

# Aurora Science Announcement of Opportunity

**Closing date:** 16:00 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017

The UK Space Agency is making funding available for Aurora science. The purpose of this AO is to support science associated with planetary exploration to enhance the UK's capabilities and cross-disciplinary approach to planetary science. The first mission in the Aurora programme, ExoMars, will search for traces of past and present life. A key goal of the ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO) is to detect and characterise trace gases in the Martian atmosphere and gain a better understanding of methane and other atmospheric gases that are present in small concentrations, but could be evidence for possible biological or geological activity. The ExoMars rover, due for launch in 2020, will search Mars for signs of biosignatures from past life preserved within the subsurface via a 2m drill.

InSight, a NASA mission due for launch in 2018, will investigate the interior structure and processes of Mars by placing a single geophysical lander on Mars to study its deep interior. This should help scientists to understand the formation and evolution of terrestrial planets and determine the present level of tectonic activity and meteorite impact rate on Mars.

This scheme is open to academics and individual scientists from the UK or overseas, working at UK Research Organisations, for proposals to fund:

- **Fellowships** to develop promising early career researchers or allow existing academics to discipline-hop
- **Post Doctorate Research Assistants**
- **Studentships**
- **Support for academics** to participate in international science teams to exploit data from future missions such as the NASA InSight mission

Applications are particularly welcome in the following areas:

- *InSight and TGO data exploitation;*
- *Preparation for data exploitation of 2020 ExoMars*
- *Science research activities in collaboration with the robotic exploration unit within the ESA Centre at Harwell, for example activities around sample curation, understanding contamination introduced by a missions sample processing system. All proposals should have a letter of support from ESA (contact point [Ludovic.Duvet@esa.int](mailto:Ludovic.Duvet@esa.int)). This need not be restricted to Mars research. Proposals for matching funding for the ESA NPI scheme are most welcome ([http://www.esa.int/Our\\_Activities/Space\\_Engineering\\_Technology/Networking\\_Partnering\\_Initiative](http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Space_Engineering_Technology/Networking_Partnering_Initiative)).*

Although extensions to current fellowships will be considered, preference will be given to new fellowships.

## **Award Duration**

For PDRAs, awards will normally be for no more than three years; fellowships will be offered for no more than 36 months in total but could be held part-time for up to six years. Support for academics must be justified and of reasonable length in relation to the mission.

## **Award value**

Awards will be made in line with standard STFC criteria for PDRAs and fellowships. Grants will be administered by STFC, in accordance with their financial rules, on behalf of the UK

Space Agency. Reasonable costs will be permitted, but it should be noted that all costs must be justified and that the appropriateness and justification of sums requested will form part of the assessment criteria.



**Start Date**

No earlier than 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 and it is expected that studentships would start in the academic year 2018/19.

## How to Apply

Please read all of the guidance carefully. Contact the Agency if you have any questions.

Application forms should be completed but **not submitted** on the JeS system:

Please fill in a **JeS form** via <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/> for a **STFC Standard Proposal** (note: not a fellowship or studentship) and **produce a .pdf of the completed form**. To do this, follow *document actions --> print document --> select print format as 'pdf' --> download the print*.

Send this **.pdf** file, along with the relevant annexes as listed below, to [SpaceExploration@ukspaceagency.bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:SpaceExploration@ukspaceagency.bis.gsi.gov.uk)

**Please note:** it is the responsibility of the proposal Principal Investigator to clear their submission with the relevant finance and research offices of their institution. Such clearance must be obtained prior to submission.

Applications must be received no later than **16:00 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017**. Applications received after this will **not** be considered.

### Annexes:

**Project Studentships** should have the following annexes:

- 1) **Case for Support:** This should be no more than three sides in 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins) (excluding references). Containing the following information:
  - a) **Description of the Project**
  - b) **Supervision** - There should be a brief description of the experience the supervisors have. New lecturers are encouraged to apply and should indicate their experience to how the institution will support them.
  - c) **Monitoring of Progress** - This should explain the monitoring process that will be used and the type of remedial actions that could be put in place if required. Does the institute have an approved code of practice covering PhD student supervisory and monitoring procedures?
  - d) **Training Opportunities** - This section should detail the training that would be provided to the student, both compulsory and optional. This should include the number of lecturing (instruction) hours attended by the student over the duration of the award, excluding summer schools. The project must provide the student with training in the methods of research associated with the work to be undertaken. The student must have the opportunity to undertake broader skills training during the course of a PhD.
  - e) **Research Environment** - Provide some contextual information of the research environment, including the number of PhD students.
  - f) **Justification of Resources Requested**
- 2) **Impact Plan:** one side, 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins)
- 3) **Current Funding List for the PI:** This should include title, funder, value, duration and level of applicants time spent on the project. If the title is not self-explanatory include a sentence to explain what the project is about.

**Fellowships** should have the following annexes:

- 1) **Case for Support:** This should be no more than six sides in 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins) (excluding references). Containing the following information:
  - a) **Description of the Project**
  - b) **Monitoring of Progress** - This should explain the monitoring process that will be used and the type of remedial actions that could be put in place if required. Does the institute have an approved code of practice covering monitoring procedures?
  - c) **Research Environment** - Provide some contextual information of the research environment, including the number of PhD students.
  - d) **Justification of Resources Requested**
- 2) **Impact and outreach plan:** one side, 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins)
- 3) **Curriculum Vitae:** two sides in 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins)
- 4) **Publications List**
- 5) **A statement from the Head of Department** at the host institution in support of the application (maximum one side of A4 in 11pt text)
- 6) **Two references** in support of your application. One, and only one, must be from the host institution. The reference from the host institution must provide an explicit statement *outlining the advantages gained from hosting the fellowship*.
- 7) **Letter of support** from a relevant UK instrument team member or PI.
- 8) **Current Funding List for the PI:** This should include title, funder, value, duration and level of applicants time spent on the project. If the title is not self-explanatory include a sentence to explain what the project is about.

**Post Doctorate Research Assistants** should have the following annexes:

- 1) **Case for Support:** This should be no more than six sides in 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins) (excluding references). Containing the following information:
  - a) **Description of the Project**
  - b) **Management plan:** Proposed management of both the project and resources, identifying the training and career development opportunities for personnel working on the project.
  - c) **The relationship to any earlier or current work** of the applicant(s) and/or collaborating organisation(s) and any relevant work elsewhere.
  - d) **Justification of Resources Requested**
- 2) **Impact and outreach plan:** one side, 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins)

Please note: If the proposal is from a **named** PDRA, a CV and Publications list **must** be included.

- 3) **Curriculum Vitae:** two sides in 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins)
- 4) **Publications List**
- 5) **Letter of support** from a relevant UK instrument team member or PI.

6) **Current Funding List for the PI:** This should include title, funder, value, duration and level of applicants time spent on the project. If the title is not self-explanatory include a sentence to explain what the project is about.

**Support for Academics** should have the following annexes:

- 1) **Case for Support:** This should be no more than three sides in 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins) (excluding references). Containing the following information:
  - a) **Description of the Project**
  - b) **Monitoring of Progress** – This should explain the monitoring process that will be used and the type of remedial actions that could be put in place if required. Does the institute have an approved code of practice covering monitoring procedures?
  - c) **Research Environment** – Provide some contextual information of the research environment, including the number of PhD students.
  - d) **Justification of Resources Requested**
- 2) **Impact and outreach plan:** one side, 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins)
- 3) **Curriculum Vitae:** two sides in 11pt text (A4 paper, with minimum 2cm margins)
- 4) **Publications List**
- 5) **Current Funding List for the PI:** This should include title, funder, value, duration and level of applicants time spent on the project. If the title is not self-explanatory include a sentence to explain what the project is about.

IMPORTANT: Before submission, please ensure you have included the following:

	Studentship	Fellowship	PDRA	Support for academics
<b>JeS form</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Case for Support</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Impact Plan</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>CV</b>	No	Yes	*Possible	Yes
<b>Publications</b>	No	Yes	*Possible	Yes
<b>HoD Statement</b>	No	Yes	No	No
<b>References x2</b>	No	Yes	No	No
<b>Letter of Support</b>	Possible	Possible	Possible	Possible
<b>Current Funding</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

\* If the proposal is for a *named* PDRA, a CV and publications list *must* be included in the application.



## Proposal Assessment

In assessing your proposal the UK Space Agency will seek comment from at least two additional referees, to which you will be able to respond. **Please note: It may take up to 6 months for the UK Space Agency to seek peer reviews for PI response.** A final assessment and ranking of proposals will be made by a review panel which will draw experience across a broad range of science disciplines.

In considering the proposal, the panel will use the following criteria:

- Science excellence of the proposal
- Relevance, cross-disciplinarity and timeliness
- Justification and appropriateness of requested resources
- Studentships- quality of training and supervision
- Fellowships- the potential of the individual including the capability to perform the wider and responsibilities on an academic career
- PDRAs- how far a PDRA would enhance the project
- Team membership- the research record of academics applying for support funding
- Impact and outreach plan

The panel, in finalising the awards to be made, may take account of the distribution of awards in terms of subject, type of award and institution.

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## Key Points to Consider

- As the AO is linked to missions, the candidate should contact the relevant mission groups to discuss their proposal and highlight this in the proposal under the Case for Support.
- Submitted proposals should include science output that would be gained from the project; care should be taken to ensure that the proposal is concise and well written.
- All of the information boxes on the Je-S form must be filled including Objectives; Summary; Academic Beneficiaries and Impact Summary. The Summary must not be the same as the Objectives as the Agency may use the Summary for the public in future press releases or Agency news stories.
- Any additional documentation that is included in the .pdf, but is not stated in the guidance above (e.g. covering letters or additional letters of support) will **not** be considered. It will not be seen by reviewers or the review panel and will not count towards the proposal.
- If any part of the proposal extends over the page limit, the additional pages will not be considered and will not count towards the proposal.

## Further Information

For further information, please contact:

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