

ESRC Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)

Postdoctoral Fellowships Scheme

FAQ

Eligibility

I am an international/EU student – am I eligible to apply?

There are no residential restrictions for applicants. As long as applicants completed their PhD at one of the NWDTC institutions, they are eligible to apply.

I did not undertake my PhD at one of the NWDTC universities – is there no way I can apply?

Only candidates who undertook their PhD at Lancaster, Liverpool or Manchester University can apply to this particular call. However, five different DTCs are offering similar opportunities for students who undertook their PhD with them: [Bloomsbury and UCL DTC](#), the [Oxford DTC](#), the [Scottish DTC](#) and the [South West DTC](#).

My PhD was not funded by the ESRC NWDTC – can I apply to this call?

You do not need to have been funded by the NWDTC to apply to this call, you just need to have undertaken your PhD at one of the NWDTC institutions (Lancaster, Liverpool or Manchester University).

What is the latest possible start date for the fellowship?

The ESRC have indicated that fellowships should commence by 9th January 2017. ESRC also agreed that in some instances where visas are required there might be a degree of further slippage (beyond 9 th January).

Viva

If a student is due to have their viva in the next few months, can they apply in the hope that they only get minor corrections?

Please see the eligibility section of the [Call Specification](#). Applications should only be made by people who have a PhD **or** have passed their viva with no more than minor corrections by the 9th September 2016. Candidates who are due to have their viva before the 9th September are welcome to prepare an application, on the understanding that they will not be eligible to submit the application if they receive anything beyond minor corrections.

“At the time of submission, applicants must either have a PhD or have passed their viva voce with only minor corrections” Does this mean that an applicant with an awarded PhD but it was awarded with major corrections is not eligible?

The stipulation that people pass their PhD with either no corrections or only minor corrections applies to people who have yet to be awarded their PhDs. If they have been awarded their PhDs (in the last 3 years) it does not matter what requirements were made at their viva, as long as they went on to meet them and be awarded their PhD.

Active Experience

Does the “3 years active experience” need to be within an academic institution or can be, for example, within a public sector or non-academic organisation?

The 3 years active postdoctoral experience is a maximum ('no more than 3 years'); there is no minimum as people could go straight from a PhD to one of these postdoctoral fellowships. So

there's no need to be concerned whether the <3 years is in the academic or non-academic sectors.

I completed my PhD more than three years ago. How is the “active experience” defined?

Applicants can deduct time taken for career breaks for family, health or other personal reasons. E.G. If a candidate completed their PhD three years ago, but took one year out of work to start a family, they would be considered to have two years active experience, and would be eligible.

Costs

What is the value of the fellowship?

The total costing of the fellowship, including indirect and estates costs, must be within £125k at 100% fEC. As usual, the ESRC will provide 80% fEC (i.e. £100k). Departments must make up that shortfall, and therefore must approve your application. Departments are advised to ensure that mentoring costs of up to two hours per week are included in the bid.

Mentors

How do I find a mentor?

The best place to start is to discuss your project with your previous PhD supervisor, who should be able to advise on appropriate expertise in the North West. You may also wish to discuss this with the nominated academic expert at each institution:

Lancaster University: Linda Woodhead (l.woodhead@lancaster.ac.uk)

University of Liverpool: Atif Rahman (atifr@liverpool.ac.uk)

University of Manchester: Phil Woodhouse (phil.woodhouse@manchester.ac.uk)

Lancaster University has also compiled a list of academics who have expressed an interest in becoming a mentor: <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/support-for-researchers/research-services/gcrf/esrc/>

Can my PhD supervisor be my mentor or not?

The call specification states that the mentor should not *normally* be the applicant's PhD supervisor. A PhD supervisor *can* be a mentor, but a compelling case needs to be made, e.g. if no other suitable person is available (the mentor 'should not normally be the applicant's PhD supervisor'). If your PhD supervisor is to be your mentor, they should not then also be your referee.

Selection process

How will the final fellows be selected?

A panel of academic experts from the three NWDTC institutions will consider and rank the applications in the first instance. The top candidates will be invited to interview with this panel of academic experts, the NWDTC institutional leads and the NWDTC Director.