

Newton International Fellowships 2026 – FAQs

This list is not exhaustive. You may be able to find the answer to your questions in the Scheme Notes for the round. Please check all relevant documents before contacting the Grants Team. Queries related to the Newton International Fellowship can be directed to info@newtonfellowships.org

Eligibility & Assessment

1. Q. What changes have been made to the 2026 round by the Royal Society?

A: Changes to Eligibility:

- Applicants must now have no more than five years' active full-time postdoctoral experience post-PhD, taking into account career breaks. In previous rounds this was no more than seven years.
- Applicants must have been awarded their PhD or successfully defended their doctoral thesis before the closing date for applications. In previous rounds this was before the start of the fellowship award.
- UK Sponsors will be limited to one application per round. In previous rounds there was no limit.

A: Changes to the Selection Process:

- There will be a single submission application process, but application forms will be reviewed in two parts, with a 'triaging' stage by committee based on Part A of the application. Full applications (Parts A and B) will then be reviewed for those applicants that are longlisted.

A: Changes to the Application Form:

- The application form is composed of three parts (Parts A, B and C). Please see the scheme notes for further details.
- Heads of Departments no longer submit a pdf statement of support but will be required to confirm support through a series of questions in the application form.
- Only one Nominated Reference is required. This reference can be from the UK or overseas. In previous rounds two nominated references were required.

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

A: The scheme notes (Section 4) provide guidance regarding eligibility for the scheme. Please consult the scheme notes before contacting the grants team. Eligibility can only be assessed based on the information provided in your email therefore a final decision is subject to receiving a full application on Flexi-Grant.

3. Q: How is 'five years active full-time postdoctoral experience' calculated when considering eligibility?

A: Career breaks and gaps between employment contracts are considered when calculating active research experience. Part-time contracts are also considered, e.g. if you hold/have held a research contract at 0.5 FTE, your research experience will be pro-rated accordingly.

We are happy to review your career history if you are unsure if your work would be considered actual research experience or you have taken complex career breaks and are unable to calculate the time you have taken out of research since

completing your PhD, please contact the Newton International Fellowship team on the email address above.

You will need to provide the following information when contacting us:

- date of your successful PhD examination/viva.
- details of any research and non-research positions.
- details of career breaks/periods of leave and any additional circumstances that may have affected your research career.

Please provide dates in the format of DD/MM/YYYY (days may be omitted if unknown).

4. Q: What is meant by the eligibility criteria "applicants must have been awarded their PhD or successfully defended their doctoral thesis by the closing date for applications"?

A: Applicants must have had their formal oral examination (viva voce/PhD defence/thesis defence presentation) by the closing date for applications. If you have had your viva but not your award certification yet before the deadline, it is the successful viva/examination date that should be entered as date for "PhD award date" in Part A of the application form. You must have been awarded your PhD degree unconditionally by the time of the closing date for applications. Please use the date of the unconditional award in the application. Your degree awarding organisation will be able to let you know if your degree is being considered unconditional and the relevant date.

5. Q: Does the fellowship have to be two years, i.e. can I do a shorter fellowship?

A: Newton International Fellowships must have a full-time duration of two years, you cannot hold the fellowship for less time.

However, there is the option of working part-time for health or caring responsibilities and in such instances you can hold the fellowship part-time over a longer period (for example, you could hold it at 50% part-time over four years). Applications should be submitted with a two-year duration and then, if awarded, part-time working requests can be submitted to the Royal Society.

6. Q: If I am successful, is it strict that I have to move to the UK or is it possible to just visit regularly?

A: Attracting talent to the UK and gaining experience across international borders (in the UK) is a core aim of this scheme. Therefore, tele- or remote working from abroad is not allowed for the fellowships; it is expected that you move to the UK for the duration of the fellowship.

7. Q: Am I still eligible for the Newton International Fellowship if I move to the UK during application stage, or after the application deadline?

A: If you fulfil all the eligibility criteria (please see Section 4 of the scheme notes) at the time of the application deadline date, provide the required information in your application, and submit your application before moving to the UK, you are eligible for the scheme. Moving to the UK after the application deadline date does not affect an applicant's eligibility status.

8. Q: I have dual-nationality/citizenship, one being British. Am I still eligible to apply for a Newton International Fellowship?

A: Please contact us providing further information on your dual nationality/citizenship and time spent in the UK. We will then be able to advise on how your individual situation may affect your eligibility.

9. Q: My research proposal is interdisciplinary – which Royal Society Subject Group/Area(s) should I submit my proposal to?

A: Please refer to our website for information on which subjects we fund: [Subject Groups and Areas | Royal Society](#). Please discuss with your UK Sponsor who may be able to advise on which primary field of research would be best placed. Please select the subject group/area(s) that most closely defines the research area of the research proposal from the drop-down menu and tick box options. This will enable us to allocate the application to the most appropriate assessment committee. The subject group and areas that you select in this section of your application play a vital role in matching your application with appropriate assessors, so it is extremely important to select only the most relevant subject sub-categories from the list. Please select between 1 to 4 tick box options, with 4 as the maximum.

10. Q: My research is in the humanities and/or social sciences subject areas. How do I apply?

A: Please apply for the International Fellowship through the [British Academy](#) website. For specific questions regarding your eligibility or the remit of the scheme you can contact the British Academy and review their scheme notes. Humanities and Social Sciences applications submitted through the Royal Society will be made ineligible as they are outside the Royal Society's remit.

11. Q: How do I choose a UK Host Organisation?

A: Please see our website for details on eligible Host Organisations ([Making a grant application | Royal Society](#)) Look for places that are active in your field and try to find a Host Organisation that will give some help in preparing your application. Find out how the host will support the fellowship in terms of space and resources, and possibly longer-term prospects. Choosing a Host Organisation is an opportunity for you to find somewhere that provides you with collaborative links, access to facilities, and training and development options that will enhance your research. Your host organisation should support you through from your application to your award.

12. Q: Can I be hosted in a British Overseas Territory institution?

A: Institutions in British Overseas Territories are not eligible to be the host for a Newton International Fellow.

13. Q: Will there be an interview round for the assessment?

A: Interviews are not conducted on this scheme. Please see Section 5.2 of the Scheme Notes for details on our assessment process.

14. Q: Do you allow resubmissions?

A: Each application round is treated independently; therefore, resubmissions are allowed if the applicant continues to meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme. There is no set waiting period before resubmitting, i.e., you can re-apply in the subsequent round after being unsuccessful.

15. Q: What is the status of my application?

A: When the application has been submitted and the submission has been approved by the host organisation, the applicant will receive a confirmation of submission email. The applicant will also receive a confirmation email, once the application has passed the eligibility checking stage. After this stage, the application will be in the review status, and therefore there will be no further updates until the decision notification stage scheduled for August unless your application is made unsuccessful earlier at longlisting or shortlisting.

16. Q: Will I receive feedback on my application?

A: Unfortunately, due to the high volume of applications the Royal Society receive for Newton International Fellowships, we will be unable to provide individualised feedback.

17. Q: Can I apply for other fellowships at the same time as the Newton International Fellowships?

A: We understand that you might apply for other opportunities at the same time as the NIF. Please include any active fellowship applications in the 'Applicant Research Funding' section of the application form. If your applications are successful, you will be required to choose one fellowship as you will not be able to hold a NIF in conjunction with another fellowship.

18. Q: What are the typically success rates for the scheme?

A: This is a very competitive scheme. Success rates are published on the [scheme webpage](#) under 'Application and offer data'.

References & Letters of Support

19. Q: What information should be included in the nominated referee statement?

A: The primary consideration for a nominated referee is that they are able to comment independently and authoritatively on your application. The referee should be someone who has worked closely with you and is familiar with your research (for example, a PhD or postdoctoral supervisor, mentor, prior collaborator). You should make sure they are able to provide a reference before adding them to your application.

The nominated referee will have to provide a PDF formatted statement on headed paper, that includes their name, title, and contact details. In that statement they will have to provide an unbiased comment. We do not have guidance on formatting beyond this.

Nominated Referees should comment on:

- The Applicant's previous experience, the proposed research project, and their suitability for the proposed research project and this international fellowship.

The Newton International Fellowship programme provides support for outstanding early career researchers to make a first step towards developing an independent research career through gaining experience across international borders. It is aimed to promote independence of the fellow.

20. Q: How do I check if my potential nominated referee is part of the assessment committee?

A: Please see our website for details on who is part of the Newton International Fellowship Standing Committees: [Committees, Working Groups, and Councils | Royal Society | Royal Society](#)

UK Sponsor

21. Q: What is the role of the UK Sponsor?

A: The Newton International Fellowship is aimed to promote independence of the fellow. These are personal fellowships and not a group or departmental postdoc for the Sponsor's laboratory. The UK Sponsor's role is to provide mentoring, support, advice on research direction and career guidance throughout the duration of the award. The Sponsor is not a principal investigator or co-applicant for this award. Please see Section 4.3 of the Scheme Notes for more information.

22. Q: How do I find a UK Sponsor and can the Royal Society assist me in doing so?

A: The Royal Society is not able to assist in identifying UK Sponsors. Applicants should contact prospective UK Sponsors at their proposed UK Host Organisation.

23. Q: Can an additional UK Sponsor be added to the application?

A: Additional UK Sponsors or co-investigators cannot be added to the application as participants on Flexi-Grant. However, if the applicant will receive additional support during their fellowship from another faculty member, this information can be highlighted in the UK Sponsor statement of support and/or the Justification for choice of UK Host Organisation.

24. Q: Can a UK Sponsor support more than one applicant in a single round?

A: From the 2026 round onwards, changes to the eligibility criteria mean that each UK Sponsor may support only one application per round. This does not mean one application per institution, it means that each UK academic Sponsor can only support one application in any round.

25. Q: Can an Emeritus professor act as a UK Sponsor?

A: Emeritus Professors can act as a UK Sponsors if they have an agreement in place with the Host Organisation that permits this. They must have Emeritus Professor status at the host institution for the duration of the fellowship and the host institution must approve the application. The Emeritus Professor must ensure, in collaboration with the Head of Department, that the commitments from the Host Organisation (Documented in section 4.4 of the scheme notes) are met.

26. Q: How far in advance should I contact a potential Sponsor when preparing my application?

A: It is highly recommended that you contact potential Sponsors as early as possible, ideally well before the application deadline. Many Sponsors and departments require time to consider proposals and complete their internal approval processes. As a guideline, we suggest reaching out at least one month in advance of the application deadline and preferably longer, to ensure sufficient time for discussions, revisions, and approvals.

27. Q: Can I return to my UK-based PhD supervisor or organisation?

A: Applicants proposing to return to their UK-based PhD organisation, PhD supervisor, or postdoctoral supervisor are generally considered ineligible unless exceptional reasons are provided. If applicants choose to proceed with this option, they must include a sound justification in the application, with a strong scientific rationale for the return.

This policy also applies to non-UK-based PhD supervisors who are now working at a UK institution.

Application Form

28. Q: What are each of the parts of the Flexi-Grant application form used for?

A: All parts of the application should be prepared diligently and with care. Part A will be reviewed at Triage stage determining whether your application is longlisted. Parts A and B will be reviewed at full assessment if your application is longlisted. Part C will be used for administrative purposes such as determining eligibility and assigning your application to assessors and checking finances.

29. Q: Does the research proposal have margins or image limits?

A: There are no restrictions on margins and figures. Tables and images are to be included in the specified page limit. The research proposal may be accepted in landscape orientation only if submitting a PDF file. For more information, please see the Research Proposal section in Section 10.3 of the Scheme Notes.

30. Q: Does the 3-page PDF limit include references?

A: No, references can be included in addition to the 3-page limit.

31. Q: I cannot fit all of my publications in the application due to the word limit. Which ones should I include?

A: Please include your most relevant publications (up to 10). If you are the first author, you can add 'et al' while if you are not the first author, you can include the initials for all contributing.

32. The financial details section of the application form requires a Host Organisation type. How do I know which my Organisation is?

A: Please contact your UK Sponsor for clarification over whether your proposed Host Organisation is a Higher Education Institute (HEI), or an Independent Research Organisation (IRO) or Public Sector Research Establishment (PSRE). It is important that this is identified correctly. Please note that the financial details section of the application form must be filled in with the oversight of your Host Organisation's Research/Finance office. Therefore, the Research Support participant role can be used on Flexi-Grant for this purpose.

33. The Royal Society's Newton International Fellowship funding cap is £280,000. Is this 80% or 100%?

A: Please see the [Royal Society Grant Funding Guidance](#) and the budget table in the Financial Details section in the Flexi-Grant application for clarification over which budget headings are funded at 80% and 100%. Please note that this differs depending on whether your Host Organisation is a Higher Education Institute (HEI) or Independent Research Organisation (IRO) or Public Sector Research Establishment (PSRE).

£280,000 is the maximum contribution (excluding Relocation and Visa expenses which can be applied for above the cap) the Royal Society will pay towards the fellowship. Therefore, for budget headings funded by the Royal Society at 80%, (for Higher Education Institutes), the Host Organisation must contribute the remaining 20%. Please see values below as a guide:

Example Budget Heading	Royal Society's Contribution (To be entered into the budget table)	Host Organisation's contribution	Total
HEI: Salary (at 80%)	80% e.g. £35,000 in Year 1	20% e.g. £8,750 in Year 1	100% e.g. £43,750 (Gross Salary) in Year 1
IRO: Salary (at 100%)	100% e.g. £43,750 in Year 1	0%	100% e.g. £43,750 (Gross Salary) in Year 1

34. Q: What will my gross, and net, salary be?

A: Newton International Fellows' gross salary will be the sum of the Royal Society's contribution (80%) and a contribution of 20% made by the Host Organisation if it is a HEI. If your Host Organisation is an IRO or PSRE, 100% of your salary will come from the Royal Society's contribution.

It is expected that the requested salary will be comparable to academic staff at an equivalent career stage in the field. Salary values must be based on the host institutional scales. Please see the [Royal Society Grant Funding Guidance](#) for further guidance.

You can ask your Host Organisation for your net ('take-home') salary which will depend on variables such as UK national insurance and pension contributions.

35. 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 and/or Statements of Support from the Head of Department and Nominated Referee are compulsory, while the Research Support is optional and can be revoked if no longer needed.