

# Applying for Postdoc/Early Career Research Funding

## Finding Funding and Writing Research Proposals

*Catherine Reynolds*

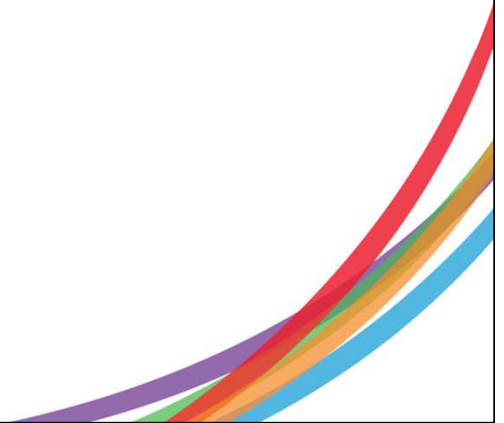
*PhD and Research Staff Careers Consultant, LSE*

Lent term 2016



# Today's Topics

1. Funding at different career stages
2. Finding out about funding calls
3. Common funders
4. Research proposals

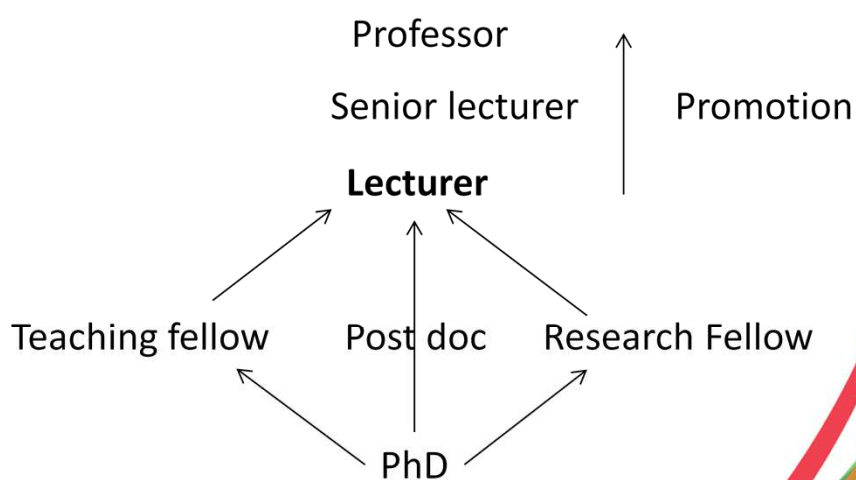


# Building an academic career?

## US



## UK



- Jobs advertised on: [www.jobs.ac.uk](http://www.jobs.ac.uk)
- Pay negotiated nationally

Other 'first' job titles exist:

Eg

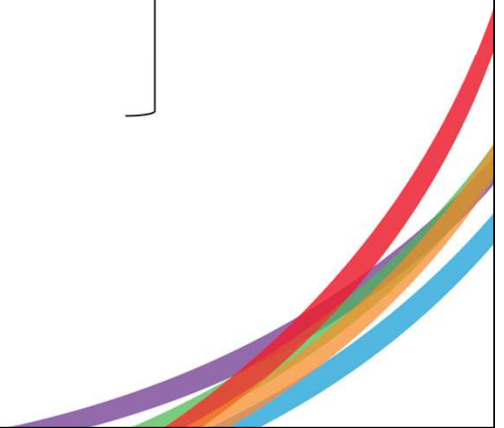
Post doc research assistant; assistant professor (term from US); research assistant; researcher; research associate;

Essentially entry point jobs for either teaching or research.

# Successful researchers need to.....

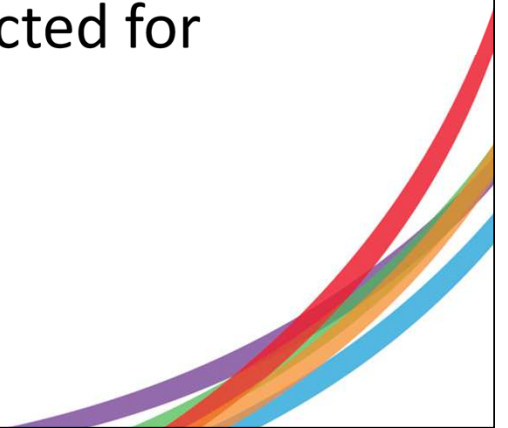
1. generate research ideas
2. 'sell' these ideas – get backing
3. complete project successfully

Research  
Funding



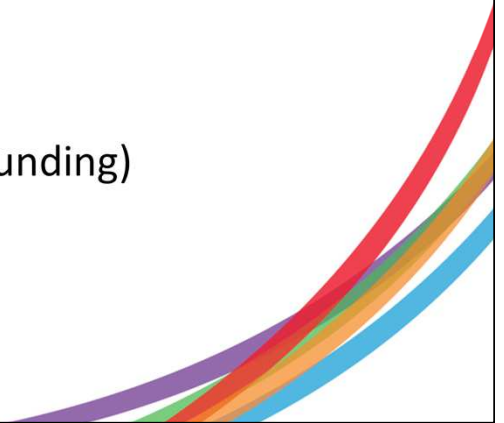
# Why bother?

- Crucial skill for any academic/researcher
- Makes you marketable in and out of academia
- Can develop own research ideas / independence
- Create opportunities for yourself
- In some disciplines will be expected for progression e.g. to lectureship



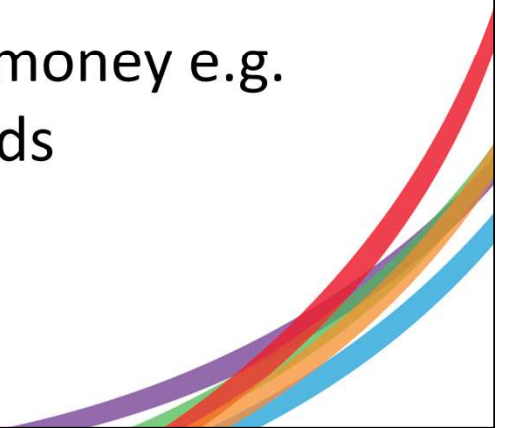
# Major Funders

- UK Government
  - British Academy, ESRC, AHRC, EPSRC (maths, statistics, info systems), NIHR (National Institute for Health)
- Charitable Trusts / Corporate Funding
  - Leverhulme Trust, Wellcome Trust, Nuffield Foundation, AXA Research Fund
- European
  - Max Weber, ERC, Marie Curie (European Funding)



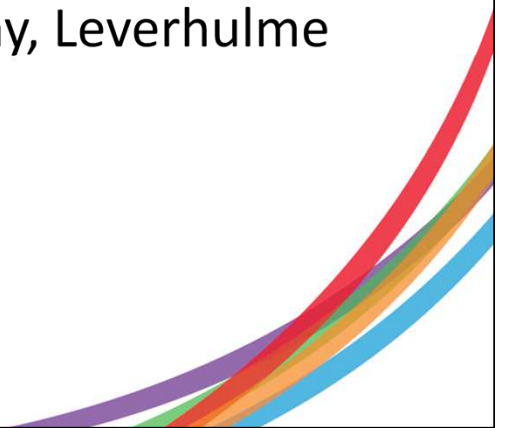
## Early PhD – first/second years

- Learn about funding in your discipline
  - Who funds research you read?
  - Who funds in your department?
  - Keep up to date with funding news
- Start applying for small pots of money e.g. travel, conference, grants, awards



## Late stage PhD/Early postdoc

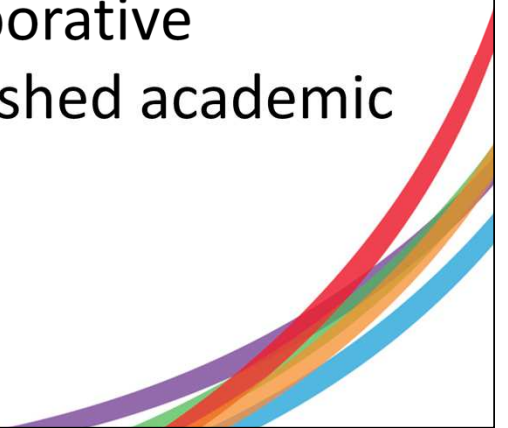
- Look at fellowships/early-career schemes
  - Independent funding for your research project
  - Fixed time period
  - Long time period for applications (more than a year)
  - Examples include: British Academy, Leverhulme Trust.....





## Research Staff

- Learn about funding in your discipline
  - Who funds research you read?
  - Who funds in your department?
  - Keep up to date with funding news
- Think about developing a collaborative research project with an established academic



# Finding Out About Funding

- **Research Division at LSE**

Sign up to e-briefing at:

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/researchAndDevelopment/researchFundingNews/briefing.aspx>

- **Research Professional Database**

Sign up to Email Alerts once registered

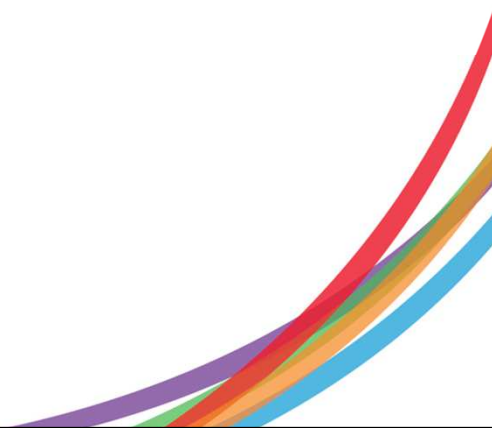
Save 'searches' for regular updates in your area



## Research Division at LSE

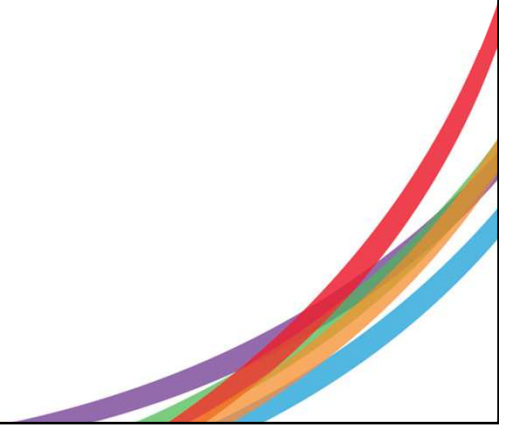
“...offers advice and assistance to the School's academic community in respect of all areas of funded research activity”

- Dr Aygen Kurt-Dickson,  
Research Development Manager
- Contact [rescon@lse.ac.uk](mailto:rescon@lse.ac.uk)



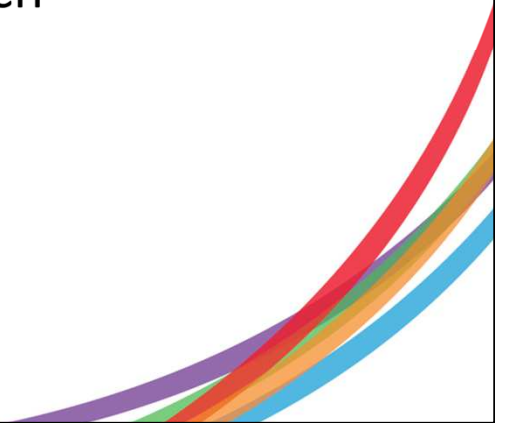
## Research Division

- Helpful if you want to hold research funding **at LSE**
- Need to talk to supervisor/mentor/head of department
- Contact RD early – ideas stage
- They can help you to identify funding
- Can comment on drafts of research proposals
- **MUST** contact them **at least** 2 weeks before deadline for any scheme



# Research Professional

- Database of funding opportunities
- <http://www.researchprofessional.com/>
- Register with LSE email address
- Includes wide range of items such as:
  - Travel to conferences / for research
  - Postdoctoral fellowships
- Includes anticipated deadlines



## For Example:

Searched “Political Science” and found.....

### **JFK Library Foundation Kennedy research grants**

- on any topic relating to the Kennedy period.
  - to help defray living, travel, and related costs incurred while doing research in the holdings of the library.
  - Scholars and students are eligible to apply. Preference is given to .... the preparation of recent dissertations for publication.
  - Next closing date August 2016
  - Across social sciences

# Always Check Eligibility

- Affiliation
- Established/non-established
- Time since PhD
  - (often exemptions e.g. maternity leave)



# General Approach

1. Research funders and schemes
2. Decide which you wish to apply for
3. Check application forms and timelines
4. Initial draft of application
5. Talk to department where you want to hold the fellowship
6. Get advice on proposal from mentors
7. Submit application well before deadline





# British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowships



- Award for 3 years full time, at a UK Institution
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Must have been awarded doctorate within last 3 years
- Aims to help recent PhDs towards academic posts
- Can stay at same institution as PhD
- Must have support of institution where you plan to work
- Eligible if UK/EEA national or completed PhD at UK institution
- Up to 45 awards per year
- Deadline usually in early October each year
- Success rate around 5%
- [Website](#)

[Information on this page](#)  
correct on 9 March 2016

# Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowships



- 3 years full time
- Any discipline
- Must have had doctorate for not more than 5 years
- Aims to help recent PhDs towards academic posts in UK
- Must be held at UK institution
- 50% of salary, balance paid by host institution and some research costs
- 100 were available in 2016
- Closing date 10 March 2016

[Information on this page](#)  
correct March 2016

# ESRC Future Research Leaders



- 2 years of support
- Fund around 70 per year
- Closing date end of September every year
- Within 4 years of submission of PhD – if worked outside academia since PhD that time won't be counted
- Don't necessarily need a PhD if have equivalent research experience from e.g. NGO, government, private sector
- Currently under review – keep up to date: [register for eNews](#) or [follow us on Twitter](#)
- [Website](#)

*Information on this page  
correct March 2016*

# AXA Research Fund



- Fund 2 years of research
- Fund research in 3 areas
  - Environmental, Life and Socio-economic risks
- Institution applies, not individual
- Institution can back max of 2 candidates per year
- About 30 per year
- Application process starts November
- No nationality restrictions
- Must propose a new project
- Must be within 5 years of PhD
- [Website](#)

*[Information](#) on this page  
correct as of Mar 2016*

# Max Weber Fellowships

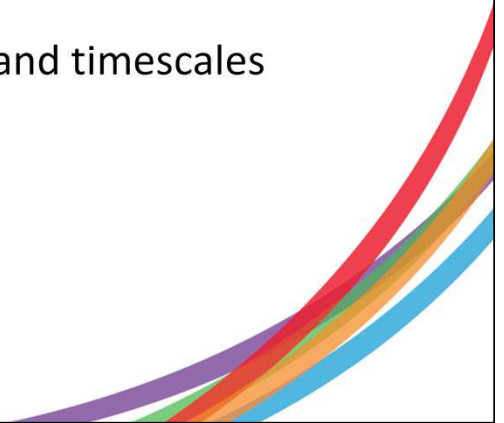
- 1- and 2- year fellowships
- Economics, Law, History, Social and Political Sciences or related fields
- Deadline 25 Oct
- Funded by European Commission and hosted in European University Institute in Florence
- Must have received doctorate in last 5 years
- Open to all nationalities
- Known as MWP Max Weber Programme



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correct as of Mar 2016

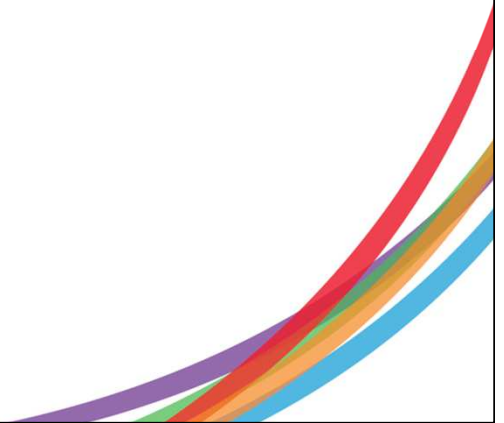
# Research Proposals – Some Tips

- Comply exactly with what funder asks for
- Don't assume your research is self-evidently interesting – sell it!
- Situate your work
- Limit to a single project – focus
- Choose an engaging title
- Write for an intelligent, non-expert readership (try it out on friends)
- Make it plausible/realistic
- Be clear about exactly what you will be doing and timescales
- Specify projected outcomes



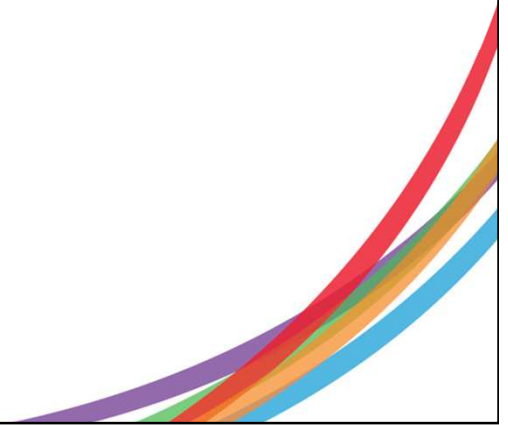
# Useful Questions

- Why is it novel?
- Why is it interesting?
- Why does it matter?
- What new knowledge will this create?
- Why do this now?
- Why do this here?



Imagine your reader is asking you.....

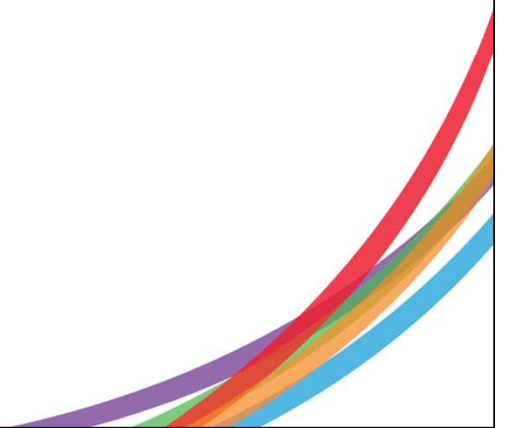
“So what?!”





“It is not advisable to base the research proposal for the three-year Fellowship simply on publishing the PhD thesis in book form. Rather, evidence of progression to a second project will be required.”

From British Academy Fellowship FAQs



## Highlights and insights from the wonderland of UK research

- <http://www.researchfundingtoolkit.org/blog/>
- <http://fundermental.blogspot.co.uk/> Research Funding Manager at the University of Kent
- LSE Careers information: [fellowships](#) , [writing proposals](#) , [Oxbridge fellowships](#) , [PhD Blog](#)

## LSE Careers PhD seminars

Termly seminars and events

- **Career planning for PhDs and research staff**
  - **(Non) Academic CVs and cover letters**
  - **Interview skills for jobs outside Academia**
  - **Academic interviewing skills and preparation**
  - **Using Your Time Effectively for Your Career**
  - **Research fellowships - finding/applying**
  - **Book on Career Hub <http://careers.lse.ac.uk/>**
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# PhD Careers Service

- Book [one-to-one](#) PhD Careers appointments
- Find out about all careers seminars through Career Hub: <http://careers.lse.ac.uk/>
- PhD section on Careers website  
<http://tinyurl.com/LSECareersPhD>
- Keep up to date with PhD Careers Blog  
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/careers/>

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