

Every Researcher Counts

Resource E

Supplementary guides

E4 – Alternative approaches to funding research

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Alternative approaches to funding research

Examples of approaches and schemes to encourage and facilitate diversity within research

This document is an example of further research and information that is available to help incorporate equality and diversity into existing workshops with research audiences. Many higher education institutions already run workshops on grant proposal writing, winning research funding and considering alternative sources of funding. The examples given in this document illustrate different approaches available to include in workshops.

Funding research carried out part-time and for women returners:

One of the reasons given by individuals within higher education institutions for resistance to the implementation of flexible working is that the current funding guidelines do not facilitate the employment of people part-time or women returning from maternity leave.

However, there are examples of the flexibility in funding to accommodate different individual needs. For example, the EPSRC is very clear on the subject under the heading of 'fellowship eligibility and resources' on their website www.epsrc.ac.uk:

'Fellowships will be awarded for an equivalent of up to three years full time effort. Postdoctoral fellowships may be held on a part-time basis (minimum 50%). Where part-time arrangements are considered, the equivalent duration would spread over a maximum of 6 years. If you wish to hold the award on a part-time basis you must state this on the application form and give the percentage time (between 50%-100%).'

Maternity leave

All research councils now have a standardised policy on maternity leave provision for fellowships www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/student-pregnancy-and-maternity (section on funding).

Examples of alternative approaches to research funding:

The following examples suggest that there are opportunities for reduced hours research proposals. Additionally, whilst competition for the fellowships detailed below is obviously significant, these examples demonstrate that there are opportunities for researchers from more diverse backgrounds.

L'Oreal UK and Ireland Fellowships for Women in Science

This fellowship is for £15,000 to provide flexible support to women in science. The prize money is for female postdoctoral researchers and it can be spent in innovative ways to enable women scientists to pursue and continue their research careers – buying equipment, paying for childcare and travelling to overseas conferences.

Science and Technology Facilities Council Returners Fellowships

This fellowship is offered as one-year full time or spread through (up to) 5 years. It is aimed at returners to science who have been dealing with long term illness, family or caring responsibilities or moving from a non-academic employment sector.

EPSRC: Daphne Jackson Fellowships

Part-time fellowships to help scientists and engineers to return to work following a career break due to family commitments.

LSE: The Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines

The offer of an annual fund for new researcher awards – up to £20,000. Applicants can be lecturers, part-time staff or fixed term staff.

Wellcome Trust New Investigator Awards

The trust makes allowances for people who have taken career breaks, taken unconventional career paths or have been working part-time.

NERC Research Grants Handbook

This states that staff funded from research grants can be flexible as "all appointments may be full or part-time as appropriate".

Summary

This is not a definitive guide; it is provided as an example of the wider thinking that exists in the research environment regarding funding and how a more diverse workforce can be encouraged in the areas of equality relating to sex and pregnancy and maternity.

It is provided in the context of encouraging staff developers to undertake their own research to include a diverse range of sources, examples and thinking in delivering their existing programmes of personal development to diverse audiences within their institutions.