SULSA Early Career Development
Funding Guidelines

Scope

This funding aims to support researchers in their endeavors to develop their own independent academic research track. The funds can be used for a variety of activities within these categories:

- Travel (to meet a collaborator or for training purposes – travel to conferences or organised meetings is not included)
- Training in new techniques/skills
- Consumable costs
- Facility access

Awarded funds cannot be used for salaries.

The project must be used to foster collaboration which could fall within following aims:

- Building a new academic collaboration (cross-disciplinary, cross-university, international)
- Upskilling of the applicant through collaborative training
- Generation of pilot data and/or developing a pathway to commercialisation with an external collaborator

You can apply for up to £4,000 and we hope to award a minimum of 5 projects.

Eligibility

- This call is open to the following SULSA members only: University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh Napier University, University of Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University, Heriot-Watt University, University of the Highlands and Islands, James Hutton Institute, Robert Gordon University, University of St Andrews, University of Strathclyde, University of the West of Scotland. Please refer to our **SULSA Funding Eligibility Key** at the end of this document to confirm you are eligible for this call.
- The lead applicant must be a postdoctoral researcher, research assistant, technical staff member or teaching fellow actively pursuing an independent academic career trajectory (Please see eligibility key).
- The lead applicant must be employed by a SULSA university or institute. Their contract must be valid for the duration of the funding.

- You require at least one collaborator (from outwith your own university). They can be from a university, industry or public sector and do not need to work in Scotland. Your collaborator can be a PhD student or research staff member, if applicable.
- Postdoctoral Researchers: if you hold a fellowship that ONLY covers your salary costs, then you are eligible to apply for this funding. If you hold a research grant worth £50k or more then you are no longer eligible to apply for this funding.

Funding Information and Conditions

- Projects must have defined milestones.
- Your project must be completed within 12 months of being awarded, or (if less) the duration of your contract at your host institution.
- The project must show a pathway to further funding from external sources.
- You must have your application signed by your PI to demonstrate their support.

Judging Criteria

- Project feasibility, objectives, and proposed outcomes
- Novelty and importance of the research described
- Track record of the applicant
- Impact for the applicant and broader community
- Support of your networks
- Sustainability (potential to leverage further funds)

Key Dates

- **Call Opens:** Monday 19th January 2026 (originally 2nd February 2026)
- **Application Deadline:** Monday 16th March 2026
- **Applicants Informed of Outcome:** by early April 2026
- **Funding End Date:** 30th April 2027

Submitting Your Application

Please submit your application (a single PDF) to jill.inkster@glasgow.ac.uk at SULSA by Monday 16th March 2026 at 5pm.

Notification of Outcome

Successful applications will be notified by email by early April 2026.

Payment of Funds

If successful, funds will be transferred to your lead Institution. Funds must be spent within 12 months of the date of transfer.
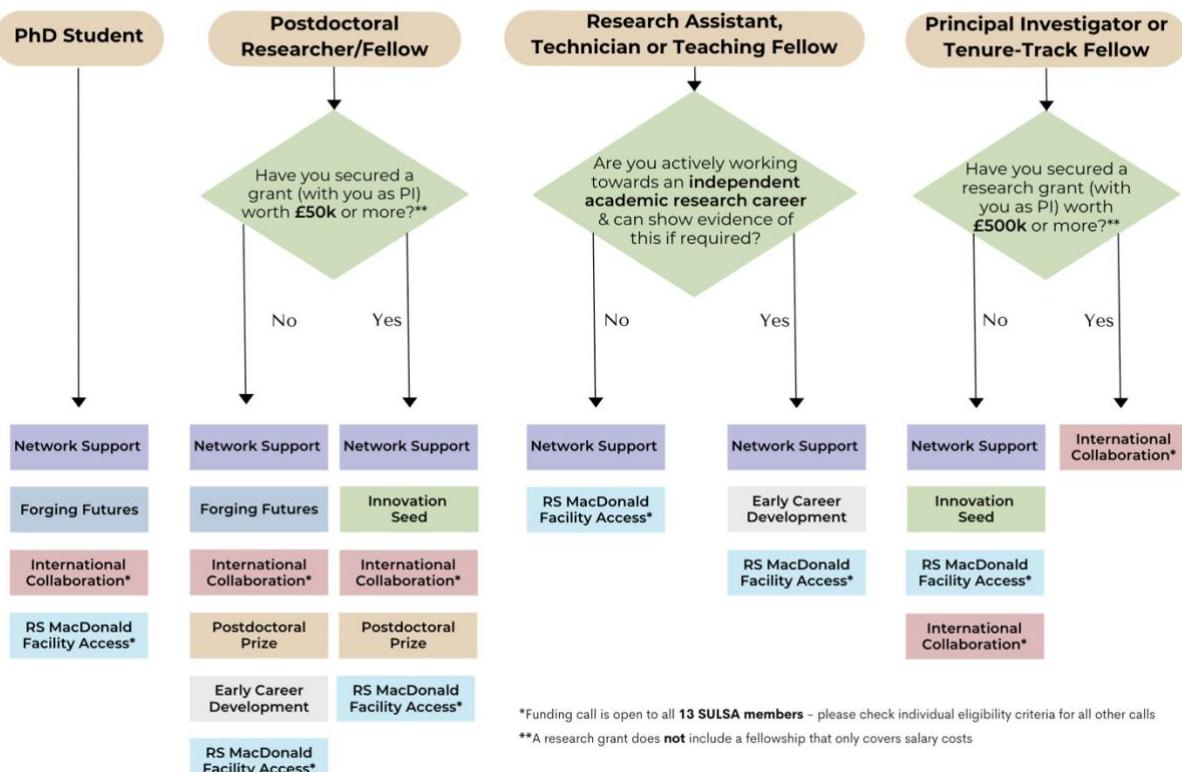
Awardee Reporting

You must provide the SULSA administration with project updates and outcomes when requested for reporting purposes. You will receive a survey to complete 3-months post-project completion and 1-year post-project completion.
If this project leads to a published article, or leverages grant funding, please contact the SULSA administration to make them aware.

SULSA Funding Eligibility Key

Please refer to our funding eligibility key for all SULSA funding calls:

SULSA FUNDING ELIGIBILITY KEY

| PhD Student | Postdoctoral Researcher/Fellow | | Research Assistant, Technician or Teaching Fellow | | Principal Investigator or Tenure-Track Fellow | |

Postdoctoral Researcher/Fellow: Have you secured a grant (with you as PI) worth **£50k** or more?**

Research Assistant, Technician or Teaching Fellow: Are you actively working towards an **independent academic research career** & can show evidence of this if required?

Principal Investigator or Tenure-Track Fellow: Have you secured a research grant (with you as PI) worth **£500k** or more?**

PhD Student
- Network Support
- Forging Futures
- International Collaboration*
- RS MacDonald Facility Access*

Postdoctoral – No
- Network Support
- Forging Futures
- International Collaboration*
- Postdoctoral Prize
- Early Career Development
- RS MacDonald Facility Access*

Postdoctoral – Yes
- Network Support
- Innovation Seed
- International Collaboration*
- Postdoctoral Prize
- RS MacDonald Facility Access*

Research Assistant – No
- Network Support
- RS MacDonald Facility Access*

Research Assistant – Yes
- Network Support
- Early Career Development
- RS MacDonald Facility Access*

Principal Investigator – No
- Network Support
- Innovation Seed
- RS MacDonald Facility Access*
- International Collaboration*

Principal Investigator – Yes
- International Collaboration*

*Funding call is open to all **13 SULSA members** – please check individual eligibility criteria for all other calls

A research grant does **not include a fellowship that only covers salary costs

Scottish Universities Life Sciences Alliance (SULSA)
www.sulsa.ac.uk