

Call for applications: Wellcome Early-Career Awards

<https://wellcome.org/grant-funding/schemes/early-career-awards>

Keywords: early career, science, discovery research, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), experimental medicine, humanities and social science, health sciences, and public health

Funding amount and duration of funding: Salary and up to £400,000 for research expenses over 5 years

Funder deadline: 10 November 2026, 17:00 GMT

UCT Intention to Submit deadline: Please complete UCT's [intention-to-submit](#) form by **18 August 2026** to help ensure timely submission of your completed application.

UCT internal deadlines: Approval via UCT's electronic Research Administration (eRA) system is **required prior to submission** to the funder. Applicants should:

- Complete UCT's intention-to-submit form. Your finance staff will be automatically contacted when you complete and submit the form.
- Ensure [eRA Internal Approvals forms](#) reach the Finance Approver step by no later than **27 October 2026**
- Ensure faculty approved eRA forms reach RC&I by **3 November 2026**

[The Wellcome Early-Career Awards scheme](#) is soliciting applications from early-career researchers from any discipline who are ready to develop their research identity. Through innovative projects, awardees will deliver shifts in understanding that could improve human life, health, and wellbeing.

By the end of the award, successful candidates will be equipped to lead their own independent research programme. Research proposals may be in any discipline - including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), experimental medicine, humanities and social science, clinical/allied health sciences, and public health - as long as it has the potential to improve human life, health and wellbeing, and aligns with the Wellcome Trust's [funding remit](#).

Award details:

- Grants are available for up to five years, but this may be less for some disciplines, and longer if held on a part-time basis.
- Applicants may request salary and up to £400,000 for research expenses.
- More information regarding allowable and non-allowable costs can be found [here](#).

Eligibility:

The call is open to early-career researchers who:

- May have some postdoctoral experience in their proposed field of study, but no more **than three years** at the point of the application deadline, unless they can demonstrate how other factors have impacted their research career. **Wellcome defines postdoctoral experience as any period spent in research after the successful completion of your PhD/higher research degree viva.**
- Hold a PhD or have completed four years' equivalent research experience; and
- Are ready to design, plan, and deliver their own innovative project that aims to:
 - Advance understanding in their field, and/or
 - Develop methodologies, conceptual frameworks, tools, or techniques that could benefit health-related research
- Please review the [Wellcome's Eligibility and Suitability](#) criteria to confirm your individual eligibility.

Deadlines & submission process:

This proposal requires the PI to complete an online application on the funder portal ([Wellcome Funding platform](#)) as well as requesting institutional approval via UCT's electronic Research Administration (eRA) system, prior to submission of the application.

Important: The call has 3 submission rounds per year, with deadlines in February, July & November.

PI to initiate an eRA proposal approval request and alert their faculty finance staff of the budget support needed	Tuesday, 18 August
PI to submit an eRA Proposal Approval request with a draft budget to the Budget Reviewer step on eRA at least 4 weeks before the funder deadline	Tuesday, 13 October
PI to submit an eRA Proposal Approval request to the Finance Approver step on eRA at least 2 weeks before the funder deadline	Tuesday, 27 October
Approval form and all supporting documents to reach RC&I via eRA at least 1 week before the funder deadline	Tuesday, 3 November
Funder deadline: Final submission actioned by RC&I via the funder's portal.	Tuesday, 10 November

Contact information:

- Health Sciences applicants contact fhs.researchfunding@uct.ac.za
- All other faculties contact internationalgrants@uct.ac.za