

ECR Visiting Fellowships

Guidelines

Applicants should be working in the field of comparative physiology and/or biomechanics with a focus on experimental work that is hypothesis-driven and aims to elucidate mechanism (i.e. that aligns with the core focus of Journal of Experimental Biology). ECR Visiting Fellowships have been set up to provide funding for junior faculty staff members to attract an early-career researcher (e.g. student or postdoctoral fellow) to their lab to conduct a defined research project and to support the travel and accommodation costs of the ECR for one to three months. This funding is to support new research collaborations between the junior faculty staff member and an ECR, not existing ones. Each application will be judged on the excellence of the applicant, the innovative quality of the proposed research and the benefits that will result from hosting an ECR.

Guidelines for completing the application form

- ECR Visiting Fellowships can be awarded once only to an applicant.
- There are two funding rounds per year. If an application is unsuccessful, the applicant may not apply again in the following funding round (e.g. if an applicant is unsuccessful in the December 2023 funding round, they cannot apply again in the June 2024 funding round).
- The date of travel for the ECR must occur within six months of funding being awarded.
- Applications will not be considered retrospectively.
- Existing research collaborations will not be supported.
- Applications will be considered only from junior faculty staff members within five years (excluding any career breaks) of their first faculty position (e.g. appointed as a Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Group Leader, Principal Research Investigator).
- The application form and all supporting documents must be completed in English, and letters of support must be on headed paper and signed.
- Expenses covered can include travel, accommodation, subsistence and visa fees of the ECR. Travel insurance costs should not be included in the expenses.
- The grant does not cover research costs – you must already have secured funding for your research project.
- Please attach the following documents to your application:
 - letter of employment status and support from your Head of Department/School
 - statement/evidence of research funding from your Head of Department/School
 - Curriculum Vitae
 - publication list
- It is your responsibility to ensure that you and the ECR meet the criteria required for an ECR Visiting Fellowship.
- You cannot apply for both an ECR Visiting Fellowship and a Research Partnership Kickstart Travel Grant within a 12-month period.

Conditions of the ECR Visiting Fellowship

1. If your application is successful, you and the ECR will be required to sign our ECR Visiting Fellowship Agreement.
2. The start date of the ECR visit must occur within six months of funding being awarded.
3. If for any reason the visit is delayed beyond six months of the award, you must seek permission to extend the funding.
4. If you are unable to recruit an ECR or the visit is cancelled, the funds allocated will need to be returned, in full.

5. Any unspent funds must be returned within one month of the end of the visit.
6. You must keep all receipts related to the visit of the ECR (e.g. travel and accommodation costs). These must be scanned and uploaded via the online application portal within one month of completion of the ECR's visit.
7. You must provide at least two bright, clear photographs and a 300-500-word summary of the outcomes of the ECRs visit within three months of completion of the visit.

Applicant handbook

This handbook will help you to complete your application and to understand the terms and conditions of the ECR Visiting Fellowship. **Please read thoroughly before submitting your application.**

What is an ECR Visiting Fellowship?

The Company of Biologists and Journal of Experimental Biology are offering **ECR Visiting Fellowships** to junior faculty staff (e.g. Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Group Leader, Principal Research Investigator) to attract an early-career researcher (ECR; e.g. graduate students and post-doctoral researchers, up to five years post-PhD conferral) to undertake a defined research project in their lab. Each grant is a maximum of £3,000 (or currency equivalent) and is to be used to support the travel and accommodation of the visiting ECR for a period of one to three months. The grant does not cover research costs, and you must already have secured full funding for your research project.

Who can apply for an ECR Visiting Fellowship?

- Junior faculty staff (e.g. Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Group Leader, Principal Research Investigator) who are within five years (excluding any career breaks) of their first appointment to a faculty position.
- Applicants must be working in the field of experimental biology relating to animal comparative physiology or biomechanics.
- ECR Visiting Fellowships can be awarded only once to an applicant.
- If an application is unsuccessful, the applicant cannot apply again within 12 months.
- ECR Visiting Fellowships will not be awarded to applicants with an existing collaboration with the ECR to be invited.
- Grants do not support attendance at scientific meetings, conferences or training courses, nor are they to be used to fund the research project.
- Although there is no restriction on nationality, we are unable to pay awards to recipients in jurisdictions, countries or regions of the world subject to sanctions, embargoes or other political trade restrictions put in place by the United Nations, the EU or the UK.

Application deadlines

There are two funding rounds each year. Please refer to our website <https://www.biologists.com/grants/visiting-fellowships> for further details.

How are applications assessed?

- A JEB Editor with the appropriate expertise and discipline knowledge will referee and assess the proposal.
- Applications will be evaluated for their merit across several attributes, including the aims and approach of the proposed research project, the applicant's track record, benefits to the applicant and ECR, and alignment of the research project to the core remit of Journal of Experimental Biology.
- Applicants will generally be informed of the outcome of their application within four weeks of the application deadline.

Completing the application form

- Unsuccessful applicants may re-apply for a Research Partnership Kickstart Travel Grant for a revised project 12 months from the date of the original application (e.g. if you are unsuccessful for the December 2023 funding round, you can apply again in the December 2024 funding round).
- All sections of the application must be completed unless specifically stated; incomplete applications will not be accepted.
- The application and all supporting documents must be submitted in English.
- Applications will not be considered retrospectively.
- If possible, please convert your attachments into a single PDF file.
- It is your responsibility to ensure that both you and the Visiting ECR meet the criteria required for the ECR Visiting Fellowship.

Documents to be submitted with your application:

- **Letter of status and support from your Head of Department/School** should include who you are, your position, and when you were appointed to that position at your institution.
- **Statement/evidence of research funding from your Head of Department/School** should include a statement of support that the institution is willing to host an ECR, that infrastructure and funds are available for the proposed research project and that the project is feasible.
- **Curriculum Vitae**
- **Publication list**

All supporting letters must be:

- provided in an institutional letter-headed document, written in English and signed.
- submitted with the application; we do not accept supporting letters directly from the Head of Department/School.

Details of travel should include dates of the proposed visit by the ECR which may be provisional at the time of application but should be confirmed prior to your visit if the Grant is awarded.

The total amount requested **should not exceed £3,000.**

You should indicate how the funds will be used.

- **Travel and accommodation:** please include a level of detail to support your request, e.g. return flights LHR to SEA (British Airways) or accommodation one month at Orchard Hotel single en-suite room. Travel insurance is not included.
- **Fees:** includes visa fees, COVID tests.
- **Estimated costs** are acceptable, as you will be required to provide evidence of expenditure and return unspent funds.

Funding sought from other sources. If you have applied or intend to apply to other funding bodies, then please provide details in this section. This should include the amount requested and a link to the organisation website. If you do not intend to receive additional funding for the ECR's visit then this section should be left blank. The ECR should not be holding a Travelling Fellowship from The Company of Biologists for the same project/visit.

Proposed Project proposal should include full details and explanation of the proposed project, hypotheses to be tested, the approach, and its alignment to the core remit of JEB.

Receipts [evidence of expenditure] from successful applicants

- We will require receipts from you following the completion of the ECR's visit and return of unused funds within one month of their departure. Evidence of every expense incurred and paid must be provided or monies returned.
- Receipts must be scanned and submitted via the Online Application portal.

Reports from successful applicants

- You will be required to provide a 300-500-word summary detailing the visit, benefits and outcomes within three months of the end of the ECR's visit.
- We request that you provide at least two bright, clear photographs (e.g. these can be of yourself and ECR from their visit). Please ensure individuals featured in photographs complete and sign a consent form.
- We may use material from ECR Visiting Fellowship reports to publish a summary on our website, on social media and in other promotional materials to inspire other junior faculty staff to apply for these grants. We may also use your personal data relating to the ECR Visiting Fellowships, including your name, your institution, the project title, and details of the visiting ECR to include on our website to promote you as a successful applicant for the grant, and also to promote our ECR Visiting Fellowship Grant scheme. If you have any concerns about the use of your material or personal data for these purposes, please let us know.
- Your report will be retained for at least seven years and may be inspected by the Charity Commission.

Terms & conditions

- The date of travel of the ECR must occur within six months of funding being awarded.
- If for any reason the ECR's visit is delayed beyond six months of the award, you must seek permission to extend the funding.
- If your application is successful, you will be required to sign our ECR Visiting Fellowship Agreement.
- Funds will be paid directly into an account at your institution once the grant has been approved. We require you or your institution to acknowledge receipt of funds by emailing accounts@biologists.com.
- Awarded funds must be returned in full if for any reason the ECR is unable to complete the planned trip.
- We may require a partial return of funds in the event that the ECR undertakes a shorter trip than the one detailed in your application.
- We are unable to 'top up' the grant in the instance that the actual cost of travel exceeds the funding awarded.
- Under no circumstances is an ECR Visiting Fellowship transferable.
- Funds can only be used to support the ECR visit specified in your application. You must seek agreement from us if any details change after your application has been submitted.
- The Company of Biologists/ Journal of Experimental Biology should be acknowledged wherever relevant and possible. Our company logo and journal logo will be provided to you.

FAQs

Can I apply for a Visiting Fellowship if I already have an existing collaboration or partnership with the ECR?

No, we do not award funds for existing collaborations.

Do I already need to have recruited the visiting ECR before I submit the application?

You may already know an ECR that is interested in visiting your lab to work on a project or you may need to advertise the opportunity if your application is successful.

Will The Company of Biologists or Journal of Experimental Biology help in finding/recruiting a visiting ECR?

No, it is the responsibility of the junior faculty member to find, recruit and liaise with the Visiting ECR. Any recruitment process should follow the guidelines of the faculty member's institution/university/research centre. We also encourage consideration of equity, diversity and inclusion in the recruitment process (see <https://www.biologists.com/about-us/edi>).

Do supporting letters have to be signed?

Yes, all supporting letters must be on headed paper with a signature. They can then be scanned and submitted with your completed application through the grant application portal.

What information needs to be included in the Letter of Status/Support from my Head of Department/School?

The Letter of Status must include who you are, your position, and when you were appointed to that position at your institution.

What information needs to be included in the Statement/Evidence of Research Funding from my Head of Department/School?

The Statement/evidence of research funding from your Head of Department/School should include a statement of support that the institution is willing to host an ECR, that the infrastructure and funds are available for the proposed research project and that the project is feasible.

Can my Head of Department/School send you their letters directly?

No, the application letter and all supporting documents should be submitted through the grant application portal together, either as one document or as separate attachments.

Is it acceptable to complete the application with estimated costs for expenses as I don't know the exact costs at this stage?

Yes, that is acceptable, as you will be required to provide evidence of expenditure and return unspent funds.

If I am awarded an ECR Visiting Fellowship, will I get the funding before the ECR's visit?

Yes, we pay the funds directly into your institution's bank account once the award has been granted.

If my application is successful, will you publish the details of my submission?

Yes, we may publish a summary of your report on our website, on social media and in other promotional materials. We may also include details of your name, your institution, the project title and details of the ECR who will be visiting. This is a great achievement, and your success will inspire other junior faculty staff to apply for an ECR Visiting Fellowship. If you have any concerns about the use of your material or personal data in this way, please let us know.

Would you like the original receipts mailed to you or can I scan them and send you copies electronically?

Receipts must be scanned and submitted via the Online Application portal.

I assume any amount of money that I can't explain with receipts will have to be returned?

Yes, we do require evidence for every expense incurred and paid.

Will I have an answer about the result of my application even if it is negative?

Yes, you will be notified even if your application is unsuccessful.

Can the ECR hold a Travelling Fellowship from The Company of Biologists to provide additional support for the visit?

No, the ECR is not permitted to hold a Travelling Fellowship for the same project.

Are career interruptions (parental leave, illness, carer's responsibilities) taken into consideration?

Yes, all applications are considered relative to opportunity, including time elapsed since taking up first appointment as a junior faculty member.

How does an ECR Visiting Fellowship differ from a JEB Research Partnership Kickstart Travel Grant?

Both schemes have been initiated to support junior faculty staff members entering a critical stage in their careers, a stage where there are few funding initiatives. Research Partnership Kickstart Travel Grants are different from ECR Visiting Fellowships in that they are designed to initiate a new research collaboration by providing funds to support a junior faculty member to travel to another research lab for up to seven days to initiate a new research partnership and develop, write and submit a major grant application for collaborative research. ECR Visiting Fellowships are designed to attract and support an ECR (e.g. graduate student or postdoc, up to five years post-Ph.D.) coming to the junior faculty member's lab to undertake a defined research project.