Concern over aid money used for research
Billions routed through GCRF and Newton Fund under scrutiny

THE GOVERNMENT’S DECISION to spend a sizeable chunk of the foreign aid budget on UK-led research projects is being heavily reviewed.

Observers are increasingly concerned that the Global Challenges Research Fund and the Newton Fund are distorting the priorities of both aid and research spending. The funds are classified as Official Development Assistance.

The GCRF has a budget of £1.5 billion and the Newton Fund has £585 million, both between 2016-17 and 2020-21. This represents a sizeable part of the £20bn science budget for 2016-17 to 2019-20. Both funds support partnerships between researchers in the UK and in lower to middle-income countries. Work must be led by UK researchers, and counts both towards the government’s legal obligation to spend 0.7 per cent of GDP on ODA and its target to spend 2.4 per cent of GDP on R&D by 2027.

One policy expert said that the large amount of funding classified as ODA and targeted at low-income countries “distorts what we can do in research” because there is less money for partnerships with other countries. They were speaking at meeting on the internationalisation of research hosted by the Research and Enterprise Network for Universities on 23 May, held under the Chatham House rule. “It is becoming increasingly difficult to set up collaborations with Japan, which used to be a top partner, and Russia, which we are trying to improve relations with,” the expert said.

On the aid side there are concerns about the benefits for lowest-income countries, especially those with less capacity to carry out excellent research. Newton Fund rules explicitly state that partner countries must have a fairly developed research and higher-education system and be able to provide match-funding.

Gideon Rabinowitz, a policy manager at the charity Oxfam, said: “A big concern around the GCRF is that there isn’t enough emphasis on channelling resource through research entities in lower-income countries.” Even where this does occur, it is to institutions in emerging economies rather than the very poorest ones, he said.

In evidence to the House of Commons International Development Committee, which is carrying out an inquiry into the definition and administration of ODA, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact warned that the government was getting “closer to the limits of what is a permissible use of ODA under UK legislation and international rules”.

Alison Evans, ICAI’s chief commissioner, said that concern was due to some funds having a “dual purpose” of helping low-income countries and serving the UK’s interest. “That is a complicated balancing act,” Evans said. “There is very little clarity around how you achieve and measure the secondary purpose of meeting the UK national interest.” The government should be “incredibly transparent” about this and “never allow it to trump the primary purpose of ODA”, she said.

The international development committee’s report will be published in the first week of June. Conservative MP for Mid Derbyshire Pauline Latham, who sits on the committee, said she thought the government could legitimately spend ODA funds on research but only if the Department for International Development improved its oversight of them.

A spokeswoman for UK Research and Innovation said ODA funds “enable interdisciplinary approaches to tackling complex development challenges, while strengthening the capacity of our partners in developing countries”. UKRI is also preparing to launch a £110m fund to support collaboration with non-ODA eligible nations over a period of three years, she said.

A spokesman for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said that GCRF and Newton Fund spending “formed strong relationships” with low-income countries.

But Noel Castree, professor of geography at the University of Manchester, said: “To so classify research as aid implies a certain paternalism of UK expertise—one that many British academics would feel most uncomfortable about.”

by Eleni Coura
ecnews@ResearchResearch.com

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Issue No. 523
International rescue

Is it research funding, overseas aid, or both?

International collaboration is intrinsic to the lives of many of the UK’s researchers. As we are frequently reminded, more than half of the country’s research output involves international partnership; a far cry from four decades ago, when not even 5 per cent of UK research publications had an international co-author.

Given this shift, and the looming prospect of Brexit, it is no surprise that questions around the future of the country’s global research partnerships are preoccupying researchers and policymakers alike.

They will be at the heart of discussions at next month’s Inorms conference of research managers in Edinburgh. This week, however, the spotlight has fallen on an area of contention that cuts even deeper: the relationship between research and overseas aid.

As we report on the cover, scrutiny of this relationship is on the rise. MPs are examining the spending of money designated as aid for low-income countries, known as Official Development Assistance, on research programmes led by UK universities.

This cash, channelled through the Global Challenges Research Fund and the Newton Fund, is worth more than £2 billion until 2020-21. It is a clear boon for universities and—on the basis that their founding purpose is to use knowledge for the good of society—has the potential to bring real benefits to the countries with which they work. But for that potential to be fulfilled, there is a fundamental question that needs to be considered far more carefully by government. What does it actually want this money to do?

Whitehall counts the cash in question towards both the government’s overseas-aid spending obligation and the UK’s own target to ratchet up spending on R&D to 2.4 per cent by 2027. Given that prime minister Theresa May, in a major speech on science last week, chose to emphasise that questions around the future of the country’s global research partnerships are preoccupying researchers and policymakers alike.

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Observers are concerned that this tension is skewing the direction of aid spending, preventing the lowest-income countries from benefitting as their higher-education systems are not developed enough to participate in research projects. At the same time, directing significant research funds towards partnerships with low-income countries is, some believe, reducing the money available for partnerships with others. Partnerships that are of increasing importance to strengthen relationships beyond Europe.

For universities, a further danger is that the scrutiny that has already begun within parliament ends up at their doorstep. So even though the tension is not of their making, institutions need to justify genuine benefit to the communities that overseas aid is intended to help.

For government, the issue is further proof, if it were needed, that the UK’s place in international research needs urgent consideration.

The questions, however, are much more far-reaching than GDP targets and the relationship with the countries across the channel.

This is not just about who researchers partner with, and how, but just as importantly about why they do it.
UK contests exclusion from Galileo programme
The UK government has lodged a “strong objection” to European Union attempts to exclude UK companies from parts of the Galileo satellite navigation system after Brexit. The Department for Exiting the EU said in a position paper that excluding UK firms from security-related elements of Galileo could risk “delays of up to three years and additional costs of up to €1 billion [£875 million]”. On 21 May, defence secretary Gavin Williamson said that a Royal Air Force unit was examining the defence requirements of a UK satellite system for global positioning. The government will also assess the UK’s financial contributions to Galileo, he said.

Migration committee pulls heavily criticised student survey
The Migration Advisory Committee has withdrawn a survey designed to measure attitudes towards international students that formed part of its ongoing review of the impact of overseas students on UK universities. UK students had been asked to rate the impact that their overseas peers had on their academic and social university experiences. Researchers criticised the wording of the survey, which they said included leading questions, and the fact that it was openly accessible, so there was no way to ensure that only students responded.

Union and university leaders appoint panel to examine pension scheme
Joanne Segars, a pensions executive, has been appointed chairwoman of the Joint Expert Panel that will examine the valuation of the Universities Superannuation Scheme, which affects how contributions and benefits are set. Segars is chairwoman of LGPS Central, a company that manages the assets of nine local authority pension funds. The expert panel will start its work soon, after all its members were appointed last week. It was set up as a result of an agreement between the University and College Union and the vice-chancellors’ group Universities UK, following a dispute over proposed reforms to the pension scheme.

Housing ministry seeks chief scientist...
The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has begun its search for a chief scientific adviser, following months of pressure from researchers and MPs to recruit one. The CSA must be a “highly credible scientist, engineer or technologist”, the department said in the job advertisement. The role includes overseeing the building-safety expert advisory panels and mechanisms that the ministry has set up in the wake of last June’s Grenfell Tower fire.

...while the culture department sets out research priorities
The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has shared its research priorities, which will be overseen by its chief scientific adviser. The department says in its first Areas of Research Interest report that it wants to encourage researchers to explore topics such as the effect of place-based initiatives on growth of regional economies and the impact of physical activity and increased access to art and culture on people’s wellbeing.

UK and Gates join global project to address antibiotic resistance
The UK government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have put a total of nearly £40 million into the Combating Antibiotic Resistance Bacteria Biopharmaceutical Accelerator. Carb-X is a five-year transatlantic partnership initiated in 2016 to accelerate the development of antibiotics, diagnostics and vaccines to curb a global rise in antimicrobial resistance.

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UK seeks influence over EU R&D

The UK stands little chance of having a vote on the future direction of the European Union’s next research Framework programme even if it signs up to it, according to policy experts on the continent.

Representatives of European university groups have welcomed a speech delivered by prime minister Theresa May on 21 May in which she confirmed that her government would seek “full association” with the next Framework programme Horizon Europe and make an “appropriate financial contribution” to EU R&D spending in return.

But there are already questions over May’s statement that the UK would expect a “suitable level of influence in line with that contribution”.

UK influence over Horizon Europe “should be greater” than the influence any non-EU country has had over the current Horizon 2020 programme, the Department for Exiting the EU said in a document released on 23 May.

In the existing programme, associated countries can attend meetings but their influence over the direction of funding is limited to being party to those discussions. They cannot vote on decisions.

The EU’s research commissioner Carlos Moedas has previously said that “something different” to the current association agreement would be needed with the UK.

Kurt Deketelaere, secretary-general of the League of European Research Universities says that while it wouldn’t be a problem to let the UK attend meetings, it is not in the EU’s interest to let associated countries vote.

“A strong research country like the UK must be able to sit around the table,” he said. But “the UK government by now is quite aware that buying voting rights as an associated country is not going to work”.

Thomas Jørgensen, senior policy coordinator at the European University Association, agrees that getting voting rights will be tricky for the UK.

“If you want formal influence in the sense of voting rights and you want to be formally asked about issues, that’s difficult because of the way things work and the mentality around it. The EU is not keen on special rules,” he said.

Another sticking point could be the timeline of wider Brexit negotiations. The EU’s position is that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. Any delay in negotiations could mean the UK joins Horizon Europe late, which would exclude UK researchers from some research networks “to the detriment of Europe as a whole”, Jørgensen said.

‘Small is beautiful’ fund likely to be oversubscribed

Research England is expecting to receive up to 100 applications for its fund for spreading excellence to small departments, causing many universities to brace themselves for disappointment.

The Expanding Excellence in England (E3) scheme, announced on 9 April, will award 10 grants worth a total of £75 million to small and excellent units or departments within English universities.

Alan Palmer, head of policy and research at the MillionPlus group of teaching-led universities, said that it would be fair to assume that almost every university in England would be interested in winning E3 funding. “It is going to be very hard to get a distribution of grants that reflect the likely quality and spread of applications that will come through from universities across the regions and from different disciplines,” he said.

Geoff Hill, a higher-education policy adviser at Research England, said interest in the E3 grants was continuing to increase. “As we can only fund up to 10 bids it is sadly inevitable that we will not cover all disciplines; however we are set to announce our [grant selection] panel shortly and believe it demonstrates our commitment that E3 funds a broad disciplinary spread,” he said.

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Clinical trial reform ‘a game-changer’

NHS England’s plans to overhaul its funding system for clinical trial patients could prevent delays that currently plague research, but medical charities warn that the new system must not restrict expensive yet high-reward studies.

It is more expensive to treat people participating in research studies compared with other patients, and in England the NHS pays for these additional costs. The payments are determined by complex costing rules.

Researchers conducting clinical trials and NHS staff who commission and provide treatment have to negotiate over these payments, which can delay the recruitment of patients by months. This delay is worsened when trials are conducted across multiple sites, requiring negotiations with several of England’s 195 NHS clinical commissioning groups.

Under draft plans outlined this month by NHS England, excess treatment costs will be determined using a new standardised framework and negotiations will be conducted between fewer parties. The changes start with the launch of a pilot in October, with the new rules expected to come into force more widely in April 2019.

“This is all about speeding up and increasing patient access to studies, ultimately to improve treatments and patient care,” said Laura Bousfield, head of feasibility and start-up manager at the National Institute for Health Research’s Clinical Research Network. “We welcome this work and we hope it will be a game-changer in research.”

Peter Johnson, professor of medical oncology at the University of Southampton, said the reform could make the NHS a more attractive place to carry out trials. “I think if we get it right, it will make a big difference.”

But there is also some trepidation about NHS England’s plan to cap excess treatment costs and appoint a panel to assess the value of trials. Proposals deemed to require high investment in exchange for low value will be “challenged and potentially rejected early in the process”, NHS England said.

Emlyn Samuel, head of policy development at Cancer Research UK, said there was “some opaqueness” about how value would be judged. The charity is calling for a “clear and transparent” criteria underpinning decisions.

The NHS England document outlining feedback it had received on the plans notes: “There was concern that any decisions on studies labelled as ‘high cost/low value’ would be made purely on a cost basis.”

In response, NHS England said that it had taken note of these comments and would work with the NIHR and funders including the Association of Medical Research Charities “to define criteria and the mechanism by which these studies will be assessed”.

UCL academics pin hopes on governance inquiry

Researchers at University College London are hopeful that an internal commission can resolve their growing concerns over the institution’s governance.

Some UCL staff have become increasingly vocal about their unhappiness in recent months. On 14 May the university’s academic board, which brings together all UCL professors and advises the governing council, voted to launch an internal inquiry into the university’s governance.

One member of the board told Research Fortnight that they would like to see the commission deal with “increasing regulation, bureaucracy and centralised instruction” at the university. “It should look into the allegations that there’s been a deviation from its values and academic mission,” they said.

A UCL spokesman said: “The debate at the academic board was collegial and illustrated that governance of a large complex university is a real challenge.”

He added: “The commission is committed to making positive suggestions for improvements to governance and these will be considered carefully in due course by the academic board and council.”

An archaeology professor said that academics wanted to be given more input in the planning of UCL’s project to build a £483-million campus in east London, including how it will benefit individual departments.

In February, a judge who oversees aspects of UCL’s administration ordered an investigation into claims that the university excluded academics from decisions about the project. In response, UCL said at the time that it would fully cooperate with the investigation and that most of the problems raised had been deemed to be “unfounded or mistaken”.

The university has also initiated a series of meetings for its staff to share their thoughts about the institution’s future. At the first meeting on 2 May, UCL president Michael Arthur said that action was needed to help staff feel involved in decision-making.

But one lecturer in the humanities who attended the event said that it “seemed to be more about telling us what they do and defending it rather than thinking of exploring new territory”. She said that instead, the university should be holding consultations at the departmental level.
Emerald science

The UK and Ireland are working more closely on research than ever before, the head of Science Foundation Ireland tells Cristina Gallardo.

The Tower of London does not have much of a scientific pedigree, apart from a brief period when Isaac Newton ran the country’s coinage from it. But earlier this month, money and science met again in this imposing fortress, when the UK and Irish governments announced plans to increase the amount of cash their funders spend on initiatives that include researchers from both countries.

Mark Ferguson, the head of Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), is the mastermind of this evolving partnership, a rare bright spot in relations as Brexit increases friction between the two countries.

He has been pushing for such collaboration since January 2012, when he was appointed director-general of the Irish R&D funder. In October that year he was also appointed chief scientific adviser to the Irish government. But the sense of urgency grew after the UK voted to leave the European Union in June 2016.

“Before Brexit the reasons for our bilateral collaborations were obvious: we are very close, our systems are remarkably similar and we speak the same language,” he says. “But these things took on an even greater significance with the Brexit vote.”

As it stands, researchers in the Republic of Ireland and the UK can jointly apply for the response-mode grants run by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, as well as the EPSRC Centres for Doctoral Training. If a UK funder deems a proposal worth funding, SFI will automatically pay a share of it; each council will cover the costs of researchers in their own countries.

Over the past five years, the UK’s research councils funded 119 projects involving partners based in Ireland, to the tune of €146 million. There is no target figure for the funding boost that the two countries have agreed to, Ferguson says, but the partners would like this activity to “both increase and diversify”.

The increased support is expected to take different forms. Ferguson says he wants SFI and UK Research and Innovation to sign an agreement soon, allowing Irish and UK researchers to apply jointly to all the UK research councils.

SFI and UKRI have also agreed to support PhD students spending time and being supervised by a tutor in the partner country.

Opening up more UK funding to Irish researchers is an opportunity for Ireland to showcase its excellent research internationally, Ferguson says. “That is important in a small country with an emerging scientific reputation such as Ireland.”

The partnership will also enable Irish students to access UK student funding until the end of the Brexit transition period in December 2020. About 12,000 Irish students currently study in the UK, of which 2,000 are in Northern Ireland.

But Ferguson says he wants the research partnership to be more ambitious. He says Ireland is proposing joint university appointments that would see individuals spending at least 40 per cent of their time at an Irish institution. “Ireland is very keen to recruit outstanding researchers, either real star researchers at the peak of their careers or emerging research leaders. Our top priority would be to have these individuals coming to Ireland full time, but we are also very open to a joint appointment where it makes sense for them or their science. There are domains of science where splitting time is very common, especially those that use very large facilities, such as physics and astronomy,” he says.

In future Ferguson says he wants to expand cooperation to include sharing large scientific equipment between researchers based in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Even more ambitious is the idea of a research centre for the whole island, where each side pays the salaries of their own nationals. This has the backing of Daire Keogh, chairman of the British-Irish Chamber of Commerce higher education and research committee and deputy president of Dublin City University. The decision on where such a centre is located should take into account where the majority of its researchers or equipment would be based, Ferguson says.

A further idea up for discussion is ‘twinning’ research centres in the Republic of Ireland and the UK. Some SFI centres already do this with the United States National Science Foundation’s Engineering Research Centers and with the Fraunhofer Society in Germany. “There is nothing like that with the UK,” says Ferguson.

Such links could make sure that researchers remain close regardless of how the UK exits the EU. “Brexit has made us pay attention to things that we previously took for granted,” says Ferguson. “We are really open for business and we want to strengthen our bilateral collaborations.”
funding opportunities

every new opportunity every discipline

focus points

Issue no. 523

Chinese language training
The Great Britain-China Educational Trust invites applications for its Chinese language awards, worth up to £2,000 [3].

Innovate UK terrorism
Innovate UK invites applications for its identifying, catalogue and analyse terrorist still imagery online call. Grants are worth up to £50,000 for three months [7].

AHRC arts policy
The Arts and Humanities Research Council invites applications for its parliaments and people in Myanmar and Ethiopia. Awards are worth up to £100,000 [9].

CRUK brain cancer
Cancer Research UK and Stand Up To Cancer invite applications for their paediatric brain cancer dream team translational research grant, worth up to USD 10 million (£7.5m) [13].

MRC diabetes and hypertension
The Medical Research Council invites proposals for their scaling-up of evidence-based interventions at the population level for the prevention or management of hypertension and diabetes call. The budget is £6 million [22].

deadlines

Opportunities from previous issues of Research Fortnight, listed by closing date. European Commission and associated funders marked EU. Each entry is followed by a Web id.

May
7 American Heart Association council on cardiovascular disease in the young meritorious achievement award 1178199
British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology research project grants 252605
EU EUREKA Eriupi2 call for projects 1161501
EU Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Fostering collaboration through mapping, analysing and interlinking of European entrepreneurial regions 1205555
Microbiology Society Fleming prize lecture 202478
Microbiology Society Marjory Stephenson prize lecture 202476
Microbiology Society Peter Wilde prize lecture 1189249
UK Research and Innovation future leaders fellowships 1204727
Alberta Innovates bitumen beyond combustion programme 1205599
British Council Newton Bhobha Fund researcher links workshop – India 1205016
British Council Newton researcher links travel grants 1205077
British Council Newton researcher links workshop grants – Brazil, China, India, Jordan and Peru 1201665
British Council Newton researcher links workshop grants UK-Russia 1205214
CARB-X research funding 1203466
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs research on removal of microplastics by drinking water treatment processes 1205755
EU Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (EuropeAid) annual action programme for Turkey for the year 2014 under the instrument for pre-accession assistance 1205689
EU Directorate-General for the Environment LIFE – technical assistance projects 1185443
Durham University Institute of Advanced Study fellowships 1189716
European Federation of National Associations of Orthopaedics and Traumatology Mark Paterson travel fellowship 1188225
Gambleware evaluation of the impact of multi-operator self-exclusion schemes and awareness and barriers to self-exclusion 1205622
MRC UK-São Paulo neglected infectious diseases joint centre partnerships 1205750
STFC ESA business incubation centre – Harwell campus 1198257
Earthwatch Institute marine mammalogy research grants 178115
National Cancer Research Institute conference prizes – for members 1189716
US Agency for International Development West Bank and Gaza conflict management and mitigation programme 1204689
EU EUMETSAT study to generate the mesosat third generation flexible combine imager and infrared sounder image navigation and registration observations 1205451
MRC/NIHR methodology state-of-the-art workshop on complex risk–benefit analysis by question class, between non-inferiority and superiority designs 1205370
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Sternberg clinical innovation award 168067
ScotGov health and social care directorates Scottish senior clinical fellowship scheme 1190165
Wellcome epidemic preparedness – social science research protocols 1205718
Welcome master’s programme awards in humanities and social science 1205590
American Thoracic Society unrestricted research grants 1166389
BBSC/National Science Foundation lead agency opportunity 1178201
EU Directorate-General for Environment LIFE – traditional projects on environment and resource efficiency 1185437
EU Directorate-General for Environment LIFE – traditional projects on nature and biodiversity 1185438
European Institute of Innovation and Technology digital challenge 1189995
EU Innovative Medicines Initiative Joint Undertaking H2020-JTI-IM2018-1A JMI fourth call for proposals – two stage 1204202
Royal Society of Chemistry train to teach – teacher training scholar scheme 1185439

June
8 European Commission Large projects on environment and resource governance and information 1185439
EU Directorate-General for the Environment LIFE – traditional projects on climate governance and information 1185443
ESRC large grants competition 1203976
ESRC transnational organised crime – deepening and broadening our understanding 1204578
EU European Anti-Fraud Office Hercule III law training and studies 1180798
EU European Anti-Fraud Office Hercule III training and conferences 1188937
EU European Institute of Innovation and Technology digital challenge 1189995
EU Innovative Medicines Initiative Joint Undertaking H2020-JTI-IM2018-1A JMI fourth call for proposals – two stage 1204202
Royal Society of Chemistry train to teach – teacher training scholarships 1200004
USAID women’s economic empowerment and equality business services 1205688
US Department of Defense peer reviewed medical discovery award 1195317
Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics Dirac medal 254891
American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists/IPEC Foundation graduate student awards 1167347
American Society of Mechanical Engineers pressure vessel and piping medal 199093

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30 May 2018

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Innovate UK laboratories
The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, under Innovate UK, invites applications for access to its Guy’s Hospital. This supports health researchers by offering laboratories and collaborative office space.
Web id: 1205938
No deadline [1]

Innovate UK pharmacology
The Cell and Gene Therapy Catapult, under Innovate UK, invites applications for access to its manufacturing centre in Stevenage. This supports therapy developers by offering them an opportunity to use the centre’s manufacturing labs to refine large-scale manufacturing methods to produce gene delivery vectors, cell products, or both.
Web id: 1205933
No deadline [2]

Chinese language training
The Great Britain-China Educational Trust invites applications for its Chinese language awards. These support postgraduate students seeking Chinese language training either as a part of their degree or as a stand-alone course. Grants are worth up to £2,000.
Web id: 1206054
Email: trust@gbct.org.uk
No deadline [3]

Applied microbiology grants
The Society for Applied Microbiology invites applications for the following opportunities:

• educational resources grant, worth up to £5,000 for one year.
• event support grants for lectures and meetings, worth up to £2,000 each.

Web id: 1206063
Email: communications@sfram.org.uk
No deadline [5]

Space exploration research
The UK Space Agency invites proposals for its statements of interest to outline a new project call. This supports ad hoc ideas for new space science and exploration projects.
Web id: 1205795
No deadline [6]

Innovate UK terrorism
Innovate UK, on behalf of Research, Information and Communications Unit and through the Small Business Research Initiative, invites applications for its identify, catalogue and analyse terrorist threat still image online call. This seeks to develop solutions for automatic identification, cataloguing and analysis of still imagery in order to prevent people from being drawn into extremism and terrorism. Grants are worth up to £50,000.
Web id: 1205820
Email: support@innovateuk.gov.uk
Deadline: 20 June 2018 [7]

Newton food science Kenya
The British Council and the Kenyan National Research Fund, via the Newton-U UTFATI Fund invite applications for their improving food security and nutrition in Kenya, strengthening Indigenous leafy vegetables research and innovation capacity workshop. This enables early-career researchers to attend a workshop on food security in Kenya in September 2018. Funding covers travel and accommodation.
Web id: 1206074
Contact: Jim Monaghan
Email: jimmonaghan@harper-adams.ac.uk
Deadline: 29 June 2018 [8]

AHRC arts policy
The Arts and Humanities Research Council, under the Global Challenges Research Fund, in collaboration with SOAS, the Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation and other funders, invites application for its partnerships and people in Myanmar and Ethiopia. This supports research into the relationship between parliaments, elected politicians and people in Ethiopia and Myanmar. Awards are worth up to £100,000.
Web id: 1205383
Contact: Richard Axelby
Email: ra39@soas.ac.uk
Deadline: 30 June 2018 [9]

Newton workshops
The British Council, via the Newton Fund, invite applications for the following workshops:

• the UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Royal Society of Chemistry scopes and challenges for the development of novel antimicrobial agents from Ayurvedic medicinal plants to combat the problem of antimicrobial resistance.

Web id: 1206018
• how resilient manufacturing can solve the unemployment problem in Kenya.

Web id: 1206020

Autism awards
Autistica invites letters of intent for its future leader award. This supports PhD students and early-career researchers conducting autism research. Grants are worth up to £100,000 each for four years.
Web id: 1205708
Email: georgina.warner@autistica.org.uk
Deadline: 2 July 2018 [12]

CRUK brain cancer
Cancer Research UK and Stand Up to Cancer invite applications for their paediatric brain cancer dream team translational research grant. This addresses critical problems in patient care and delivers near-term patient benefit. The grant is worth up to £500,000 (up to £7.5m).
Web id: 1205852
Email: safia.danovi@cancer.org.uk
Deadline: 2 July 2018 [13]

Innovate UK robotics and AI
Innovate UK, under the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, via the knowledge transfer network, invites applications for robotics and artificial intelligence – inspect, maintain and repair in extreme environments call. This supports business-led collaborations to develop robotic and artificial intelligence systems that remove humans from infrastructure inspection, maintenance and repair in extreme environments.
Web id: 1205751
Email: support@innovateuk.gov.uk
Deadline: 11 July 2018 [14]

Chemistry awards
The Salters’ Institute invites nominations for its centenary awards. These recognise individuals who are starting out in their careers and who have the potential to make an impact during long-term contribution to industries that use chemistry and chemical engineering. Awards are worth £2,500 each.
Web id: 1206045
Email: stephanie.mearns@salters.co.uk
Deadline: 13 July 2018 [15]

AHRC follow-on grants
The Arts and Humanities Research Council, via the Global Challenges Research Fund, invites applications for its follow-on funding for impact and engagement scheme – international development. This supports engagement with AHRC-funded research in countries receiving Official Development Assistance or which contribute more broadly to international development. Funding is worth up to £100,000.
Web id: 1205384
Email: enquiries@ahrc.ac.uk
Deadline: 25 July 2018 [16]

AHRC digital research
The Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Smithsonian Institute invite applications for its PhD internship call. This supports digital research expertise in museums and cultural or heritage sectors by enabling scholars from UK to undertake research at the Smithsonian and scholars from US to undertake research at cultural or heritage institutions in the UK. Fellowships cover salary costs for three to six months, living stipend, and research and mentoring costs.
Web id: 1199547
Email: dfs@ahrc.ac.uk
Deadline: 26 July 2018 [17]

Geriatric nursing grants
The Burdett Trust for Nursing invites applications for its people living with frailty empowerment grants programme. These support projects that evaluate interventions, practices and services that meet the needs of people living with frailty. Grants are worth up to £100,000.
Web id: 1205784
Contact: Shirley Baines
Email: administrator@btfn.org.uk
Deadline: 28 July 2018 [18]

EPSRC hardware security
The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and the National Cyber Security Centre, via the Research Institute in Secure Hardware and Embedded Systems, invite applications for the following calls:

• secure hardware and embedded systems, worth up to £300,000 each.

Web id: 1199583
Email: small equipment bids,worth up to £140,000 each.
Web id: 1205946
Email: researchcalls@gchq.gsi.gov.uk
Deadline: 31 July 2018 [20]

Philosophy conferences
The Royal Institute of Philosophy invites applications for its postgraduate conference grants. These enable university students to participate in the Philosophy at the Big Conference in relevant topics in 2018 and 2019.
Web id: 1206062
Contact: Adam Ferner
Email: assistant@philosophy.org
Deadline: 31 August 2018 [21]

MRC diabetes and hypertension
The Medical Research Council and the National Institute for Health Research, in partnership with the Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases, invites proposals for their scaling-up of evidence-based interventions at the population level for the prevention or management of hypertension and diabetes call. This supports research in low- and middle-income countries. The budget is £6 million.
Web id: 1205957
Email: catalina.toma@mrc-ukri.org
Deadline: 10 September 2018 [22]

Quaternary research
The Quaternary Research Association invites applications for its centenary awards. This supports application of scien
tific excellence for fieldwork expeditions or innovative laboratory-based projects. Awards are worth up to £5,000.
Web id: 1205942
Contact: Alan Palmer
Email: awards@qra.org.uk
Deadline: 15 September 2018 [23]

Cancer surgery travel award
BASO – Association for Cancer Surgery invites applications for the Raven travelling fellowship. This enables trainees or consult-
ants to conduct research visits outside the UK. Fellowships are worth up to £3,000.
Web id: 1206071
Contact: Zaed Hamady
Email: rattandeepjihita@baso.org.uk

Cancer surgery fellowship
BASO – Association for Cancer Surgery invites applications for its project grants. These assist surgeons to undertake research projects related to surgical or surgically linked cancer care. Awards are worth up to £6,000 each for one academic year.
Web id: 1206073
Email: rattandeepjihita@baso.org.uk
Deadline: 28 September 2018 [25]

Reproduction and fertility 1
The Society for Reproduction and Fertility invites applications for the following opportunities:

• academic scholarships – early-career researcher scholarship, worth up to £12,000.
• academic scholarship – return to research, worth up to £12,500.

Web id: 1206014
Email: srf@conferencecollective.co.uk
Deadline: 12 October 2018 [27]

Alzheimer’s conferences
Alzheimer’s Research UK invites applications for its scientific conference grants. These promote networking, collabora-
tions, communication and dissemination of Alzheimer’s research. Grants are worth up to £2,000 each.
Web id: 257034
Email: research@alzheimersresearchuk.org
No deadline [28]
ESRC data analysis
The Economic and Social Research Council invites proposals for its secondary data analysis initiative. This supports deeper exploitation of major data resources created by the ESRC and other agencies. Grants are worth up to £300,000.

Web id: 1186074
Email: sda@esrc.ac.uk
No deadline [29]

Innovate UK aerospace
Innovate UK, via the Aerospace Technology Institute, invites registrations for its funding competition under its research and technology programme. This stimulates industry-led research and technology projects that fit with the aerospace technology strategy and that maximise the potential of the strategy to the UK economy.

Web id: 1190072
Email: engage@ati.org.uk
No deadline [30]

Japanese studies projects
The Japan Foundation London invites applications for its London grant programme. This provides assistance to projects in any discipline of the humanities and social sciences that have a significant Japanese element, or to involve collaboration with Japanese researchers or practitioners. Grants are up to £3,000 each.

Web id: 1172032
Email: julieanne.robb@jhf.org.uk
No deadline [31]

ScotGov product development
The Scottish Government’s ScotGov Enterprise invites pre-qualification applications for its small grant scheme. This supports ScotGov businesses to design new products, or improve existing products, processes or services. The grant is worth up to £5,000.

Web id: 1185279
Email: enquiries@scotcent.co.uk
No deadline [32]

Applied microbiology fund
The Society for Applied Microbiology invites applications for its grants for Early Career Researchers, to support career development. This provides resources to enhance education and training in applied microbiology in developing countries. Awards are worth up to £5,000 each.

Web id: 199623
Email: grants@safm.org.uk
No deadline [33]

Sustainable horticulture
The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board invites proposals for its SceptrePlus fourth call on horticulture research and knowledge exchange. This supports applied research on high priority disease, pest and weed problems in fresh produce and ornamental crops in order to develop integrated pest management programmes.

Web id: 1193532
Email: research@ahdb.org.uk
Deadline: 14 June 2018 [34]

ScotGov asthma grants
Asthma UK and the Scottish Government invite applications for their innovation grants. These support novel applications of digital technology in asthma. Grants are worth up to £60,000.

Web id: 1202322
Email: alan.mcnaul@gov.scot
Deadline: 29 June 2018 [35]

Innovation vouchers
Invest Northern Ireland invites applications for its innovation vouchers. These enable businesses to team up with specialist knowledge providers to help them innovate, develop and grow. Vouchers are worth £5,000 each.

Web id: 1165579
Deadline: 29 June 2018 [36]

Obstetrics and gynaecology
The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, in collaboration with the American Gynecological Club and the Gynaecological Visiting Society of Great Britain, invites applications for its fellowship. This enables a candidate to visit a centre offering new techniques or methods of clinical management in obstetrics and gynaecology. The fellowship is worth up to £1,200.

Web id: 121448
Deadline: 20 July 2018 [37]

Alzheimer’s networks
Alzheimer’s Research UK invites applications for its network support scheme. This supports Alzheimer’s research networks with secured funding, or where there is a need to retain key staff or to complete pieces of work to a tangible end point. Grants are worth up to £30,000 each.

Web id: 1184309
Email: research@alzheimersresearchuk.org
Deadline: 4 July 2018 [38]

Social care studentships
The Welsh Government’s Health and Care Research invites applications for its PhD social care studentship award. This supports research and study leading to a PhD. Studentships are worth up to £60,000 each.

Web id: 1177708
Email: maria.davis@swanseaa.ac.uk
Deadline: 9 July 2018 [39]

Pain congress bursary
The British Pain Society invites applications for its International Association for the Study of Pain world travel bursary. This enables members to attend the World Congress on Pain. Bursaries cover registration, accommodation and travel.

Web id: 258640
Email: info@britishpainsociety.org
Deadline: 16 July 2018 [40]

Hearing loss studentships
Action on Hearing Loss invites applications for its PhD studentships. These aim to bring new benefits closer for people who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have tinnitus. Awards are worth up to £79,500 each.

Web id: 254742
Email: research@hearingloss.org
Deadline: 25 July 2018 [41]

Ophthalmic research
Fight for Sight invites applications for its small grant awards. These support clinical research on ophthalmology and vision science. Awards are worth up to £79,500 each.

Web id: 253485
Email: grants@fightforsight.org
Deadline: 31 July 2018 [42]

Libyan studies
The Society for Libyan Studies invites applications for its research grants. These promote research on the social and cultural interactions across North Africa. Grants are worth up to £7,500 each.

Web id: 194565
Contact: Pauline Graham
Email: general@soclibyanstudies.org
Deadline: 31 July 2018 [43]

Radiology awards
The Royal College of Radiologists invites applications for the following opportunities:

* the Kodak radiology fund educational bursary, worth up to £5,000 for at least three months.

Web id: 211448
Contact: the Royal College of Radiologists
Deadline: 31 January 2019 [44]

ScotGov commercialisation
The Scottish Government’s ScotGov Enterprise invites applications for its high-growth spinout programme. This supports the commercialisation of biotechnology and other knowledge-intensive technologies emerging from Scotland’s universities, research institutes and NHS boards. Grants are worth up to £750,000 each for three years.

Web id: 1166807
Email: hgs@scotent.co.uk
Deadline: 3 August 2018 [45]

Neuroendocrinology awards
The British Society for Neuroendocrinology invites applications for its international conference travel fund. This enables members to present their work at international conferences and meetings. Awards are worth up to £300 each.

Web id: 199252
Email: theteam@neuroendo.org.uk
Deadline: 1 September 2018 [47]

Physiotherapy grants
The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, via the Physiotherapy Research Foundation, and in collaboration with the Private Physiotherapy Educational Foundation, invites applications for its funding scheme B grants. These support novice researchers in the field of physiotherapy. Grants are worth up to £25,000.

Web id: 197239
Email: prfaward@scp.org.uk
Deadline: 3 September 2018 [48]

CRUK cancer innovation
Cancer Research UK invites applications for its pioneer award. This supports high-risk, high-reward research projects relevant to cancer. Grants are worth up to £200,000 over two years.

Web id: 1185909
Email: pioneeraward@cancer.org.uk
Deadline: 30 September 2018 [49]

Equine research awards
The Horserace Betting Levy Board invites applications for its small project grants. These support projects on the health and well-being of the thoroughbred horse. Awards are worth up to £10,000.

Web id: 1179238
Email: equine-grants@hbb.org.uk
Deadline: 10 September 2018 [50]

Chemistry engagement
The Royal Society of Chemistry invites applications for its outreach fund – small grants. These support chemistry-based public and school engagement activities.
Grants are worth up to £2,000.
Web id: 1165016
Deadline: 10 September 2018 [31]

Jewish culture grants
The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation invites applications for the following opportunities:
- the Jewish life and learning grants, worth up to £10,000. Web id: 250767
- medical research grants, worth up to £1,000 each. Web id: 213946

Mathematics visits
The London Mathematical Society invites applications for its research in pairs grants. These support visits for collaborative research. Grants are worth up to £1,200 each.
Web id: 2831160
Contact: Anthony Byrne
Email: grants@lms.ac.uk
Deadline: 15 September 2018 [34]

MRC adolescent health
The Medical Research Council invites applications for its call for research to improve adolescent health in low- and middle-income countries. This supports research on effectiveness and access to health interventions that will result in improved adolescent health. The budget is £4 million.
Web id: 1187251
Email: catalina.toma@mrc.ac.uk
Deadline: 18 September 2018 [55]

CRUK clinical trial grants
Cancer Research UK invites statements of intent for its clinical trial fellowship award. This enables trials to gain further training in a clinical trial unit. Grants are worth up to £150,000 for three years.
Web id: 1186421
Deadline: 20 September 2018 [56]

Alzheimer’s research
The Alzheimer’s Society invites applications for the following opportunities:
- clinical training partnerships, worth up to £25,000. Web id: 1193710
- clinician and healthcare professionals training fellowships, worth up to £225,000 each over three years.
Web id: 1169483
- junior fellowships, worth up to £225,000 each over three years.
Web id: 1169481
- PhD studentships, worth up to £19,000 for up to five years.
Web id: 2508082
- project grants, worth up to £400,000 each over three years. Web id: 1811211
- senior fellowships, worth up to £400,000. Web id: 1180716
Email: grantenquiries@alzheimers.org.uk
Deadline: 28 September 2018 [62]

Mathematics and computing
The London Mathematical Society invites applications for its computer science small grants. These support visits for collaborative research related to mathematics and computer science. Grants are worth up to £500 each.
Web id: 2033332
Contact: Katherine Wright
Email: computerscience@lms.ac.uk
Deadline: 1 October 2018 [63]

Reproduction and fertility 2
The Society for Reproduction and Fertility invites applications for its academic scholarship. This enables members to develop and maintain research programmes. Awards are worth up to £12,500.
Web id: 1169471
Email: srf@conferencellective.co.uk
Deadline: 12 October 2018 [64]

Orthopaedics prizes
The Royal Society of Medicine invites applications for its orthopaedics president’s prizes. This recognises original previously unpublished work in orthopaedics. Prizes are worth up to £600.
Web id: 202257
Email: orthopaedics@rsm.ac.uk
Deadline: 14 October 2018 [65]

Earth sciences grants
The Geologists’ Association invites applications for its new researchers’ scheme. This enables younger earth sciences researchers to undertake field expeditions, geological surveys, visits to laboratories and laboratory analysis. Grants are worth up to £600 each.
Web id: 257260
Contact: Sarah Stafford
Email: secretariat@geologistsassociation.org.uk
Deadline: 15 November 2018 [66]

Agricultural economics essays
The Agricultural Economics Society invites submissions for its prize essay competition. This recognises an essay on agricultural economics. The prize is worth £1,000.
Web id: 203346
Email: secretariat@aes.ac.uk
Deadline: 30 November 2018 [67]

CRUK population health
Cancer Research UK invites applications for its population research catalysit award. This supports capacity building and collaboration in population health, enabling groups to unite to deliver impact. The award is worth up to £5 million.
Web id: 1187498
Contact: Jessica Brand
Email: prc@cancer.org.uk
Deadline: 30 November 2018 [68]

Botany thesis prizes
The Linnean Society of London invites nominations for the John C Marsden medal. This recognises the best doctoral thesis in biology during a single academic year. The prize is worth £1,000.
Web id: 1190747
Email: info@linnean.org
Deadline: 30 November 2018 [69]

Geography field research 1
The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) invites applications for the following opportunities:
- field centre grant, worth up to £5,000.
Web id: 1177579
- the Neville Schulman award, worth up to £8,000. Web id: 209363
Email: grants@rgs.org
Deadline: 30 November 2018 [71]

Scottish history grants
The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland invites applications for the Sir George MacDonald grant. This supports research on the Roman occupation of Scotland. The grant is worth up to £2,000.
Web id: 1186209
Email: grants@socantscot.org
Deadline: 30 November 2018 [72]

Cultural history fellowships
The Warburg Institute at the University of London invites applications for its short-term fellowships. These enable fellows to conduct interdisciplinary research on cultural and intellectual history. Fellowships are worth up to £5,200.
Web id: 208513
Email: warburg@sas.ac.uk
Deadline: 30 November 2018 [73]

Zoology prize
The Zoological Society of London invites nominations for the Thomas Henry Huxley award and Marsh Prize. This recognises the best original work in zoology. The prize is worth £1,000.
Web id: 202537
Email: grants@zsl.org
Deadline: 30 November 2018 [74]

Invertebrate biology grants
The British Entomological and Natural History Society invites applications for the Maitland Emmet research fund awards. These support research on insects and other invertebrates with reference to the British fauna. Grants are worth up to £1,000 each.
Web id: 207742
Email: grants@benhs.org.uk
Deadline: 1 December 2018 [75]

Medieval studies
The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature invites submissions for the Medieval MÆWn essay prize. This recognises an essay on society in the medieval period. The prize is worth £1,000.
Web id: 1171452
Email: ssml@history.ox.ac.uk
Deadline: 1 December 2018 [76]

Plastic surgery awards
The British Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons invites applications for its prize essay competition. This recognises an essay on society in the medieval period. The prize is worth £1,000.
Web id: 202984
Email: bapras@bapras.org.uk
Deadline: 1 December 2018 [77]

Socio-legal events
The Socio-Legal Studies Association invites applications for its prize essay competition. This recognises previously unpublished work in orthopaedics. Prizes are worth up to £600.
Web id: 202569
Email: ssmll@history.ox.ac.uk
Deadline: 1 December 2018 [78]

Economic history prize
The Economic History Society invites nominations for the Thirsk-Feinstein PhD dissertation prize. This recognises the best doctoral dissertation in economic or social history. The prize is worth £1,000.
Web id: 253038
Email: ehsocsec@arts.gla.ac.uk
Deadline: 31 December 2018 [80]

Psychiatry travel fellowship
The Royal College of Psychiatrists’ Faculty of Academic Psychiatry invites applications for the Margaret Slack travelling fellowship. This enables a senior psychiatric trainee to conduct research in a centre of excellence. The fellowship is worth £2,000.
Web id: 1165695
Email: ktottaz@rcpsych.ac.uk
Deadline: 31 December 2018 [81]

Early-career entomology
The Royal Entomological Society invites nominations for the following opportunities:
- the Marsh award for early-career entomologists, worth £1,250.
Web id: 1178835
- the Marsh award for insect conservation, worth £1,250. Web id: 252637
Deadline: 31 December 2018 [83]

History book prizes
The Royal Historical Society invites nominations for the following opportunities:
- the Gladstone history book prize, worth £1,000. Web id: 257643
- the Whitfield book prize, worth £1,000. Web id: 257649
Contact: Melanie Ransom
Email: m.ransom@royalhst.org
Deadline: 31 December 2018 [85]

Periodontology awards
The British Society of Periodontology invites applications for its clinical fellowship awards. These enable candidates to visit centres of excellence to enhance their skills, participate in courses or conferences related to periodontology. Awards are worth up to £4,000 each.
Web id: 206959
Deadline: 1 January 2018 [86]

Prosthodontics award
The British Society of Prosthodontics invites applications for its in training award. This enables participants to obtain further clinical, audit or research experience in prosthodontics. The award is worth up to £1,500.
Web id: 1169910
Email: a.j.preston@liv.ac.uk
Deadline: 6 January 2019 [87]

Orthodontics prize
The British Orthodontic Society invites submissions for the Chapman prize in orthodontics. This recognises a published article related to an orthodontic or allied subject. The prize is worth £1,200.
Web id: 149943
Deadline: 7 January 2019 [88]

Design history grants
The Design History Society invites applications for its research publication grant. This enables researchers who are engaged in design history with the publication of their research. Grants are worth up to £1,000 each.
Web id: 208229
Email: designhistory@gmail.com
Deadline: 15 January 2019 [89]
HIGHLIGHTS

Head of Public Engagement
£50,618–£56,950
University of Bristol
Closing date: 03/06/2018
Email: kate.miller@bristol.ac.uk

Programme Director – Finance & Economic Data Science
Alan Turing Institute
Closing date: 03/06/2018
Email: HR@turing.ac.uk

Programme Director – Urban Analytics
Alan Turing Institute
Closing date: 10/06/2018
Email: jobs@turing.ac.uk

Head of Award Management
£50,618–£58,655, plus LW
Research Management and Innovation Directorate,
King's College London
Closing date: 10/06/2018
Details: www.kcl.ac.uk/hr/jobs

Research Development Manager (Physical Sciences)
£38,832–£47,722
Research and Enterprise Directorate, University of York
Closing date: 11/06/2018
Details: https://jobs.york.ac.uk

Programme Managers x3
£37,789–£48,286
Medical Research Council
Closing date: 17/06/2018
Details: www.topcareer.jobs

Programme Director – Data Science for Science
Alan Turing Institute
Closing date: 17/06/2018
Email: HR@turing.ac.uk

Business Development Manager
£40,000–£55,000
University of Birmingham Enterprise Ltd
Closing date: 18/06/2018
Email: info@enterprise.bham.ac.uk, quoting BDM2018

Research Software Engineer
£30,000–£60,000
Alan Turing Institute
Closing date: 03/08/2018
Email: HR@turing.ac.uk

Data Scientist £30,000–£60,000
Alan Turing Institute
Closing date: 03/08/2018
Email: HR@turing.ac.uk

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Academy mentors sustained me

Helena Lee failed with several bids before winning an MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowship. She tells Beckie Smith that she couldn’t have done it without her mentors at the Academy of Medical Sciences.

Helena Lee is a Medical Research Council (MRC) clinician scientist fellow and clinical lecturer in ophthalmology at the University of Southampton.

Lee works on albinism, a disorder characterised by the absence of pigment in the skin, hair and eyes, and associated defects in vision. She examines its effects on children and the significant impact it has on their quality of life, which is an overlooked medical problem.

She submitted many applications to fund her work but was rejected by the National Institute for Health Research, the Wellcome Trust and, initially, the MRC. A big problem was not having enough pilot data to show that her project would be a safe investment.

To overcome this, she applied for and won an Academy of Medical Sciences Starter Grant and funding from the Gift of Sight charity, which enabled her to collect the pilot data she needed.

The associated opportunity to join the AMS SUSTAIN mentoring programme provided a strong foundation from which to apply for an MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowship. Through the programme Lee talked to a lot of people who told her, “We’ve been through exactly the same, but if you truly believe in what you’re doing, you’ll get funded.”

The benefits of mentoring

One of the biggest revelations for Lee was hearing eminent researchers recount how many times they’d failed, which is not apparent from the outside. “People in academia are used to being very near the top of their class,” she says. “You’re not used to failure and rejections, and you’re definitely ill prepared for it.”

Her mentors taught her how to deal with negative feedback. She learned how to dissect comments and determine whether the reviewers hadn’t understood a particular point, or she hadn’t provided enough proof or support in her applications. Interpreting feedback is a skill in itself.

Many of the others on the programme said that they felt that they were drowning in work outside of the lab. Mentoring taught them to set aside time for themselves, which made them more productive because they were less stressed. Lee is now very strict about maintaining a work-life balance.

For Lee it was crucial to learn from each failure: what went wrong, and what she could do about it. So, for the MRC application, she got everyone possible to review it, and it took her a year and many iterations to get to the point of being happy with it.

Tell a story

The outcome was that the proposal was much easier for lay people and non-specialists to read. Feedback from Lee’s public and patient group was particularly helpful. She felt that she and her research team had been too buried in the research and couldn’t step back and tell the ‘story’ of the proposed project.

“Somebody told me to aim my writing towards Harry Potter,” she says. “A lot of the time, these grants are only being read on planes or trains, so they need to be as easy to read as a novel. There needs to be an engaging story, and your vision and career intentions need to be clear, which should get reviewers onside.”

Make time to write

Lee suggests that applicants should set aside a time in the day to answer emails, and then turn them off. “It makes you more focused and also induces behaviour change in other people,” she says.

With this structure in place you have the space to work on your proposal, but don’t leave your bid to the last minute. Tell your faculty that you’re planning to apply, and make sure your finance department has your outline in good time. Your patient-public involvement will need to be done and if you need to work with a clinical trials unit arrangements should be in place at least six months before submission.

When the call opened, Lee had a draft case for support written, which just needed to be readjusted for the format of the MRC form. Nevertheless the form itself took weeks to fill in correctly and she worked hard to structure a realistic timescale with specific milestones for the project.

Throughout it all she has learned that academia can feel like the Hunger Games. “There are 12 of you in the ring, and one or two of you will get through. Those that do usually have a good mentor,” she says. “I’m grateful to have been one of those.”

This article first appeared in Research Professional’s Funding Insight service. To subscribe to Funding Insight contact sales@researchresearch.com
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Date: Friday 15th June 2018 (9:30 to 13:00)

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Location: Hotel Leopold, Brussels
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The Academy is committed to diversity and welcomes applications from women and other groups who are currently underrepresented across engineering.

All applications must be submitted via the online grants system.

**Deadline:**
16:00 Tuesday 4 September 2018

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed the week commencing 10 December.

If you have any queries please email: research@raeng.org.uk.

Find out more at: www.raeng.org.uk/researchchairs

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To apply, please email a CV, three examples of your journalism, and a covering letter explaining why you’re the right person for the role to recruitment@researchresearch.com by 8 June 2018.

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Endangered languages
The Endangered Languages Documentation Programme invites applications for the following opportunities:
• individual graduate scholarship.
Web id: 213833
• individual postdoctoral fellowships, worth up to £150,000 over two years.
Web id: 253150
• legacy material grants. These support UK-led fieldwork grants. Grants are worth up to £3,000 each.
Web id: 255883

Chemistry awards
The Royal Society of Chemistry invites nominations for the following awards:
• the Bader award, worth £2,000.
Web id: 206320
• the Beilby medal, together with the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining and the Society of Chemical Industry, worth £1,000. Web id: 206311
• the Corday-Morgan prizes, worth £2,000 each. Web id: 206323
• the Dalton emerging researcher award, worth up to £1,000. Web id: 255967
• the Hawkins award, worth £1,000. Web id: 255947
• the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining and the Society of Chemical Industry, worth £1,000 each. Web id: 256118
• the Longstaff prize, worth up to £10,000. Web id: 256228
• the Longstaff prize, worth £5,000 each. Web id: 206310
• the Ludwig Mond award, worth £2,000. Web id: 256241
• the Marlow award, worth £5,000. Web id: 256263
• for materials for industry – Derek Birchall award, worth £1,000. Web id: 256221
• for the McErl, Sharp and Dohme award, worth £2,000. Web id: 256228
• for the National Medal for Chemistry, worth £2,000. Web id: 255887
• for the Pedler award, worth £2,000. Web id: 256225
• for the Petter Day award, worth £2,000. Web id: 205970
• for the Rota and John Cornforth award, worth £2,000. Web id: 255958
• for the Robert Robinson award, worth £2,000. Web id: 255992
• for soft matter and biophysical chemistry award, worth £2,000. Web id: 256164
• for surfaces and interfaces award, worth £2,000. Web id: 256157
• for the Tilden prizes, worth £5,000 each. Web id: 256182

Deadline: 15 January 2019 [119]

Intercalated surgery degree
The Royal College of Surgeons invites applications for its intercalated bachelor of science degree in surgery or surgical related area grants. These support medical students at UK medical schools wishing to undertake an intercalated bachelor of science degree related to surgery.
Web id: 1189826
Email: blater@rcseng.ac.uk
Deadline: 17 January 2019 [120]

Geography awards
The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) invites applications for the following opportunities:
• the Frederick Soddy Postgraduate scholarship, worth up to £6,000. Web id: 1163626
• the Monica Cole research grant, worth £1,000. Web id: 212454
• small research grants for society members and fellows, worth up to £3,000. Web id: 212448

Web id: 213840
Email: eldp@soas.ac.uk
Deadline: 15 January 2019 [94]

Orthodontic travel
The British Orthodontic Society invites applications for the following opportunities:
• the Geoffrey Fletcher elective scholarship, worth £2,000. Web id: 2123752
• the Houston postgraduate research scholar award, worth £1,000. Web id: 1173610
Email: ann.wright@bos.org.uk
Deadline: 31 January 2019 [130]

Oral pathology prize
The British Society for Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology invites applications for the following opportunities:
• research prize, worth £1,000. Web id: 184664
• scholarship scheme, worth up to £1,000 per year. Web id: 202467
Contact: Rachel Hall
Email: thebsomp@gmail.com
Deadline: 31 January 2019 [132]

Female engineers travel
The Institution of Civil Engineers invites applications for the QUEST Elise Plunkett award. This enables female engineers to travel with a civil engineering focus. The award is worth up to £2,500.
Web id: 1169777
Email: quest.awards@ice.org.uk
Deadline: 20 January 2019 [124]

Japanese studies
The Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, with the support of the Daiwa Securities Group, invites applications for its scholarships in Japanese studies. These support postgraduates in Japanese studies in Japan or the UK. Scholarships cover university fees, living expenses and travel.
Web id: 1192304
Email: scholarships@dajf.org.uk
Deadline: 24 January 2019 [125]

Midwifery research
The Iolanthe Midwifery Trust invites applications for its midwifery award. This enables midwives to undertake professional education or training to improve midwifery practice. Awards are worth up to £1,500 each.
Web id: 207776
Email: awards@iolanthethe.org
Deadline: 31 January 2019 [131]

Astronomy and geophysics
The Royal Astronomical Society, sponsored by the Patricia Tomkins Foundation, invites nominations for its thesis prize. This recognises a doctoral thesis in instrumentation science for astronomy and geophysics.
Web id: 1173660
Email: awards@ras.org.uk
Deadline: 31 January 2019 [134]

Paediatric radiologists
The Royal College of Radiologists, in collaboration with the British Congenital Cardiac Association, invites applications for its intercalated bachelor of science degree in surgery or surgical related area grants. These support medical students at UK medical schools wishing to undertake an intercalated bachelor of science degree related to surgery.
Web id: 1189826
Email: blater@rcseng.ac.uk
Deadline: 17 January 2019 [120]

Primary care awards
The Society for Academic Primary Care, in collaboration with the Royal College of General Practitioners, invites applications for the Yvonne Carter award for outstanding research. This recognises contributions of early-career researchers in advancing academic primary care. The award is worth £1,000.
Web id: 1170080
Email: sfapc@rcgp.org.uk
Deadline: 31 January 2019 [138]

Urology laboratory research
The Urology Foundation invites applications for its research scholarship. This supports basic laboratory research in urological diseases. Grants last between one to three years.
Web id: 1179536
Email: info@urologyfoundation.org
Deadline: 31 January 2019 [139]

Environmental sustainability
The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), invites applications for the following opportunities:
• the Deutsche Post-Stiftung environment and sustainability research grants, worth up to £15,000 each. Web id: 1185274
• the Slawson awards, worth up to £3,000 each. Web id: 200956
Email: grants@rgs.org
Deadline: 22 February 2019 [141]

Antimicrobial chemotherapy
The British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy invites applications for its travel grants to attend the European Congress on Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases. These enable members to giving presentations at the meeting in the Netherlands in April 2018. Grants are worth up to £1,000 each.
Web id: 145766
Email: grants@bsac.org.uk
Deadline: 28 February 2019 [142]

NIHR lectureships
The National Institute for Health Research invites applications for its clinical lectureships in medicine. These provide clinical and academic training for specialty trainees to develop their postdoctoral research portfolios. Lectureships last up to four years.
Web id: 1167752
Email: latenquiries@nihrctc.org.uk.
Deadline: 31 March 2019 [143]

NERC Arctic research
The Natural Environment Research Council’s British Antarctic Survey invites applications for its Arctic research station programme. This supports environmental research at the Ny-Alesund station on the Svalbard archipelago. The station is open from June to September.
Web id: 209468
Contact: Nick Cox
Email: nc@bas.ac.uk
Deadline: 31 March 2019 [144]

Forensic psychiatry travel
The Royal College of Psychiatrists invites applications for the John Hamilton traveling fellowship. This enables forensic psychiatrists to travel to recognised forensic centres. The fellowship is worth £2,000.
Web id: 255818
Email: stella.galea@rcpsych.ac.uk
Deadline: 15 October 2019 [145]
Medicinal chemistry award
The Royal Society of Chemistry invites nominations for the Caps Green Zomaya award. This recognises contributions to medicinal or computational medicinal chemistry. The award is worth £2,000.
Web id: 259753
Deadline: 31 October 2019 [146]

Sanfilippo syndrome
Sanfilippo Foundation Switzerland invites applications for its research projects on a therapeutic approach for Sanfilippo syndrome. Grants are worth up to CHF 100,000 (£74,500) each.
Web id: 120580
Email: info@fondation-sanfilippo.ch
No deadline [148]

Sustainable food grants
The Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition Foundation invites proposals for its YES! research grants. These support early-career researchers working to make the agri-food system more sustainable. Grants are worth €20,000 (£17,500) each.
Web id: 1205971
Email: info@barilacfn.com
Deadline: 14 June 2018 [149]

EU civil society Lesotho
The Directorate-General for Internal Cooperation and Development (Europe-Aid) invites concept notes for its call on exploring the possible employment implications of connected and automated driving. The tenderer will elaborate policy options to address these implications. The contract is worth €2 million (£1.8m).
Web id: 1206075
Email: rtd-transport-procurement@ec.europa.eu
Deadline: 2 July 2018 [153]

EU defence technology
The European Defence Agency invites tenders for its CapTech human factors strategic research agenda update. The tenderer will perform tasks within technology, landscape, defence & R&I gap analysis, prioritisation and road-mapping, and strategic research agenda update. The contract is worth €100,000 (£87,700).
Web id: 1205851
Email: procurement@eda.europa.eu
Deadline: 2 July 2018 [154]

EU antimicrobial resistance
The Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance invites proposals for its eighth call on building the virtual research institute. The tenderer will conceptualise and develop the JPIMR virtual research institute. Grants are worth up to €50,000 (£43,900) each.
Web id: 1205288
Email: secretariat@jpmiar瑟curve
Deadline: 4 July 2018 [155]

Plasma physics travel grant
The Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, with the International Atomic Energy Agency, invites applications for its college on plasma physics travel grants. These support attendance at the college on plasma physics in Trieste, Italy from 29 October to 9 November 2018.
Web id: 1205883
Email: smr3239@ictp.it
Deadline: 15 July 2018 [156]

EU 3D printing
The Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs invites applications for specific research on EU industrial modernisation by improving support for pan-European demonstration facilities – the 3D printing case. This aims to establish a virtual support platform connecting 3D printing-related facility centres in EU countries. The budget is €800,000 (£701,700).
Web id: 1205792
Email: grow-cp18293-3d-printing@ec.europa.eu
Deadline: 2 August 2018 [157]

Science and medicine award
The Olav Thom Foundation invites applications for its international research award for mathematics, natural sciences and medicine. This recognises research in mathematics, natural sciences and medicine with special attention given to gerrontology. The award is worth NOK 5 million (£461,900). Deadline: 27 June 2018 [152]

EU automated driving
The Directorate-General for Research and Innovation invites tenders for a study on exploring the possible employment implications of connected and automated driving. The tenderer will elaborate policy options to address these implications. The contract is worth €2 million (£1.8m).
Web id: 1205903
Email: enner-tender-2018-8313@ec.europa.eu
Deadline: 27 June 2018 [152]

PhD strategic basic research
The Fund for Scientific Research - Flanders (FWO) invites applications for its Ph.d Grant in strategic basic research. This supports PhD studies in any research field. Funding is worth at least €1,897 (£1,700) over two years.
Web id: 1205838
Email: sb@fwo.be
Deadline: 17 September 2018 [159]

EU transport call
The Innovation and Networks Executive Agency invites proposals for its Connecting Europe Facility Transport call. This supports the development of digital infrastructure across transport modes, road safety and multimodality. The budget is worth €450 million (£394.7m).
Web id: 1205725
Email: ineac-transport-calls@ec.europa.eu
Deadline: 24 October 2018 [160]

Toxicology travel grant
The Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute invites applications for its travel awards. These support postdoctoral fellows in attending a conference on toxins in 2019. Awards are worth £1,000 (£750) each.
Web id: 1205928
Email: toxins@mdpi.com
Deadline: 15 November 2018 [161]

Journal awards
The Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute invites applications for the following opportunities:
• the Applied Sciences journal young investigator award, worth CHF 2,000 (£1,500).
Web id: 1205935
• the Catalysts journal young investigator award, worth CHF 2,000.
Web id: 1205937
• the Symmetry journal young investigator award, worth CHF 2,000.
Web id: 1205942
Email: symmetry@mdpi.com
Deadline: 30 November 2018 [164]

Funding opportunities
Research Fortnight, 30 May 2018

Life sciences awards
The Institut Pasteur and Sanofi invite nominations for their international awards. These recognise progress in immunology or microbiology and infection. Awards are worth up to €1,100,000 (£964,600) each.
Web id: 1190114
Deadline: 25 June 2018 [167]

Biology and medicine
CORBEL invites applications for its second open call. Applicants must be researchers working to access cutting-edge technologies and services at research infrastructures across the biological and medical sciences. Funding covers research infrastructure staff and instrumentation costs.
Web id: 1192454
Email: frauke.leitner@embl.de
Deadline: 30 June 2018 [168]

Palliative care research
The European Society for Medical Oncology invites applications for its palliative care fellowships. These enable oncologists or oncology fellows to conduct research at one of the society’s designated centres of integrated oncology and palliative care. Fellowships are worth up to £5,000 (£4,400).
Web id: 209398
Email: esmo@esmo.org
Deadline: 2 July 2018 [169]

Infectious diseases research
The Institut Pasteur invites applications for its postdoctoral grants within the Cellular and Molecular Biology of Infectious Diseases programme. These enable researchers to conduct a postdoctoral training experience in an institute within the Institut Pasteur International Network. Grants are worth up to €122,800 (£200,000) each.
Web id: 1173696
Email: marianne.lucas-houari@pasteur.fr
Deadline: 13 July 2018 [170]

Psychology conference
The European Association of Social Psychology together with the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues invite applications for their joint international conferences grants. These support small international conferences in North America and Europe. Funding is worth USD 7,000 (£5,200) each.
Web id: 1193133
Email: thepsych@easp.eu
Deadline: 1 August 2018 [171]

Diabetes research
The European Foundation for the Study of Diabetes invites applications for its European diabetes research programme. This supports basic or clinical diabetes research. Grants are worth up to €100,000 (£87,700) each.
Web id: 252519
Email: foundation@easd.org
Deadline: 1 September 2018 [172]

Urology awards
The European Association of Urology invites applications for its scholarships. These support basic urology research at a European research institution. Scholarships are worth up to £30,000 (£26,300) each.
Web id: 252519
Deadline: 1 September 2018 [173]
Nervous system prize
The Lundbeck Foundation invites nominations for its brain prize. This recognises research on the nervous system. The prize is worth €1 million (£877,300).
Web id: 116573
Email: info@thebrainprize.org
Deadline: 1 September 2018 [174]

EU France-England cooperation
The INTERREG France (Channel) England Programme invites applications for its call for proposals. This fosters economic development in the south of the UK and north of France.
Web id: 1154547
Email: Interreg@norfolk.gov.uk
Deadline: 6 September 2018 [175]

Natural resource grants
The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development invites applications for the following opportunities:
• conference sponsorship grants under its cooperative research programme.
Web id: 180651
• research fellowships, worth up to €17,000 for 26 weeks.
Web id: 180557
Email: tad.prog@oecd.org
Deadline: 10 September 2018 [177]

Molecular biology grants
The European Molecular Biology Laboratory and Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions invite applications, under the EMBO Interdisciplinary postdoc (EPIDo) Initiative, for the EPIDo postdoctoral fellowship programme. This enables researchers to take part in international and interinstitutional collaborations.
Web id: 1186261
Email: info@embl.de
Deadline: 12 September 2018 [178]

Multiple sclerosis meeting
The European Charcot Foundation invites applications for its annual meeting award for young investigators. This enables young investigators to attend the meeting in Italy in November 2018. Prizes are worth €4000 (£3,500) each.
Web id: 1189166
Email: charcot@seauton-international.com
Deadline: 14 September 2018 [179]

Beam time access 2
The Laue-Langevin Institute invites proposals for its beamtime allocation. This enables researchers to access neutron beams and instruments at the Laue-Langevin Institute.
Web id: 255579
Email: user-office@ILL.eu
Deadline: 14 September 2018 [180]

Austrian studies fellowships
The Austrian Exchange Service (ÖAED) invites applications for its Franz Werfel fellowship. This enables young university teachers of German language and Austrian literature to spend one year in Austria and carry out specialist studies in Austria. Fellowships are worth €1,750 per month.
Web id: 1165490
Email: teresa.karamat@oead.at
Deadline: 15 September 2018 [181]

Personalised nutrition
InCiSilver invites applications for its innovation vouchers. These support collaboration in the field of personalised nutrition for the elderly. The budget is €2.8 million (£2.5m).
Web id: 1203441
Email: info@livsmelsakademien.se
Deadline: 15 September 2018 [182]

Clinical trials
The Belgian Health Care Knowledge Centre (KCE) invites applications for its investigator-led call under the KCE trials programme. This supports investigator-led comparative effectiveness clinical trials.
Web id: 1194151
Email: trials@kce.fgov.be
Deadline: 25 September 2018 [183]

Computing fellowships
The European Research Consortium for Informatics and Mathematics invites applications for the Alain Bensoussan fellowship programme. This enables early-career scientists to conduct research at leading European centres. Fellowships are worth up to €43,300 (£38,000).
Web id: 254572
Email: fp-info@ercim.eu
Deadline: 30 September 2018 [184]

Medical research grants
The Laerdal Foundation invites applications for the following opportunities:
• acute medicine project support, worth up to NOK 250,000 (£23,100) each for two years.
Web id: 1183924
Email: post@laerdalfoundation.org
Deadline: 1 October 2018 [186]

EU telecommunications
EUROKA invites applications for its Celtic-Plus call. This supports ICT projects related to smart connected world. The budget is worth up to €70 million (£61.4m).
Web id: 1156474
Contact: Peter Hermann
Email: office@celticplus.eu
Deadline: 15 October 2018 [187]

EU cross-border cooperation
INTERREG France (Channel) England invites applications for its micro projects grants. These support small-scale cross-border cooperation projects in the Channel region of France and England. Grants are worth up to €500,000 (£439,000).
Web id: 1194201
Email: Interreg@norfolk.gov.uk
Deadline: 24 October 2018 [188]

Acute medicine research
The Laerdal Foundation invites applications for the following opportunities:
• centre support, worth up to NOK 3 million (£277,400) over three years.
Web id: 1177491
• programme support, worth up to NOK 3.4 million for three years.
Web id: 1196951
Email: post@laerdalfoundation.org
Deadline: 1 April 2019 [190]

Postdoctoral fellowships
The Africa Health Research Institute invites applications for its postdoctoral fellowships. These enable young scientists to engage in research in the field of HIV and tuberculosis immunology.
Web id: 1170862
Email: education@ahri.org
Deadline: 31 December 2018 [198]
ESRC changes criteria for data scheme

The Economic and Social Research Council has modified the eligibility criteria for its Secondary Data Analysis Initiative, which since December 2015 has run alongside the council’s Research Grants open call. Following an internal review of the initiative, the ESRC said that the scheme needed to improve the quantity and quality of proposals submitted. As a result, the maximum funding threshold for applications has increased from £200,000 to £300,000, and the maximum duration of projects has gone up from 18 months to 24 months.

Hydrogen fuel research boosted by £20m

The government has announced the allocation of £20 million to hydrogen and fuel cell technology development as part of its industrial strategy. The funding will enable the creation of the Hydrogen Supply programme, aimed at reducing the costs of producing large volumes of low carbon hydrogen. Researchers interested in applying should email industry.innovation@beis.gov.uk to be notified once further details become available.

NIHR awards £3m to project on screening

A collaboration of several institutions led by the University of Cambridge has won a £3-million grant from the National Institute for Health Research to investigate screening to detect undiagnosed atrial fibrillation, a heart condition that causes one in 10 strokes. The research programme will include the largest ever randomised controlled trial to find out whether screening for this condition in people older than 65 can prevent stroke, and whether screening is a good use of NHS resources.

Secure hardware proposals sought

The Research Institute in Secure Hardware and Embedded Systems (RISE)—a £5-million centre recently set up at Queen’s University Belfast—has launched a £140,000 call for small systems (RISE)—a £5-million centre recently set up at Queen’s University Belfast—has launched a £140,000 call for small equipment bids. Proposals for an expected £20,000-£50,000 are sought to procure equipment to support research into four areas, including hardware-based security services, micro-architectural and analogue security evaluation; and supply chain security. The deadline for applications is 31 July. RISE is funded jointly by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and the National Cyber Security Centre.

Extra £20m pledged for brain cancer research

The government has doubled its promised budget for research into brain cancers. The Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Research Fund is named after the eponymous Labour peer who was diagnosed with a brain tumor in 2017 and died on 12 May. It will initially be worth a total of £65 million, although there are plans to increase this figure annually, the government said. It is expected that of that amount, £25m will come from Cancer Research UK, while the remaining £40m will be provided by the Department of Health. The government funds will be channelled through the National Institute for Health Research.
Research groups uneasy over changes to next EU Framework programme

The European Commission is due to present its proposal on the European Union’s next research funding programme on 7 June, but research organisations have expressed concern over some of its main elements.

Horizon Europe, as the programme has been dubbed, will feature ‘missions’ targeting specific societal problems, and support for market-creating innovation through the European Innovation Council (EIC). “Both novelties have potential but have to be done right, otherwise there’s a risk of waste, and there is no money to waste since the proposed increase in the budget is not as big as we had hoped,” said Stephan Kuster, secretary-general of Science Europe, the association of research funders and performers.

Missions, which could include curing cancer and eliminating plastic pollution, are being introduced to Horizon Europe to increase its impact and public support for the programme. Kuster said the tricky part would be securing the political commitment to deliver on the scientific solutions. “If done wrong it could be a huge waste of money,” he said. “At the moment I don’t see it going in the wrong direction, but we need much more discussion.”

Lidia Borrell-Damian, director for research and innovation at the European University Association, said she was concerned that the Commission was being “quite secretive” about its plans for missions, with the consequence that societal benefits might not materialise. “We run the risk that the Commission prescribes something and we just have to go along with that,” she said.

Horizon Europe will consolidate the EIC pilot into one of its three main pillars, a move designed to help entrepreneurs grow their companies. This is the most worrying part of the Commission’s plan, said Kurt Deketelaere, secretary-general of the League of European Research Universities.

Leaked documents suggest the Commission is planning “deviations from all kinds of general rules” for the EIC instruments, including project selection and grant agreements, Deketelaere said. This risks legal problems with the equal treatment of participants, and compatibility with EU state aid and competition law, he said.

The Commission’s proposal will set off negotiations among national governments and MEPs over the fine detail, and research organisations will lobby hard for their preferences. They are already planning to push for a bigger budget than the €97.6 billion (£84.7bn) proposed on 2 May, saying it won’t be enough to deliver on all of the EU’s ambitions. “Something will have to give,” Kuster said.

**Europe in brief**

Horizon 2020 budget could get 8.5% boost

The European Union’s R&D funding programme Horizon 2020 should have a budget of €12.2 billion (£10.7bn) in 2019, the European Commission has proposed—about €950 million more than in 2018. The Erasmus+ mobility programme should have its budget increased by 10 per cent to €2.55bn, it said, while the Copernicus Earth-observation programme should get 39 per cent more money.

University networks set for substantial budget

The European university networks being set up to increase research and higher education standards may receive a significant part of the budget of the European Union’s next Erasmus education mobility programme. A document apparently leaked from the European Commission suggests the networks will have a “high” impact on the Erasmus budget for 2021-27 and a “medium/high” impact on its structure.

British expertise halved on EU food science panels

UK involvement in the panels of scientific experts that the European Food Safety Authority uses to assess the human, animal and environmental risks of EU food and farming activity has halved. Efsa has chosen 174 experts to serve on its scientific panels for the next three years, just 17 of whom (9.8 per cent) are British, down from 36 of 213 (16.9 per cent) between 2015 and 2018. UK representation is now similar to that of Germany and France, Efsa said.

Countries slow to act on open science

Eight EU member states had not begun discussions on national policies to encourage open access to research data by 2016, while a further 12 were yet to adopt them, the European Commission says. Preliminary results of an assessment of the impact of a 2012 Commission recommendation on access to scientific information also show that three countries had no policies or strategies to encourage open access to research publications, while nine had not adopted theirs yet.

Swedish consortium cancels Elsevier subscription

A consortium of 85 Swedish universities, government agencies and research institutes has become the latest national group not to renew its publishing and subscription deal with the academic publisher Elsevier. The Bibsam consortium said Elsevier had not been able to meet its demands, including “a sustainable price model that enables a transition to open access”.

by Craig Nicholson cnnews@ResearchResearch.com

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Research Fortnight, 30 May 2018

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Blessed be the peacemakers

As conflict grows between academics and vice-chancellors, Ehsan Masood explains how research directors could help to lower the tension.

I can’t remember a time when the relationship between the UK’s academics and their bosses has felt so pressured. As university researchers and teachers openly challenge executives, it’s hard to see how there can be any rapprochement.

The latest outbreak of resistance to university leadership was triggered by fear of losing pension benefits, but it has its roots in wider and more political matters. As the campaign that forced former Open University vice-chancellor Peter Horrocks to resign in April showed, this is as much a protest about the past 40 years of policymaking.

Academics—and many other university staff—are protesting against the use of performance management in research and teaching, against student fees, against the precarious nature of early-career employment, and against the erosion of decisions made on a collective, if not altogether collegial, basis.

Caught in the crosshairs are the hundreds of research managers and administrators attending this year’s International Network of Research Management Societies (Inorms) congress in Edinburgh. Especially for those at the middle and entry levels, the next year is not going to be easy.

In some cases, managers will be asked to implement instructions from above that researchers will challenge or resist. Disagreements are already brewing over deducting pay and making up hours lost to industrial action. If vice-chancellors insist on divide-and-rule policies, stress on all sides will spike, complaints increase, and grievance procedures mount up.

No doubt a few vice-chancellors wondering how to pass time on a long-haul flight will make the mistake of firing off an email to their management teams demanding the enforcement of this or that policy. But even in the most benign scenarios, university leaders will expect academic cooperation on the Teaching Excellence Framework, the Knowledge Exchange Framework, Athena SWAN compliance, changed reporting requirements from UK Research and Innovation and—of course—the next Research Excellence Framework.

Both sides in the pensions dispute have backed away from further confrontation, as a panel of experts begins working to find a resolution. But it won’t take much for relations to deteriorate.

What then, if anything, can be done?

Step forward the UK’s university research directors and senior research managers. You may not realise it, but there are at least three things you can do to make a difference. First, there needs to be planning to protect those at the frontline of any conflict. One immediate action could be to not ask junior staff to communicate difficult decisions to researchers. It is tragically common for senior management to dump the job of delivering bad news on those lower down. That urge should be resisted.

Second, think of changes, even small ones, that could be made further upstream. All but the most insensitive university leader knows that there is a job to be done to begin creating a less divided work environment.

In the name of streamlining, some universities have sought to cut back academic involvement in decision-making. The pensions dispute has shown the pitfalls of that approach. Could research directors and academics work together to find new ways to involve more people in decisions that matter to their collective working lives?

Could research directors create opportunities to meet and work more constructively with union representatives?

Finally, there’s work to be done nationally. Over the years, the UK’s Association of Research Managers and Administrators has developed strong links with policymakers and policy shapers. These are the people drafting the terms of reference for the next set of assessments for research, teaching and knowledge exchange. They are the people writing the next Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey, and the coming successor to the Joint Electronic Submission system for grants.

You don’t need to be psychic to know that each of these activities is likely to increase the pressure on academics, managers, and the relationship between the two. It’s a world that, in the words of ARMA’s own strategic plan, “seems to have turned upside down”. But without ideas and without inspiration, it will remain a world of campus unrest too as university leaders themselves feel under pressure to enforce changes to working practices.

That’s a recipe for a summer, autumn, winter and spring of discontent. It’s why university research directors and their teams should be thinking about what more they can do to help lower the temperature. We need you to help navigate the gathering storm.

More to say? Email comment@ResearchResearch.com

Ehsan Masood is a former editor of Research Fortnight. He will be chairing the Global Leadership Summit at Inorms 2018 in Edinburgh on 4 June.
Building a global university is a constant work in progress

A glance at the programme for the International Network of Research Management Societies (Inorms) meeting in Edinburgh shows that one strong theme will be exploring how global challenges can be addressed through international research collaborations.

There are a number of visible forces at play here, such as the internationalisation of research and higher education and the influence of policies such as the Global Challenges Research Fund. Most importantly, it reflects the recognition that addressing problems such as climate change requires world-class, interdisciplinary research.

The University of Nottingham is, of course, not alone in sharing this mission or recognising that complex global problems cannot be solved in isolation. But we are proud to be a genuinely global institution. Nottingham was the first UK university to set up an overseas campus, in the suburbs of the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur. And it was the first foreign university to establish a campus in China, in the city of Ningbo, one of the world’s busiest ports.

Both campuses are hubs of research as well as centres of education. Links between overseas campuses and the UK strengthen the work of each. For example, Nottingham’s Future Food Beacon of Excellence—one of six interdisciplinary research centres, each focused on a specific societal challenge—has proposed an AgriFoodTech Innovation Hub, a joint venture between the University of Nottingham and regional clusters of universities and industry in China.

In Malaysia, our research focuses on the challenges facing South-east Asia, including developing techniques to predict breast cancer risk in South-east Asian women, and using ecological research to aid elephant conservation. Again, Nottingham is working with local and international universities and research organisations.

Any large research-intensive university now has ties to every continent. Nottingham is working with international partners to map nutrients in soil and cereal crops in Malawi. Our growing South America research portfolio includes a partnership with the Brazilian Center for Research in Energy and Materials to develop drugs to tackle cardiovascular disease and cancer.

We are continually looking at ways to calibrate our research with the strategic priorities of UK and international funders. The situation is rapidly evolving.

Responses must be proactive and agile and support sustainable growth in countries most in need of partners committed to the long haul.

The Beacons of Excellence are crucial for this effort, championing cross-disciplinary responses to global challenges such as human rights, healthcare and transport. They embody our commitment to seeking partnerships with the best in the world to amplify the impact of research.

The Beacons are part of a diverse research portfolio. As well as aligning to global priorities, research should also be organic, sustained by a bottom-up, collaborative approach that draws people together and offers opportunities to work across disciplines. Partnerships with international collaborators and industry are another essential characteristic of world-class research.

This trend, however, is not inevitable or irreversible. The culture unleashed by the Brexit referendum is suspicious of both expertise and globalisation. The age of social media has made people both more global and more tribal. We make international connections with ease, but we are more likely to seek out those who share our views than those who will challenge them.

All of this makes it even more important that universities continue to evolve their global outlook. We must embrace the insights and open-mindedness that global thinking can provide, but in a way that is inclusive and sensitive to the complexities of different societies.

To that end, we are drawing together specialists across our campuses to harness global initiatives across the university. We are considering how to build stronger partnerships in places offering additional opportunities, such as North America, Australia, South-east Asia, India and Africa. We are also working more closely with our research leaders to integrate international collaboration and co-authorship into research planning and development.

On the student side, we are encouraging more international applicants and offering more opportunities for mobility. For those who are not able to travel, there will be better use of video-conferencing, along with imaginative on-campus opportunities.

In Edinburgh, I am looking forward to meeting colleagues from the institutions around the world where Nottingham already has deep collaborations. It will also be an opportunity to extend these networks, and share the insights of research managers on how best to strengthen our partnerships and reach new horizons.

Something to add? Email comment@ResearchResearch.com

Shearer West is vice-chancellor and president of the University of Nottingham. She will be speaking at the Inorms 2018 conference event on Running a Research University in an Era of Austerity Politics and Laissez Faire Economics.

‘We must embrace the insights that global thinking can provide.’
The best way to improve rankings is to engage with the rankers

Depending on whether your university is large or small, rich or poor, old or young, you will probably greet university rankings with either a shrug or a shudder. My lot fall among the shudders, meaning that I experience some trepidation as each release date draws near. But why does it matter so much?

Rankings have been proved to be something of a nonsense, haven’t they? A high rank correlates with size and subject mix, and probably wealth. They consist of a composite set of indicators, subject to almost arbitrary weightings, and as a result only 35 universities sit within the top 100 of all five major international rankings. Some institutions appear in the top 100 of one ranking and don’t feature at all in others.

Some of the indicators used fail even basic tests of measurement validity, such as the use of staff to student ratios as a measure of teaching quality. And, of course, some important aspects of a university’s mission, such as enterprise, are not really measured at all.

Despite all this, universities bother with rankings because, like it or not, they are inextricably linked to funding and prestige. These things stoke a university’s engine. For example, the list of international student funding opportunities that require universities to be in the top X places of ranking Y is getting longer, as a growing number of funding organisations use rankings as a shortcut to identifying quality.

Besides moaning, what can universities actually do? This is the topic of a workshop at the conference of the International Network of Research Management Societies (Inorms) in June.

The workshop is organised by the UK’s Association of Research Managers and Administrators’ Metrics Special Interest Group and sponsored by the Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) at Leiden University in the Netherlands. It is gathering together ranking bodies, scientometricians and research managers and seeks to move the debate forward by considering how the research community can respond to these issues. In short, should we embrace world university rankings, avoid them or seek to change them?

Some people will undoubtedly argue that we should stop worrying and learn to love rankings. They are clearly here to stay, and our best bet for success is to try to inch ever closer to the top.

Perhaps there are ways to sneak ahead of our peers, especially if—joy of joys—they have a bad year? If we wait long enough, and there is a good range of new entrants, perhaps we will find ourselves migrating to the upper percentiles.

Others may argue that the way to curb the influence of rankings is to shun them. Perhaps institutions that consistently do well in the rankings and also claim a commitment to the responsible use of metrics could kick-start a boycott.

The Academic Ranking of World Universities, referred to as the Shanghai ranking, would be a prime target for such action, as it counts papers in the journals Nature and Science as an indicator of research quality. This is in clear contravention of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, which states that a journal’s impact factor should not be treated as a proxy for the quality of individual articles.

Would anyone be willing to stop playing ball: to stop feeding rankings the data they need to judge us? Would anyone pledge not to trumpet their ranking in their marketing and—a brave step—decline funding from organisations that use rankings as a proxy for quality?

Perhaps the more realistic option is to seek to change them. There is no shortage of suggestions here.

Perhaps institutions should be grouped in tiers rather than ranked, as Jill Johnes suggested recently in these pages [RF 14/3/2018, p21]. Perhaps universities should be measured against their own mission and focus, rather than assuming that they are all trying to do the same thing—something attempted by the EU-funded U-Multirank project.

Perhaps all rankings should measure one thing at a time—as the CWTS Leiden Ranking does—to show that the ‘best’ university depends on what you value. Or perhaps, just as universities are being encouraged to sign up to statements on the responsible use of metrics, ranking organisations should be encouraged to do the same.

Something needs to be done, and it’s not going to be done for us. This workshop will give research managers the opportunity to start some conversations with ranking organisations rather than about them, and hopefully move towards a better way of assessing the relative strengths and weaknesses of the world’s gloriously diverse range of universities.

More to say? Email comment@ResearchResearch.com

Elizabeth Gadd is research policy manager (publications) at Loughborough University. She is taking part in the Inorms 2018 conference session on World University Rankings: Embrace them, avoid them or change them?
In left-behind places, business R&D is a mixed blessing

Speaking last week on her government’s science policy, prime minister Theresa May noted that “some parts of the country that once thrived because of innovation and technology have seen the jobs and opportunities of the past fall away”.

One way that policies such as the industrial strategy, Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine seek to redress this falling away is by attracting innovative firms that will create growth and jobs. Alongside the desire to attract high-tech companies, however, comes the fear that innovation might lead firms to shed workers, increase polarisation between the skilled and unskilled, and make work more precarious.

So do innovative companies bring high-skilled, high-wage jobs or insecurity and inequality? We have tried to answer this question by using census data to study the impact of business R&D investments—a crucial aspect of innovation in high-tech industries—on local labour markets between 2001 and 2011. The answer is it depends, and it’s complicated.

We found that, contrary to previous studies that focused on high-tech industries, IT adoption and innovation within firms, R&D investment is not associated with extra jobs in the local labour market. As many jobs are destroyed as are created when such spending grows. Employment in manufacturing, transport, business and financial services rises, while jobs in construction, wholesale and retail trade, and food and accommodation services decline.

The next question regards the quality of the jobs created. Here, local factors become all-important.

In the post-industrial, ‘left-behind’ regions where before 2001 a high proportion of workers were in routine, easily mechanised jobs, investment in R&D leads to net job creation. These jobs, however, are in service industries, including retail and accommodation; employment in manufacturing falls. This supports the idea that high-tech industries can polarise labour markets by creating a small number of well-paid, skilled jobs that in turn creates a demand for unskilled labour to perform manual personal services.

As for skills, growth in R&D spending sees a rise in the overall proportion of workers holding qualifications at level four and above, equivalent to a higher national certificate.

Again, however, post-industrial regions show the opposite trend, with the proportion of educated workers falling.

The picture for self-employment, which is rising sharply in the UK, is similar. Overall, R&D growth induces a drop in both self-employment and, to a lesser extent, permanent jobs. Once more, post-industrial regions are different; here, self-employment grows faster than paid employment, particularly for people aged under 35.

In these regions, business R&D spending causes a dramatic reduction in permanent employment for 16 to 24-year-olds, with no increase in self-employment. Those aged 25 to 34 see some increase in permanent jobs, but mainly move to self-employment, while those aged 35 to 64 see similar increases in both categories.

The youngest members of the workforce in the post-industrial regions, then, have proved most vulnerable to the shifts in the labour market reflected in patterns of R&D spending. The oldest workers have fared best, seeing gains in all forms of employment, while those in the middle seem to be especially likely to move into self-employment.

Other researchers have also found evidence that self-employment in the UK is only associated with entrepreneurship and innovation in urban areas. In rural areas it is more a response to a lack of other opportunities, part of a shift towards low-skilled, low-paid service work. More research is needed in this area.

The UK undoubtedly needs targeted industrial and innovation policies, especially to address its persistently low productivity. But our findings highlight that incentives for R&D spending may have different impacts in different places.

In particular, R&D investments may negatively affect the labour market in the regions most in need of help, where a large proportion of workers are in low-skilled, routine jobs. Not promoting R&D investments in such regions, on the other hand, would exacerbate regional inequalities.

Policies to promote business R&D must be part of a package aimed at making innovation inclusive and creating a virtuous cycle between productivity and employment. Our research points to the need to prepare the ground for R&D spending, through education and training policies, both for young people entering the labour market and for middle-aged workers in need of retraining.

‘R&D investments may negatively affect the labour market in the regions most in need of help.’

Tommaso Ciarli, Alberto Marzucchi, Edgar Salgado and Maria Savona work at the Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex. See also their working paper at rsrch.co/2s2rPVK

Something to add? Email comment@ResearchResearch.com
**Go Figure** Price comparison website GoCompare is probably best known for adverts featuring an annoying opera singer. Credit where it’s due, though, the company has launched a sponsored degree apprenticeship scheme with Aston University. However, given that its business is data analysis, eyebrows may be raised on seeing that institution described as one of the UK’s top universities based on it coming “49 out of 129 in University League Table 2018”.

**Insensitivity Training** Universities are busy minding the EU’s new data regulation, the GDPR. Attempting to give a real-world example of handling personal data, a training survey circulated to University of Bristol staff asked how they would respond to an email seeking views about a colleague who was on probation. “You regard this colleague as a troublemaker—she has already tried to get you to join the union and has taken time off work for union business,” it mooted. Given the recent strikes, this may have been a misstep. A spokeswoman said the university apologised and would “edit or remove” the content.

**Back to the Future** More than 27,500 people have entered a public ballot to attend a June thanksgiving service for Stephen Hawking, according to the eponymous foundation. Astute observers noted that the application allows people to select a birth date right up to 31 December 2038: a fitting tribute for the theoretical physicist, who in 2009 threw a party for time travellers. Hawking reasoned that as none showed up it was experimental evidence that time travel was not possible; but we’ll still be looking out for them at the memorial.

**Old News** Your correspondent knows that bioimaging is critically important in life-sciences research. As such, we have no quarrel with a report from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council saying funders should step up their support for related technologies. But it might be difficult to work closely with the Higher Education Funding Council for England, one of the funders mentioned, given that it no longer exists. Perhaps its replacement, Research England, would do?

**Musical Number** An appearance by the economist Mariana Mazzucato on Channel 4 News may have sparked an unexpected partnership. Mazzucato was discussing her new book, The Value of Everything, which argues many of the world’s most successful companies are “parasitic” and don’t create value. This caught the eye of socialist singer Billy Bragg. He praised her “great analysis”, which won him an invitation to visit the Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, where she is director. We feel a collaboration coming on...

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