guidance](#) for details. Salary contribution for the UK collaborator is an eligible cost, as are costs for members of their research group, consumables, and other Directly Incurred costs.
- **International Collaborator** – Costs for international collaborators cannot exceed 25% of the total amount requested. Costs will be provided at the funding rate of 100% of the direct costs, and up to 25% of the amount requested may be claimed to support indirect costs or overheads. For example, if the maximum grant amount of £8 million is being requested, a maximum of £2 million could be allocated to international collaborator costs. Within that £2 million, a maximum of £500,000 could be used to cover indirect costs and overheads. Salary contributions and overheads for the international collaborator are not eligible, but the salary costs for other research staff (PDRAs, technicians and/or contributions to PhD students) in the collaborator's lab are eligible.
- **Industry Collaboration** – Costs for industry collaborations should not exceed 20% of the grant total. The costs of industry partners should not be charged to the grant. Industry partners involved in the research are expected to contribute appropriate funding and resources to the research programme. Applicants may also include the costs of sub-contracting where appropriate.

**33. Q: Are the costs for a lab manager/project manager eligible?**

**A:** Yes.

**34. Q: Is there an expectation of match funding from the Host Organisation in any area?**

**A:** No, match funding is not required from Host Organisations outside of the standard 20% fEC. Industry partners involved in the research are expected to contribute appropriate funding and resources to the research programme.

## **ASSESSMENT PROCESS**

**35. Q: What does the rebuttals process involve?**

**A:** Applicants will have the opportunity to provide a written response to independent peer reviewer comments prior to the final Selection Committee meetings. Applicants who reach this stage will be provided with the reviewer comments, and will have two weeks to submit their response (maximum one page of response per reviewer). Further guidance will be provided to these applicants in advance of this process.

## **FEEDBACK**

### **36. Q: Can I request feedback on my Faraday Discovery Fellowship application?**

**A:** Due to the volume of applications received we are unfortunately not able to provide feedback for applications unsuccessful at Stage 1. Applicants can request feedback if their application has been unsuccessful following submission of a Stage 2 application. Details of how to request feedback will be provided when applicants are notified about the status of their application.