

Remit

The BBSRC is the UK's leading funding agency for academic research in the non-medical life sciences. It is one of the seven UK research councils. It supports over 7000 scientists, postgraduate students and support staff in universities and research institutions.

Its mission is:

- To promote and support high-quality basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training relating to the understanding and exploitation of biological systems;
- To advance knowledge and technology, and provide trained scientists and engineers, which meet the needs of users and beneficiaries (including the agriculture, bioprocessing, chemical, food, health care, pharmaceutical and other biotechnology-related industries), thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the UK and the quality of life.
- To provide advice, disseminate knowledge and promote public understanding in the fields of biotechnology and the biological sciences.

The BBSRC invests around £336 million per annum in the biosciences and funds research in contemporary science including:

- Genomics, stem cell biology, and bionanotechnology, that provide a basis for new technologies in healthcare, food safety, plant and livestock breeding, and bioprocessing
- Whole organism biology relevant to our understanding of diet and health, ageing, animal health and welfare, infectious diseases and immunity, and crop productivity
- Biological populations and systems that underpin agricultural sustainability, biodiversity and novel bio-based and renewable processes for energy and manufacturing

Research Priorities

- Ageing research: lifelong health and wellbeing
- Bioenergy
- Global security
- Living with environmental change
- Nanoscience through engineering to application: bionanotechnology
- Systems approach to biological research
- Synthetic biology
- Technology development for bioscience
- Animal health
- Crop science (food security)

Policy priorities

- Economic and social impact
- Impact on public policy
- Increased international collaboration
- Replacement, refinement and reduction (3Rs) in research using animals
- Welfare of managed animals (including livestock and companion animals)

Modes of research grant

- **Responsive Research Grants (RRG)** are awarded in response to unsolicited research proposals in any area relevant to BBSRC's mission. As a general principle, BBSRC allocates as much research grant funding as possible in responsive mode. Applications may be made in a variety of investigator-led research activities including but not limited to
 - Research projects, including technology development projects
 - Equipment or use of existing facilities
 - New facilities or infrastructure provision
 - Research networks and coordination
 - Summer schools

Research and Commercial Services

Applications are assessed by one of the four committees:

- **Committee A** (animal systems, health and wellbeing)
 - **Committee B** (Plants, microbes, food & sustainability)
 - **Committee C** (Technological and methodological development)
 - **Committee D** (Molecules, cells and industrial biotechnology).
- **Managed Mode:** calls for proposals with applications invited with one or more closing dates. These will normally be used in response to an emerging scientific opportunity where there is a need to enhance research activity to stimulate a particular area of science within the established BBSRC science base.

Research grant schemes

- **LINK** Research grants are awarded through LINK programmes to accelerate the commercial exploitation of government funded pre-competitive research and to focus on advances in science and engineering with particular commercial promise. They can be awarded to all LINK participants including industry.
- **Industrial Partnership Awards:** science-led, responsive mode grants where an industrial partner contributes in cash (non 'in-kind') at least 10% of the full economic cost of a project. Applications are assessed by the above research committees, alongside standard applications.
- **New Investigator Scheme:** designed primarily to assist newly employed university lecturers, researchers in Research Council Institutes at an equivalent level and fellows, to secure their first major element of research support funding. Applications are assessed by the above research committees, alongside standard applications.

Other funding schemes

- **Joint Research Council/Ministry of Defence Research Grants:** support research which is not only of high scientific quality but is also likely to be of relevance to the defence industries. Where an application is relevant to both BBSRC and MoD, and successful in obtaining BBSRC funding, MoD will contribute up to 50% of the value of the research grant awarded by BBSRC. A proposal can only be considered for the scheme if it has already been forwarded to the Defence Science Technology Laboratory and written confirmation of agreement to co-fund the project has been received from the DSTL..

- **Follow-on Fund:** enables the commercial potential of ideas arising from BBSRC supported research to be demonstrated. The Fund will support activities essential to securing commercial opportunities such as licensing, seed or venture finance through further scientific or technical development. A dedicated RCS [Fact Sheet](#) is available around Follow-on funding. Anyone interested in applying should speak with [Matthew Wasley](#), RCS, in the first instance.
- **Equipment:** requests for equipment as part of standard research grant applications to the research committees are accepted by the Council. These applications for equipment must be research project led. Full justification for the requested equipment must be included in the Justification of Resources attached.
- **Joint Research Projects:** provide researchers from two or more eligible institutions with an opportunity to apply for resources and funding for the same research project with a view to undertaking specific areas of the research project at each institution. Where this is the case, funds may be requested in either of two ways:
 - Submitting one research grant application from the lead institution or,
 - Submitting a research grant application from each institution.

Applications should describe the complementarity of the research and set out the respective responsibilities of each applicant.

Fellowships

- **David Phillips Fellowships:** For scientists who have demonstrated high potential during their research training and initial years of postdoctoral research.
- **Research Development Fellowships.** For younger members of university teaching staff who wish to devote themselves to full-time research.
- **Professorial Fellowships.** A number of prestigious fellowships for outstanding scientists at the height of their research career.
- **Institute Career Path Fellowships.** For early researchers wishing to be based at the Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research of Rothamsted Research in the targeted area of Sustainable Land Use and Agriculture.
- **Institute Development Fellowships.** For BBSRC scientists to spend a period of collaborative work at another research organisation.
- **Royal Society Industry Fellowships.** This scheme provides opportunities for post-doctoral employees in either industry or universities/institutes to spend a period in the other sector.
- **Returners to research fellowships.** These are 2-year awards designed to facilitate the return to research of able engineers and scientists who have taken a break for family or other reasons.

International Activities

BBSRC promotes international links at the policy level and between individual scientists to make the most of new scientific opportunities, and to explore ways of sharing knowledge and technology for mutual benefit. The following types of funding are available:

- **[International Scientific Interchange Scheme \(ISIS\)](#)**. This scheme brings scientists together to facilitate working links and access to external funding opportunities. Funding is available for travel and subsistence.
- **[China/India/Japan Partnering Awards](#)**. Three schemes aimed at fostering research links with the specific countries.
- **[International fellowships](#)**. This pilot scheme aims to support high-profile researchers for periods of up to 12 months abroad. The aim is to facilitate longer-term international exchange to the benefit of the UK science base. The scheme will introduce new expertise, further international linkages and help secure future external funding for the BBSRC research community.
- **[Workshops](#)**. A number of international workshops are funded each year, aimed at developing topics important to BBSRC's strategic plan. The workshops aim to provide input to policy formulation in emerging areas of science and/or stimulate joint working with other countries active in a particular area.

[Knowledge Transfer and Innovation](#)

The BBSRC provides advice, information and incentives for scientists it funds in universities and research institutions to help them develop commercialisation strategies for identifying, protecting and exploiting information that arises from their research.

Types of activities include:

- Industrial collaboration in research and training through LINK programmes,
- Industrial Partnerships and CASE and Industrial CASE studentships, plus pump-priming of modular training courses to deliver technical update training to scientists in industry.
- Exchange of scientists between academia and industry is encouraged through the Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (formerly the Teaching Company Scheme)
- Industry Fellowships.

Promotion of improved IP management is encouraged through a series of IP workshops.

Entrepreneurial training is advanced through a Young Entrepreneurs scheme, and mentoring in the formation of start-up companies is provided through the Research Councils' Business Plan Competition.

Intelligence/tips

RCS are involved in research intelligence gathering where they meet with key individuals around campus who have good relationships with funders or who sit on panels/review etc. The following is intelligence gained on BBSRC which is very much hearsay and should not be taken as being 100% accurate.

- LoLAs: It is understood that the current scheme which is under review will be replaced by a new "super LoLA" which will have a single call every year.
- In applying individuals need to understand the background of the reviewers/panel members and tailor their application to their interests – this could increase the success of an application.

Further Information

Further information is available via the BBSRC's [Grants Guide](#), the links above or by visiting the BBSRC website at www.bbsrc.ac.uk