

Career Development Fund

Applicant Guidance

Who is eligible to apply for funding?

To comply with BBSRC's standard eligibility criteria, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Applicants must be Early Career Researchers (ECRs in the broadest sense) who are NUCNet members at the time of application
- Applicants must be eligible to receive BBSRC funding. Further details are available at: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/bbsrc/guidance-for-applicants/>
- Network members based outside the UK are not eligible to apply*
- Priority will be given to applicants who have not previously received NUCNet funding

* Please note that supported activities (courses, workshops, or laboratory exchanges) may take place in either the UK or overseas.

A letter of support must also be obtained from a PI or Head of School/Department and the host lab if appropriate.

How much funding is available from NUCNet?

There will be a number of awards for attendance expenses relating to courses, meetings or lab exchange available throughout the 3-year NUCNet grant duration. The maximum request per award is £1,000 with funds awarded at 100% full economic cost (fEC). These awards are intended to serve as top-up funds and should not be the sole source of funding, with matched funding commensurate with career stage and existing funding available, although this will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

When are the funding calls?

The call will be open for the duration of the network (until December 2028) or until available funds are fully allocated. This is a rolling call, with applications reviewed on a bimonthly basis by the Network Leadership Team.

What is the application process?

Application

The applicant should complete the application form through the link available on the NUCNet Website www.novelcropnetwork.ac.uk. Alternatively, please request a form from the Network Manager via the Network's email located in document footer.

All applicants must be members of NUCNet. Here is the link to make an application for membership: [apply for network membership](#)

The application form is divided into sections and includes a final checklist.

Section 1 – Applicants' details

Section 2 – Course, workshop, lab exchange or other request details

Section 3 – Funding request and breakdown

Section 4 – Other questions

Submitting application

Applications should be for activities taking place no more than 9 months in advance of the application submission date.

Applications must be submitted to the Network Manager via the Network email address. Applicants will receive an acknowledgement of receipt from the Network Manager.

Upon receipt, the Network Manager will check whether the application meets the eligibility criteria and includes all required information. Applications with omissions that cannot be easily corrected will be returned to the applicant for revision and resubmission.

Application submission format requirements:

File naming convention:

CareerDevFund_ ApplicantSurname_FirstInitial_Date(MonthYYYY)_DocumentTitle

Example: CareerDevFund_Hughes_J_June2026_letterofsupport



Website: www.novelcropnetwork.ac.uk Email: novelcropnet@soton.ac.uk



Document format requirements:

Application form: **Word (.docx)**

Signed letter of support on Departmental header (if necessary): **PDF**

Any additional supporting documents (as specified on application form): **PDF**

Competition call and review process

Competition announcement:

Calls will be disseminated through the NUCNet website, mailing lists, and social media channels, along with detailed information on the scope and application process. The career development top-up fund is an open call (submit at any time) and will be advertised on the Network website throughout the 3-year grant funding period.

Evaluation & Assessment process:

Applications will be reviewed bimonthly by the Network Management Board. Members with a conflict of interest will not participate in the assessment or discussion of the relevant application.

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

- The proposal should add value for the researcher towards their research profile
- The course, workshop or lab exchange should have aims related to the goals of NUCNet (see <https://novelcropnetwork.ac.uk/about-nucnet/>)
- Additional part funding should be available where possible (this is not required, but for most UK-based researchers we would expect part-funding to be already available).

Notification of Review Outcome:

The Network will notify applicants of the outcome of their application by email.



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Unsuccessful applicants will be informed promptly. The Network may pass on specific feedback if the network Management Board makes this available. Comprehensive feedback will not be provided to applicants.

Post award administration, reporting and payment

A formal award letter, summarising the terms and conditions governing the transfer of funds will be issued by University of Southampton.

Award recipients must submit a final report within two weeks of the course, workshop or lab exchange to the Network Manager via email in document footer. Reports should detail skills acquired, tangible outputs and next steps (approximately 150 words each). These reports will be reviewed by the Management Board to ensure that Network objectives have been met. Conflicts of interest in this review process will be avoided.

The project completion report asks the following questions:

1. Summary of outputs. Please include photos if possible.
2. Future plans
3. Financial details of the actual spend of award
4. Is there anything else you would like to report?

Awards and outputs will be reported on the NUCNet website and to BBSRC.

Data protection and sharing

Copies of applications (application form and supporting documents) will be made available to the NUCNet leadership team in confidence for review and funding decisions. Administrative staff of the University of Southampton will use the information provided in the application for processing the proposal, the award of any funding, and reporting. To meet BBSRC obligations for public accountability and dissemination of information, details of grants (including successful awards) may also be made available on the Research Councils' website and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists. BBSRC will use this information for research-related activities, including but not limited to, transfer of funds, statistical analysis in relation to evaluation of BBSRC, study of trends and policy and strategy studies.

Have a question?

For any questions, comments, or feedback regarding this guidance, the application form or the application process, please email the NUCNet Manager using the address listed in the footer of this document.



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