

Call for applications: SSRC: LEGO Foundation Fellowship

URL: <https://www.ssrc.org/programs/the-lego-foundation-fellowship/application-details/>

Keywords: fellowship; child development; education; global health; social sciences; early- and mid-career researchers

Funding amount and duration of funding: USD 300,000 over three years

Funder deadline: 31 July 2026

UCT Internal Deadlines

- **UCT Intention to submit deadline:** Please complete [intention-to-submit](#) form by **01 July 2026**
- **UCT eRA:** Approval via UCT's electronic Research Administration (eRA) system is **REQUIRED** prior to submission to the funder. Applicants should:
 - contact faculty finance/budget reviewer by no later than **03 July 2026**
 - [eRA Internal Approvals forms](#) should reach the Finance Approver by no later than **17 July 2026**

Contacts: internationalgrants@uct.ac.za

About the Funding Opportunity

The **LEGO Foundation Fellowship**, administered by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), is a **global research fellowship** supporting **early- and mid-career researchers** working to advance understanding of how children learn, develop, and thrive. The fellowship provides **flexible funding** to enable researchers to pursue **ambitious, interdisciplinary, and policy-relevant research**, with a strong emphasis on translating evidence into practice.

The programme focuses on **child development and wellbeing across diverse contexts**, including:

- Early childhood development
- Education and learning systems
- Child mental health and wellbeing
- Public health and caregiving environments
- Children in crisis, conflict, and humanitarian settings

Fellows will also join a global cohort, enabling collaboration, knowledge exchange, and engagement with policy and practice communities.

Eligibility Criteria

The fellowship is open to **early- and mid-career researchers globally** employed by a **university or research institute**.

Applicants **must**:

- Hold a PhD (or equivalent research doctorate) by 31 July 2026
- Have been awarded their PhD no earlier than 1 January 2016 (*~10 years post-PhD*)
- Be employed by a university or research institution at the start of the fellowship
- Be able to have funds administered through their host institution (UCT requirement applies)
- Submit an individual application (no consortia)
- Propose research aligned with child development and children's wellbeing themes
- Be based in an eligible country (global, excluding sanctioned countries)

Applicants should demonstrate:

- A strong track record of research outputs relative to career stage
- A clear, original, and well-developed research agenda
- Strong methodological expertise and a feasible 3-year research plan
- Clear potential to produce evidence that informs policy and practice for children
- Interest in engaging with an interdisciplinary, global fellowship cohort

Application Process

Full details of the call please see [here](#) and [FAQs](#)

How to apply

Applicants must ensure all proposals go through UCT's electronic Research Administration ([eRA](#)) system for institutional approval **before** submission to the funder via the **SSRC online [application portal](#)**.

UCT internal requirements

	Deadline
PI to initiate an eRA Proposal Approval request and alert their faculty finance office of the budgetary support needed	Immediately
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	03 July 2026
PI to submit an eRA Proposal Approval request to the Finance Approver step on eRA at least 2 weeks before the funder deadline	17 July 2026
Approval form and all supporting documents to reach RC&I via eRA at least 1 week before the funder deadline	24 July 2026
PI to submit the application on the funder portal by the funder deadline	31 July 2026

Applications must be submitted via the SSRC online application portal by the funder deadline.

Institutional Contract with the LEGO Foundation

Grantees are required to enter into a Fellowship Contract with the LEGO Foundation. The sample agreement template has been made available [here](#) so that applicants can review the terms and expectations before applying.

Application materials include:

- Narrative submissions must use 11-point Calibri font with 1-inch margins. The application consists of:
 - A standard online application form
 - A resume or CV (two-page limit)
 - A research abstract (250-word limit)
 - A personal statement (500-word limit) that explains a) your inspiration for pursuing research into childhood development; b) how the proposed research will contribute to scholarly knowledge on the topic; and c) how the proposed research will support your capacity for leadership in moving discovery into practice.
- Research proposal (5-page limit) that includes:
 - **Relevance.** Clearly articulate the research question you will answer.
 - **Original contribution.** Describe the practical implications of the proposed research. How will your research findings be useful to other scholars, practitioners, and/or policy makers?
 - **Methods.** Describe the methods you will use for your research, the type of data you will collect, how you will analyse these data, and steps you will take to ensure that the data and analysis are reliable. Explain why you have chosen the proposed approach for the given question. If your research includes human subjects, you must include your plans for obtaining IRB approval.

- **Feasibility.** What practical, conceptual, or logistical challenges do you anticipate? How do you plan to address them during the fellowship term?
- **Work to date.** A brief description of related research work done to date, noting any preliminary analysis informing the proposed research.
- Completed [budget](#) and [narrative budget justification](#) templates
- A selected bibliography (2-page limit) relevant to the proposed research.