

# Wellcome Discovery Awards

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This scheme provides funding for established researchers and teams from any discipline who want to pursue bold and creative research ideas to deliver significant shifts in understanding related to human life, health and wellbeing.

## Scheme at a glance

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Lead applicant career stage:

Established researcher

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Administering organisation location:

UK, Republic of Ireland, Low- or middle-income countries (apart from India and mainland China)

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Frequency:

Three times a year - Upcoming deadlines in July 2025 and November 2025

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Funding amount:

You should ask for the resources you need for your research programme – see the 'Research costs we'll cover' section on this page. You will need to justify this in your application. The average size of a Discovery Award is £3.5 million. Applications above £5 million will be subject to additional scrutiny.

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Funding duration:

Awards can be up to 8 years, but may be less for some disciplines, and may be longer if held on a part-time basis. The average duration of a Discovery Award is 7 years, although we have supported awards from 3 to 8 years.

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Coapplicants:

Accepted

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## Deadline for new applications

Application deadline: 29 July 2025, 17:00 BST

**[View all key dates](#)**

## Who can apply

You can apply for a Wellcome Discovery Award if you are a researcher who wants to pursue bold and creative research ideas. You must aim to make a major contribution to your research field by:

- generating significant shifts in understanding

and/or

- developing methodologies, conceptual frameworks, tools or techniques that could benefit health-related research.

An award can be held by an established researcher or a team of researchers led by an established researcher.

### If you are applying as a team of researchers

Team size will depend on the proposed research. It will usually range from two to eight applicants, including the lead applicant. The primary location for the research, including the leadership of the programme, must be within the UK, Republic of Ireland and/or a low- and middle-income country.

### If you are applying as an individual

You cannot involve coapplicants in your application and award, but you can still work with collaborators.

Whether applying as an individual established researcher who will employ staff through your grant, or as a team of researchers, we encourage lead applicants to put together diverse teams. You will be expected to actively promote a diverse, inclusive and supportive research environment within your team and across your organisation.

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 Lead applicant career stage and experience

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 Coapplicants

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 Collaborators

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## Other Wellcome awards

An established researcher can be a lead applicant on two Discovery Awards:

- one as sole applicant and one as lead applicant for a team, or
- both as a lead applicant for a team.

They can also be a coapplicant on up to two other Wellcome awards.

Current holders of Investigator Awards and Senior Research Fellowships cannot be a sole applicant for a Discovery Award. They may be the lead applicant for a team on a Discovery Award and a coapplicant on up to two other Discovery Awards or Collaborative Awards.

Researchers cannot be a coapplicant on more than two Discovery Awards.

Read about the different applicant roles at Wellcome and how many awards you can apply for or hold at one time.

## Resubmissions

If you are unsuccessful with an application to this scheme, you can submit one more full application for the same project. Significant changes are needed for the second

application. You do not need to contact us first.

## Who can't apply



You are not eligible to apply as a lead applicant on a Discovery Award if you are the lead applicant on two other Discovery Award applications and you are waiting for a decision.

You cannot apply if you intend to carry out activities that involve the transfer of grant funds into mainland China.

## Is your research right for this scheme?



You must check whether Wellcome Discovery Research can fund your type of research project before you apply.

### Check what we fund in Discovery Research

Your research must:

- fit within what we support in Discovery Research
- have the potential to improve human life, health, and wellbeing.

Your research can:

- be in any discipline - including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), experimental medicine, humanities and social science, clinical/allied health sciences, and public health
- be in a single discipline or multidisciplinary.

Your research must not:

- fall outside of what we support in Discovery Research. Check what we don't fund.
- start earlier than seven months after the application deadline.

Review previous projects that have been successful for this scheme

Search awarded grants

## Is your organisation right for this scheme?

The administering organisation is the organisation responsible for submitting your final application to Wellcome and managing the finances of the grant if it is awarded.

The lead applicant must be based at an eligible administering organisation that can sign up to our grant conditions.

### Where your administering organisation is based

The administering organisation must be in one of the following:

- UK
- Republic of Ireland
- a low- or middle-income country (apart from India and mainland China)

The organisation must be a not-for-profit and can be a:

- higher education institution
- research institute
- healthcare organisation
- charity or social enterprise

## What's expected of lead applicant and any coapplicant organisations

We expect organisations to:

- Guarantee that the space and resources you need have been agreed and will be made available to you from the start date through to the end date of your award.
- Explain how your research fits with the strategic aims of the organisation.

If your organisation is a core-funded research organisation, a Discovery Award should not replace or lead to a reduction in existing or planned core support.

## How applications are assessed



We will review your research proposal, skills and experience, and research environment. The assessment weightings are used at interview stage.

### Your research proposal (50%)

To be competitive, your research proposal will be:

- **Bold.** It aims to deliver a significant shift in understanding and/or it provides a significant advance over existing methodologies, conceptual frameworks, tools or techniques. It has the potential to stimulate new and innovative research.
- **Creative.** Your proposed approach is novel – it develops and tests new concepts, methods or technologies, or combines existing ideas and approaches in a new way.
- **High quality.** It is well-designed, clear, supported by evidence and the proposed outcomes/outputs are feasible.

### Your skills and experience (applicants and any coapplicants) (25%)

We will review:

- your research outputs and contributions to the research community

- your previous contributions to, and plans for, developing team members and other researchers
- your leadership and management skills, and how you plan to develop these during the award
- how the programme will be managed and led
- if applying as a team of researchers, your rationale for a team approach, team composition (including your approach to diversity, inclusion and career stage) and the contribution of each team member.

## Your research environment (25%)

We will review:

- how you will contribute to the strategic aims of your organisation
- how your research environment(s) will help you develop your research capabilities, and leadership and management skills
- your experience of, and plans for, contributing to a positive and inclusive research culture.

## Research costs we'll cover



A Wellcome Discovery Award provides funding for research expenses.

The award usually lasts for 8 years, but may be less for some disciplines, such as humanities and social science.

The award may be held on a part-time basis. When applying, you should cost the application at 1.0 (100%) full-time equivalent. We will then extend the duration of the award to reflect this.

You should ask for a level and duration of funding that's appropriate for your proposed research. You will need to justify these costs in your grant application.

The award includes:

staff

continuing professional development and training

materials and consumables

animals

equipment

access charges

overheads

travel and subsistence

overseas allowances

fieldwork expenses

inflation allowance

open access charges

clinical research costs

public engagement and patient involvement costs

contract research organisations

other costs



## What we don't offer

The award does not include salary costs for the lead applicant, unless you:

- are based in a low- or middle-income country, and
- hold a permanent, open-ended or long-term rolling contract, and
- have to get your salary from external grant funding.

We only provide a salary for coapplicants in certain circumstances - see 'staff costs' for further details.

See 'Other costs' for the costs we will and will not provide.

## How to apply

### Where to apply

Apply for this scheme on the Wellcome Funding platform. You will need to log in or create an account. You can save your application and return to it at any time.

Get some [tips to help you write your grant application.](#)



[Sample full application form for Wellcome Discovery Awards](#)

[Start your application](#)

## Information you need to provide

As well as answering the application questions, you must provide:

- a letter of support from each organisation (of the lead applicant and any coapplicants)

- a letter of support from the director of finance at the administering organisation or any indirectly funded organisation requesting overheads, confirming the breakdown is a true representation of the costs incurred.

If you have less than three years remaining on your contract at the point of application, you must have secured your next position at an eligible organisation and provide a letter of support from them.

## How long it takes to apply

You must leave enough time for:

- you and any coapplicants to complete the application
- your administering organisation to review and submit the application.

## Getting support with your application

We offer disability-related support for applicants. Read the [disability-related support guidance](#) if you:

- are disabled or have a long-term health condition and you need help applying for funding
- need to defer your application
- need help completing your project, for example costs for assistive technology.

## Application process

### 1. Before you apply

Make sure you read everything on this page.

Get some [tips to help you write your grant application](#).

You do not need to contact us before you write and submit your application.

View the [sample full application for for Wellcome Discovery Awards \[PDF 1.43MB\]](#).

## 2. Submit your application to your administering organisation for approval

Complete your application form on [Wellcome Funding](#).

Submit your application to the 'approver' your administering organisation for approval. Make sure you leave enough time for the to review and submit your application to Wellcome before the deadline. The approver may ask you to make changes to your application.

If this is your organisation's first time applying for Wellcome funding

If this is your organisation's first time applying for Wellcome funding, they will need to contact us to request an organisation account. Email [fundingsupport@wellcome.org](mailto:fundingsupport@wellcome.org) with your organisation's:

- name
- address
- country
- team email address for the people who will approve and submit your application (this is usually a research management team).

We will create the organisation account and provide access to the approvers. Review our [guidance for research offices](#).

## 3. Administering organisation reviews your application and submits it to us

Your application must be submitted by 17:00 (GMT/BST) on the deadline day. Review our [guidance for research offices on using the Wellcome Funding platform](#).

## 4. Shortlisting

We will check your eligibility for the scheme and that your application demonstrates how you will meet the aims of the scheme. If your application is ineligible or does not demonstrate how you will meet the aims of the scheme, we will withdraw your application and contact you to explain why.

One of the following Discovery Advisory Groups will then review your application, depending on your area of research:

- Molecular Mechanisms
- Pathogen Biology and Disease Transmission
- Cell Biology, Development and Physiology
- Immune System in Health and Disease
- Population and Public Health
- Brain and Behavioural Sciences
- Genetics and Genomics
- Medical Humanities
- Social Sciences
- Data Sciences, Tools and Technology.

If shortlisted, we will invite you for interview.

Advisory Group meetings are observed by potential future grant applicants, as part of our Committee Observers initiative. Observers are subject to the same confidentiality obligations as committee members and reviewers.

## 5. Written expert review

We'll seek external written expert review on shortlisted applications. Only the proposed research will be reviewed.

Reviewers will be chosen based on their expertise within the relevant research field and not on their level of seniority.

Unattributed comments will be sent to you before your interview.

## 6. Interviews

The Discovery Award Interview Panel will interview shortlisted candidates at the Wellcome offices in London. Accessibility requirements will be accommodated. Those who cannot attend in person can participate remotely.

We will provide information on the structure of the interview, layout of the room, and interview committee membership.

You will be asked to give a presentation at the start of your interview. Shortly before the day of the interview, you will need to provide us with your presentation slides.

The focus of the interview will be on questions and answers. The committee will assess across a set of criteria rather than one specific aspect of the proposal.

## 7. Funding decision

Final funding decisions will be made by the Discovery Research Decision Board.

You will receive an email notification of the funding decision soon after the decision has been made. We will write to you after this with the reasons for the decision.

We may use positive action on this scheme. Read [our guidance](#) for more information.

## Key dates

You must submit your application by 17:00 (GMT/BST) on the deadline day. We don't accept late applications.

**Open round**

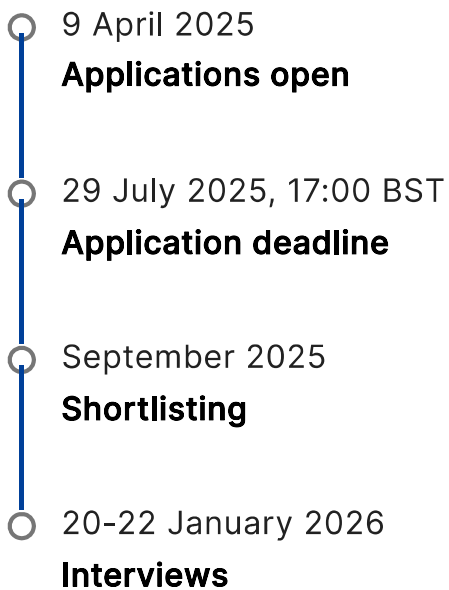
**Upcoming round**

**Closed round**



## July 2025 round

[Open to new applications](#)



## More information about this scheme

Hear from Wellcome staff, committee members and funded researchers about:

- our vision and priorities for funding researchers and research led from low- and middle-income countries
- our Discovery Research funding schemes
- examples of funded discovery research around the world
- application assessment process and advice for applying
- panel Q&A with Wellcome staff, funded researchers and our Funding Advisory Committee members.

These webinars are primarily for researchers based in low- and middle-income countries at all career stages, as well as for research support staff.

The main content of each webinar is the same, with some of the panel membership tailored for each region.

While all our application systems are managed in English, these webinars offered live interpretation options.

### Webinar for researchers in Latin America (1 hour 32 minutes)

*Live interpretation in Spanish and Portuguese*

- [English](#)
  - [Español](#)
  - [Português](#)
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Ampliar para leer la transcripción en Español

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Expandir para ler a transcrição em Português

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### Webinar for researchers in Africa (1 hour 32 minutes)

*Live interpretation in French and Swahili*

- [English](#)
- [Français](#)
- [Kiswahili](#)

### Webinar for researchers in Asia (1 hour 32 minutes)

*Live interpretation in Thai and Vietnamese*


- [English](#)
- [Tiếng Việt](#)
- [ภาษาไทย](#)


Contact us



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If you have a question about eligibility, what we offer or our funding remit, contact our funding information advisers:

 [Send us a message](#)

 [\(0\)20 7611 5757](#)

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We do not answer questions on the scope or competitiveness of proposals.