

## Research Leadership Awards Guidance for Applicants 2025

The scheme aims to create an opportunity for talented early career scholars to develop and demonstrate research leadership by supporting the career development and the project management of a modest team or group and through the development of their own intellectual leadership, leading to research that may significantly change the established landscape in a particular field of inquiry.

In the 2025 competition, the Trust Board is keen to focus the scheme on early career-stage academics who have yet to have the opportunity to lead a team; the eligibility criteria have been amended to reflect this. Please read the eligibility section carefully.

Each grant runs over a period of 4 to 5 years, and will be for up to £1 million, for staff salaries and associated costs.

**Each institution is limited to one bid only.**

**Before beginning your application, please read the information below.**

### Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for a Research Leadership Award at the time of application, you must:

- Have had at least two years full-time or equivalent experience in a research or teaching post in a university after the date of your PhD award
- Already hold a permanent academic appointment at a UK university at lecturer level or equivalent, or be nominated for the award by a UK university that undertakes to offer a contract for the duration of the award, with the expectation that a permanent role would be offered by the end of the award. Applicants must already have the right to work in the UK and be resident in the UK during the tenure of the award.
- Be at an early stage of your academic career such that the trajectory of your research contribution has yet to become firmly established. This means that you must not:
  - Have held an equivalent award or fellowship that provided funds to establish an independent research group
  - Have held project grant funding in excess of £100k in a single award\*
  - Have led a team of research staff, or managed PDRA staff.

\*Personal funding that exceeds £100k in a single award is allowable (i.e. Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship, British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship, MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowship, etc) provided the award had no provision for managing staff. You will be asked to confirm your eligibility for the award in a 300-word statement.

Research Leadership Awards are tenable in UK universities with research degree awarding powers, where award holders will be employees of the university at which they hold their award and subject to that university's terms and conditions of employment. Where the nominated candidate is not already a permanent member of the university academic staff, the Trust would expect a permanent role to be offered by the end of the award.

**Applicants at Senior Lecturer, Reader/Associate Professor or Professor level or equivalent are therefore not eligible to apply.**

We understand institutions use different terminology for academic roles, and that if someone believes they are eligible based on the criteria, but they have a title which would otherwise make them ineligible, please send through your draft eligibility statement (up to 300 words) via email for consideration.

## Topics

Proposals are welcome in any research area, with the exception of the following:

- studies of disease, illness and disabilities in humans and animals
- research that is intended to inform clinical practice or the development of medical applications
- policy-driven research where the principal objective is to assemble an evidence base for immediate policy initiatives
- research where advocacy is an explicit component
- research aimed principally at an immediate commercial application
- proposals in which the balance between assembling a database and the related subsequent research is heavily inclined to the former

More details and examples are given here: [www.leverhulme.ac.uk/research-we-do-not-fund](http://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/research-we-do-not-fund)

If applicants are uncertain about eligibility, they are encouraged to email the Trust before beginning an application.

## What the Trust offers

### **Support for research staff and students**

At least 75% of the resources requested must be used to provide funding for staff costs. This can include:

- Where the applicant already holds a permanent appointment at the university – a maximum of 24 months' teaching replacement, usually starting at the most junior point of the lecturer scale at the institution concerned, for an individual to undertake the applicant's teaching duties during the award.
- Where the applicant does not hold a permanent appointment at the university, their salary – including NI, superannuation and London allowance, where applicable, up to a maximum of £250,000 (prorated for durations less than 60 months). The Trust expects the university to contribute any remaining salary costs throughout the duration of the grant.
- Salaries for research staff, including research assistants, research technicians and postgraduate students.

The expectation of the Trust is that the applicant will dedicate a minimum of 0.8 FTE to the award.

Research assistants should have a research degree or equivalent research experience.

The tuition fees and maintenance costs of one or more PhD studentships may be included, provided they are set at the base rate for Research Council awards for UK students. Support for an overseas student is allowable but requires explicit justification, addressing how their specific skills are to contribute to the project. The additional costs of overseas student fees will need to be waived or covered by the institution.

There will be no provision for overhead costs.

### **Associated research costs**

These can be included up to a maximum of 25% of the total budget. This percentage is a maximum and not a target.

The following are examples of such eligible costs:

- pool technical services, computing, clerical staff costs
- travel and subsistence costs directly related to the research activity—these can include conference attendance, provided that such attendance can be shown to make a direct contribution to the research project
- consumables directly related to the research activity

### How to apply

#### **Please note that each institution is limited to one bid only.**

Institutional approval by the host institution is required as part of the application procedure, confirming that the necessary financial commitment can be made and providing details of the facilities with which the applicant will be provided. It is a condition that the host department has identified and secured the source of the funding for an applicant by the closing date and that this is specifically allocated to the individual concerned. The funding contributed by the host university must be drawn from generally available funds and cannot be associated with any other grants received by the university.

Host universities should ensure that the starting salary has been agreed with the applicant prior to finalising the application, and that this is in line with the university's salary policy.

Host departments must provide the candidate with their own computer and dedicated desk and/or laboratory space. Host departments must also provide the candidate with the necessary computing equipment for working from home, where applicable.

Once a university has selected its chosen candidate, it should send the applicant's name, departmental affiliation and email address to Emily Nisbet at [grants@leverhulme.ac.uk](mailto:grants@leverhulme.ac.uk). Access will then be granted to the [Leverhulme Trust Grants Management System](#). The recommended browser to use is Google Chrome.

When completing the application form, please refer to the [Application Help Notes](#).