

# Research and Commercial Services

## Fact Sheet

## Applying for funding to the Science and Technology Facility Council

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### Remit

The Science and Technology Facilities Council provides support for research, research infrastructure, training, knowledge transfer and public understanding activities through a variety of funding schemes. The STFC programme is divided into four main subject areas:

- Astronomy
- Particle Physics
- Particle Astrophysics
- Solar and Planetary Science

It also funds **UK membership** of international bodies such as the **European Organisation for Nuclear Research**, ([CERN](#)), the **European Space Agency** ([ESA](#)) and the **European Southern Observatory** ([ESO](#)). It contributes funds for the **UK telescopes overseas** on La Palma, Hawaii, Australia and in Chile, the UK Astronomy Technology Centre at the Royal Observatory, Edinburgh and the MERLIN/VLBI National Facility.

### Sample of Available Funding Opportunities

#### Research grants

- **Standard Research Grants**: provide funding for research proposals where the research direction is determined by the proposer. These are normally awarded for up to three years. Such grants are not for PIs or Co-Investigators for work that would normally be funded through a rolling grant at their institution.
- **Rolling Research Grants**: provide funding for projects or large scale programmes that require longer term support. They are normally awarded for a period of five years or more with progress.
- **Revisable Research Grants**: Provide support for the development and/or construction of major equipment or the maintenance and/or operation of major equipment as a research facility. They are intended for research that

is likely to warrant variable support, both in terms of finance and duration.

- **Astronomy Research Grants**: provide support for research in the areas of astronomy, cosmology, solar system science and certain aspects of particle astrophysics
- **Particle Physics Research Grants**: provide support in the areas of experimental and theoretical particle physics and certain aspects of particle astrophysics.
- **PATT Travel Grants**: are awarded for observing trips to recognized telescopes, including PPARCs telescopes.
- **Visiting Researcher Grants**: provide funding for senior scientists from the UK or overseas who are of acknowledged standing to visit and work in the Principal Investigator's Research Organisation for a period of up to twelve months.
- **Industrial Programme Support Scheme** (PIPPS) funds collaborations between UK researchers and UK Industry or other eligible partners.
- **Cross disciplinary proposals**: For research proposals that cross, or fall between, the remits of the Astronomy and particle Physics Grants Panels, such as those in particle astrophysics or gravitational physics.

#### Standard research (project) grants (for up to three years)

- **Astronomy research grants** are awarded for research in the areas of astronomy, cosmology and solar system science.
- **Particle Physics research grants** are awarded for research in areas of experimental and theoretical physics
- **Revisable research grants** provide funding for the development and/or construction of major equipment; the maintenance and/or operation of major equipment as a research facility; and research that is likely to warrant variable support, both in terms of finance and duration.

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They are reviewed on a regular basis during the lifetime of the grant.

- [STFC Industrial Programme Support Scheme \(PIPSS\)](#) provides funding to the academic partner in an academic-industry collaborative project, up to £50k per year for up to three years.
- [Panel for the Allocation of Telescope Time \(PATT\)](#) grants provide travel funds to enable researchers to undertake observing trips to facilities in the UK and overseas.
- [Technology development for astronomy scheme](#) is aimed at encouraging technology of a long-term, generic, underpinning nature, rather than narrowly-focused development work. At least 70% of the funds will be allocated to awards in priority topics which currently are space, solar-terrestrial physics, and ground-based astronomy.

## Fellowships

Enable researchers to devote themselves to independent and original research for a period are available as follows:

- [Postdoctoral Fellowships](#) for up to three years for less experienced researchers, normally those with four years or less full-time equivalent postdoctoral experience, and who have or expect to have a PhD, and who do not have a permanent academic position.
- [Advanced Fellowships](#) of up to five years for outstanding researchers with at least two years' research experience at postdoctoral level and who have proved their ability as an individual and independent researcher, and who do not have a permanent academic position.
- [Daphne Jackson Fellowships](#) are available for up to two years for those returning to science and engineering after a break. They are administered by the Daphne Jackson memorial Fellowship Trust.
- [Enterprise Fellowships](#) are designed to encourage exploitation of research and technological developments undertaken within the UK astronomy and particle physics programme. They aim to support fellows through an active process of business planning and implementation, and leads to a professional qualification "MSc in New Venture Creation. These are jointly run by STFC and the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
- [PIPSS Fellowships](#) focus on the transfer of technologies developed through PPARC research funding to industry; the transfer of technologies developed through STFC research funding to other academic disciplines; the development of an institution's

capacity for knowledge transfer from particle physics and astronomy and engagement with industry to identify R&D opportunities for technologies that may enable the STFC mission. Fellowships, which may be held for up to 4 years, will major on commercial exploitation of technologies and are not research oriented.

- [E-Science and the Grid](#): Opportunities are available for computing specialists to work on grid computing at CERN. UK University departments can also apply for e-science studentships.
- [Anglo-Australian Observatory Postdoctoral Research Fellowships](#) awarded to candidates with a strong background in any branch of physics or astrophysics, including theory, who wish to broaden their experience by working with a large telescope. Appointments are for up to 2 years.
- [CERN Fellowships](#) awarded by the [European Organisation for Nuclear Research](#) for tenure for one year, which can normally be extended for a second year.
- [ESA Fellowships](#) awarded by the European Space Agency for one year, with a possible extension for a further year.
- [Science and Society Fellowships](#) are aimed at those with significant research experience who have demonstrated a track record in outreach or communications work. The fellows will recognise and award current practitioners and enable them to expand the work they do in public engagement.

The STFC operates two grants rounds per year in Particle Physics (*closing dates 1 February and 1 September*) and Astronomy (*closing dates 1 March and 1 October*), and four for the PPARC industrial programme support scheme (PIPSS: *closing dates 1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October*). The closing date for applications in respect of all fellowship schemes run by PPARC is 1 November.

## Further Information

Further information can be found either in the [STFC's Research Grants Handbook](#) or from the PPARC web pages at <http://www.stfc.ac.uk>