

# 2022 Exploration Science Announcement of Opportunity

## Call for Proposals

Closing date for full proposals: **7th July 2022 at 16.00**

### 1. Scope of Call

The UK has made a major investment in ESA's Exploration Programme and the UK Space Agency wishes to secure the benefits from this investment. Exploration covers the regions where humans do, or may, in the near future, live and work, namely Low Earth Orbit, the Moon and Mars. Therefore, the UK Space Agency is making funding available to:

- Fund science research that utilises data from Mars exploration missions (Including ESA's Trace Gas Orbiter, NASA's Insight lander, Perseverance and other Mars exploration missions), or underpins future Mars exploration missions. This can include supporting science operations of current rover missions.
- Support scientists selected for groups and/or science teams, campaign science groups and other definition work related to Exploration missions (including Mars Sample Return, Artemis and Lunar Gateway and other Moon and Mars exploration missions). This would be for travel and subsistence, and the scientists time to participate in meetings.

Lunar science and the exploitation of data from Lunar missions is within the remit of STFC and is not within the scope of this call.

Exploitation of data collected on the International Space Station and other ESA SciSpace facilities where the experiment is focussed on work that is within the remit of UKRI is not within the scope of this call.

There will be a separate Exploration technology call for instrument feasibility studies and TRL raising activities and should not be applied for here.

Prospective applicants may discuss with the Agency prior to submission if they are uncertain about whether their proposal fits this call.

### 2. Aims and Objectives

This scheme is open to academics and individual scientists from the UK or overseas, working at UK Research Organisations, for proposals to fund:

- **Fellowships** - to develop promising early career researchers or allow existing academics to discipline-hop.
- **Post Doctorate Research Assistants**
- **Studentships**
- **Support for academics**, including involvement in international working groups

Although extensions to current fellowships will be considered, preference will be given to new fellowships.

### **3. Award Duration**

- For PDRAs and studentships, awards will normally be for no more than three years;
- Fellowships will be offered for no more than 36 months in total but could be held part-time for up to six years.
- Support for academics must be justified and of reasonable length in relation to the mission.

### **4. Award value**

Awards will be made in line with standard STFC criteria for PDRAs, fellowships and studentships. This is funding from the UK Space Agency, though it is administered through STFC on behalf of the UK Space Agency. Awards will be made in line with standard STFC criteria, in accordance with their financial rules (including the standard FEC application and for the length of the grant – please make sure you and your institution are fully aware of these before application - <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/before-you-apply/your-responsibilities-if-you-get-funding/meeting-ukri-terms-and-conditions-for-funding/#contents-list> ).

Reasonable costs will be permitted, but it should be noted that all costs must be justified and that the appropriateness and justification of sums requested will form part of the assessment criteria.

### **5. Grant payment**

Payments will be made to the research organisation quarterly and the first payment will be made once the formal offer letter has been accepted by the research organisation. The final payment will be made after the submission of the final reconciliation report at the end of the grant. These processes are administered by STFC, please note that UKSA remains the funder. <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/manage-your-funding-award/receiving-your-funding-award/>

### **6. Timetable**

AO Published	20th May 2022
AO Closes	7th July 2022, no later than 16.00
AO Results announced	Expected November/December 2022
Grants to start	No earlier than 1 January 2023

### **7. Grant terms and conditions**

All awards will be subject to UKRI standard grant terms and conditions, with the addition of the following specific clauses from the UK Space Agency as grant funder:

- *The UK Space Agency also reserves the right to cancel or reduce the award in the event of the project being cancelled or descope.*
- *The UK Space Agency reserves the right to terminate the grant within a 6 month notice period should it be deemed programmatically or strategically advisable to do so.*
- *The Grant holder agrees that as a condition of receiving any Funds they shall provide the UK Space Agency with all information, reports, statistics, study results and data reasonably requested by the UK Space Agency to track and assess progress and performance of the Project.*
- *The Grant Recipient shall not publish any material referring to the Funds or this agreement without the prior written agreement of the UK Space Agency.*
- *The Grant Recipient shall acknowledge the role of the UK Space Agency as grant funder in any materials that refer to the Project and in any written or spoken public presentations about the Project as it relates to this agreement. Such acknowledgements (where appropriate and with UK Space Agency's written consent shall include the UK Space Agency's name and logo (or any future name or logo adopted by the Grant Funder).*
- *In using the UK Space Agency's name and logo, the Grant Recipient shall comply with all reasonable branding guidelines issued by the UK Space Agency from time to time.*

## **8. Monitoring and Evaluation and Reporting**

All grants awarded will require the awardee to report on impacts and outcomes annually through the ResearchFish process<sup>1</sup> as per UKRI grant terms and conditions, both during the grant period and for 5 years afterwards.

In addition, during the grant period, quarterly written reports will be required to be provided to the UK Space Agency detailing the activity carried out within the scope of the grant. Regular progress meetings will also be held between the grant holder and the UK Space Agency to monitor and evaluate progress for the length of the grant.

## **9. Proposal Assessment**

In assessing your proposal, the UK Space Agency will seek comment from at least two additional referees, to which you will be able to respond. This will be a formal peer review process where relevant academic leaders will be asked to comment on your proposal. You will be given opportunity to respond to reviewer comments before the formal Review Panel takes place.

**Please note: It may take up to 6 months for the UK Space Agency to complete the evaluation process.** A final assessment and ranking of proposals will be made by a Review Panel which will draw experience across a broad range of science disciplines and representatives of UK Space Agency.

In considering the proposal, the panel will use the following criteria:

- Science excellence of the proposal (40%)
  - This score will be based on the scores awarded by the peer review assessment.
- Relevance to and priority within the UK Space Agency Exploration programme (15%)

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/manage-your-funding-award/report-your-research-outcomes/>

- Contributions of the selected research and the expected outcomes to the UK science and exploration activities as related to the National Space Strategy<sup>2</sup> and the global exploration endeavour outlined in the Global Exploration Roadmap<sup>3</sup>.
- Necessity and timeliness of requested funding (15%)
  - Criticality of the proposal to the area of research.
- Value for Money (10%)
  - Requested costs are justified, appropriate and reasonable
  - Value of any leveraged funding (including in-kind and financial)
- Research Environment and Team membership (15%):
  - Suitability of the proposed research team to successfully undertake the work covered by this proposal.
  - Appropriateness of team membership and the lead applicants relevant research record.
  - For Studentships: the quality of training and supervision, the ability to publish quickly
  - For Fellowships: the potential of the individual including the capability to perform the wider and responsibilities on an academic career
  - For PDRA's: how far a PDRA would enhance the project
  - For Support for Academics: research track record
- Impact and Outreach plan (5%)
  - Use of the research and activities to inspire others.
  - Plans to communicate the results of your selected experiment.

The review panel will be made up of independent academic reviewers across a broad range of science disciplines with programmatic support from the UK Space Agency, who will consider all proposals against the evaluation criteria outlined above. The panel will recommend a final assessment and ranking of proposals to the UK Space Agency. The panel, in finalising the awards to be made, may take account of the distribution of awards in terms of subject, type of award and institution.

## **10. How to Apply**

Refer to Annex A

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-space-strategy>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.globalspaceexploration.org/wordpress/wp-content/isecg/GER\\_2018\\_small\\_mobile.pdf](https://www.globalspaceexploration.org/wordpress/wp-content/isecg/GER_2018_small_mobile.pdf)

### **11. Confidentiality**

The information you supply on the application form will be treated in confidence and used by the UK Space Agency in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules.

All applications are made in confidence.

### **12. Further Information**

For further information, please contact:

Joanna Bird  
Exploration Science Community Officer  
UK Space Agency,  
North Star Avenue,  
Swindon  
SN2 1SZ  
[spaceexploration@ukspaceagency.gov.uk](mailto:spaceexploration@ukspaceagency.gov.uk)  
Tel: 07920 596078 (between 09.30-14.30 weekdays)

## Annex A – How to Apply

Please read all of the guidance carefully. Contact the UK Space Agency ([SpaceExploration@ukspaceagency.gov.uk](mailto:SpaceExploration@ukspaceagency.gov.uk)) if you have any questions on any aspect

### NOTE:

UKSA is the funder of this grant and we use the UKRI grant application system through STFC to administer grants.

You will need to create, **but not submit, an application** on the [Je-S system](#) through the following steps:

1. Please fill in a **Je-S form** via <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/> for a **STFC**:
  - a. **Standard Proposal** as the document type
  - b. **Standard** as the scheme
  - c. **Urgency Grants – Open Call** as the Call/Type/Mode

and **produce a .pdf of the completed form**. To do this, follow *document actions* --> *print document* --> select print format as 'pdf' --> *download the print*.

2. Send this **.pdf** file, along with the relevant annexes (as listed below as a single PDF document is preferred), to [SpaceExploration@ukspaceagency.gov.uk](mailto:SpaceExploration@ukspaceagency.gov.uk), to arrive before the closing date.

For full details in using the JeS application system, please refer to [the JeS Handbook](#)<sup>4</sup>

**Please note:** it is the responsibility of the proposal Principal Investigator to clear their submission with the relevant finance and research offices of their institution. Such clearance must be obtained prior to submission.

Applications must be received no later than **16:00 on 7th July 2022**. Applications received after this will **not** be considered.

### Points to note:

1. All the information boxes on the JeS form must be filled in including Objectives; Summary and Academic Beneficiaries. The Summary must not be the same as the Objectives as the Agency may use the Summary for the public in futures press releases or Agency news stories.
2. Any additional documentation that are included in the .pdf, but are not stated in the guidance (e.g. covering letters or additional letters of support) will **not** be considered. It will not be seen by reviewers or the review panel and will not count towards the proposal.
3. If any part of the proposal extends over the stated page limit, the additional pages will be removed, not be considered and will not count towards the proposal.

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/Index.htm#t=pages%2FJeSHelpdesk.htm>

## Annexes to applications through JeS:

All annexes **MUST** be:

- A4 paper size with minimum of 2cm margins
- Font size of no smaller than 11pt

## Fellowships should have the following annexes:

- 1) **Case for Support:** This should be no more than six sides in 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins) (excluding references). Containing the following information:
  - a) **Description of the Project**
  - b) **Monitoring of Progress** - This should explain the monitoring process that will be used and the type of remedial actions that could be put in place if required. Does the institute have an approved code of practice covering monitoring procedures?
  - c) **Research Environment** - Provide some contextual information of the research environment, including the number of PhD students.
  - d) **Impact and outreach statement/plan**
  - e) **Justification of Resources Requested**
- 2) **Curriculum Vitae:** two sides of A4 paper
- 3) **Publications List**
- 4) **Data Management Plan**<sup>5</sup> (Maximum length of two sides of A4. If it is felt not relevant then upload a document stating why to pass validation).
- 5) **A statement from the Head of Department** at the host institution in support of the application (maximum one side of A4)
- 6) **Two references** in support of your application. One, and only one, must be from the host institution. The reference from the host institution must provide an explicit statement *outlining the advantages gained from hosting the fellowship*.
- 7) **Current Funding List for the PI:** This should include title, funder, value, duration and level of applicants time spent on the project. If the title is not self-explanatory include a sentence to explain what the project is about.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/councils/stfc/guidance-for-applicants/what-to-include-in-your-proposal/data-management-plan/>

Post Doctorate Research Assistants should have the following annexes:

- 1) **Case for Support:** This should be no more than six sides of A4 (excluding references). Containing the following information:
  - a) **Description of the Project**
  - b) **Management plan:** Proposed management of both the project and resources, identifying the training and career development opportunities for personnel working on the project.
  - c) **The relationship to any earlier or current work** of the applicant(s) and/or collaborating organisation(s) and any relevant work elsewhere.
  - d) **Impact and outreach statement/plan**
  - e) **Justification of Resources Requested**

Please note: If the proposal is from a **named** PDRA, a CV and Publications list **must** be included.

- 3) **Curriculum Vitae:** two sides of A4
- 4) **Publications List**

6) **Current Funding List for the PI:** This should include title, funder, value, duration and level of applicants time spent on the project. If the title is not self-explanatory include a sentence to explain what the project is about.

Project Studentships should have the following annexes:

- 1) **Case for Support:** This should be no more than three sides of A4 (excluding references). Containing the following information:
  - a) **Description of the Project**
  - b) **Supervision** - There should be a brief description of the experience the supervisors have. New lecturers are encouraged to apply and should indicate their experience to how the institution will support them.
  - c) **Monitoring of Progress** - This should explain the monitoring process that will be used and the type of remedial actions that could be put in place if required. Does the institute have an approved code of practice covering PhD student supervisory and monitoring procedures?
  - d) **Training Opportunities** - This section should detail the training that would be provided to the student, both compulsory and optional. This should include the number of lecturing (instruction) hours attended by the student over the duration of the award, excluding summer schools. The project must provide the student with training in the methods of research associated with the work to be undertaken. The student must have the opportunity to undertake broader skills training during the course of a PhD.
  - e) **Research Environment** - Provide some contextual information of the research environment, including the number of PhD students.
  - f) **Impact statement/plan**
  - g) **Justification of Resources Requested**



- 2) **Current Funding List for the PI:** This should include title, funder, value, duration and level of applicants time spent on the project. If the title is not self-explanatory include a sentence to explain what the project is about.

Support for Academics should have the following annexes:

- 1) **Case for Support:** This should be no more than three sides of A4 (excluding references).  
Containing the following information:
  - a) **Description of the Project**
  - b) **Monitoring of Progress** – This should explain the monitoring process that will be used and the type of remedial actions that could be put in place if required. Does the institute have an approved code of practice covering monitoring procedures?
  - c) **Research Environment** – Provide some contextual information of the research environment, including the number of PhD students.
  - d) **Impact and outreach statement/plan**
  - e) **Justification of Resources Requested**
- 2) **Curriculum Vitae:** two sides of A4
- 3) **Publications List**
- 4) **Current Funding List for the PI:** This should include title, funder, value, duration and level of applicants time spent on the project. If the title is not self-explanatory include a sentence to explain what the project is about.

---

## Application Checklist

IMPORTANT: Before submission, please ensure you have included the following:

	Studentship	Fellowship	PDRA	Support for academics
<b>JeS form</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Case for Support</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>CV</b>	No	Yes	*Possible	Yes
<b>Publications</b>	No	Yes	*Possible	Yes
<b>HoD Statement</b>	No	Yes	No	No
<b>References x2</b>	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Current Funding</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

---

\*If the proposal is for a *named* PDRA, a CV and publications list *must* be included in the application.