

# A guide to the Bell Burnell Graduate Scholarship Fund

A doctoral scholarships fund to encourage greater diversity in physics



## The Bell Burnell Graduate Scholarship Fund

In March 2019, the Institute of Physics (IOP) launched the Bell Burnell Graduate Scholarship Fund (the Fund) to encourage greater diversity in physics by supporting students from groups currently under-represented in physics who wish to study towards a doctorate in physics.

The Fund was made possible thanks to the generosity of Professor Dame Jocelyn Bell Burnell, who won the prestigious Breakthrough Prize for physics in 2018 for her role in the discovery of pulsars. Dame Jocelyn chose to donate her £2.3m prize award to the Institute of Physics in order to set up the Fund.

Applications open

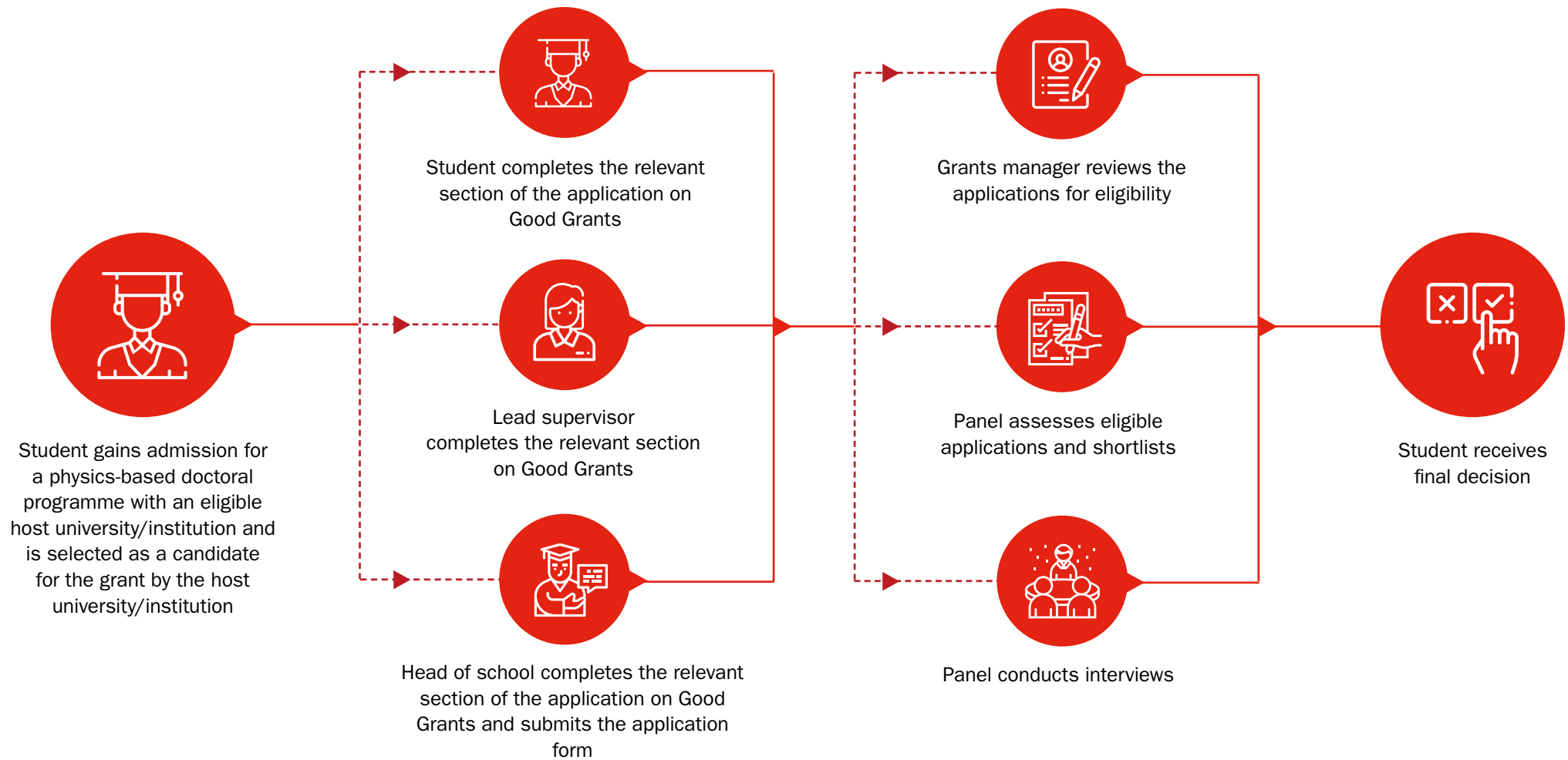
**Tuesday 1 October 2024**

Applications close

**Monday 20 January 2025**



## The process



## Eligibility criteria

A full set of terms and conditions can be found by visiting [iop.org/bellburnellfund](https://iop.org/bellburnellfund)

### Please note:

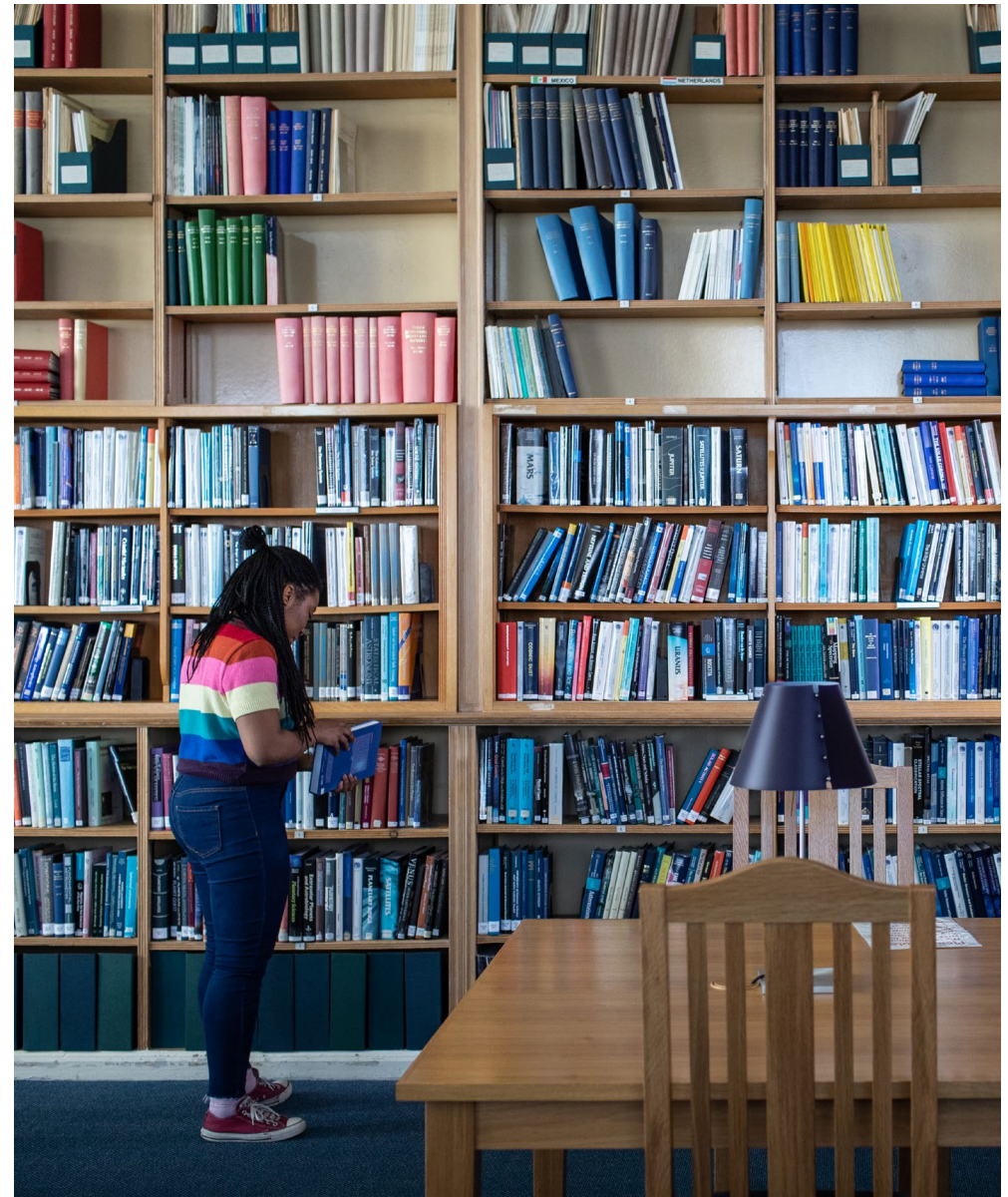
- students must be from an under-represented group in physics. For the purpose of this fund the definition\* of under-represented groups in physics refers to: women, students of Black-Caribbean, Black-African and other minority ethnic (BAME) heritage, students with disabilities, or who require additional funding to support inclusive learning, LGBT+ students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds who may struggle to find the levels of funding needed to complete their studies. People with qualifying refugee status who meet the above criteria are also encouraged to apply;
- the Fund will only support studies in a physics department, school or faculty that has either a Juno\*\* and/or Athena SWAN award that

is current at the date of enrolment of the student on to the postgraduate doctoral course and on a physics-based topic at a recognised graduate degree awarding institution in the UK and Ireland;

- each host university/institution can submit two applications. If two applications are submitted at least one must be an external candidate - both applicants can also be external.
- students may apply for one grant award only (an extension may be permitted in special circumstances at the discretion of the panel);
- there are two award categories: a co-funding award for the doctoral programme with a fixed maximum of £38k per student; or a top-up award to support additional costs that are needed to complete a fully funded PhD. The top-up awards will have a maximum value of £10k;
- people with a BSc qualification are encouraged to apply.

\*This definition will be reviewed annually and amended in line with available data.

\*\*Please email [bellburnellfund@iop.org](mailto:bellburnellfund@iop.org) if your award date has expired and you will be engaging with the new Physics Inclusion Award.



## How to apply

To apply, you must have an academic offer or be enrolled (Top-up applications) for a physics-based postgraduate doctoral programme at an eligible host university/institution and selected by the eligible host university/institution as a candidate for the grant.

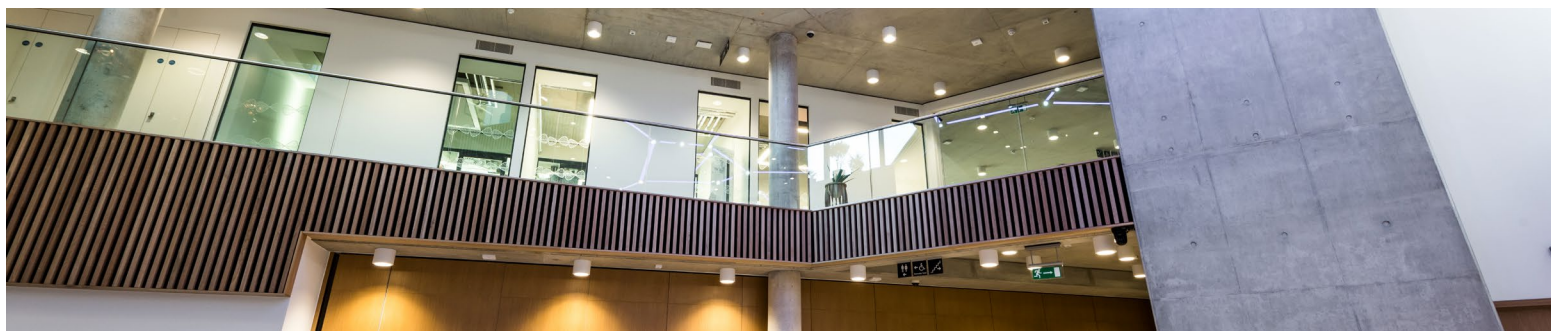
As part of the application process, there are three **separate parts that need to be completed by the student, prospective lead supervisor and the Head of School (or equivalent)**.

The application link and all the documentation for the Fund is available to download by visiting [iop.org/bellburnellfund](https://iop.org/bellburnellfund)

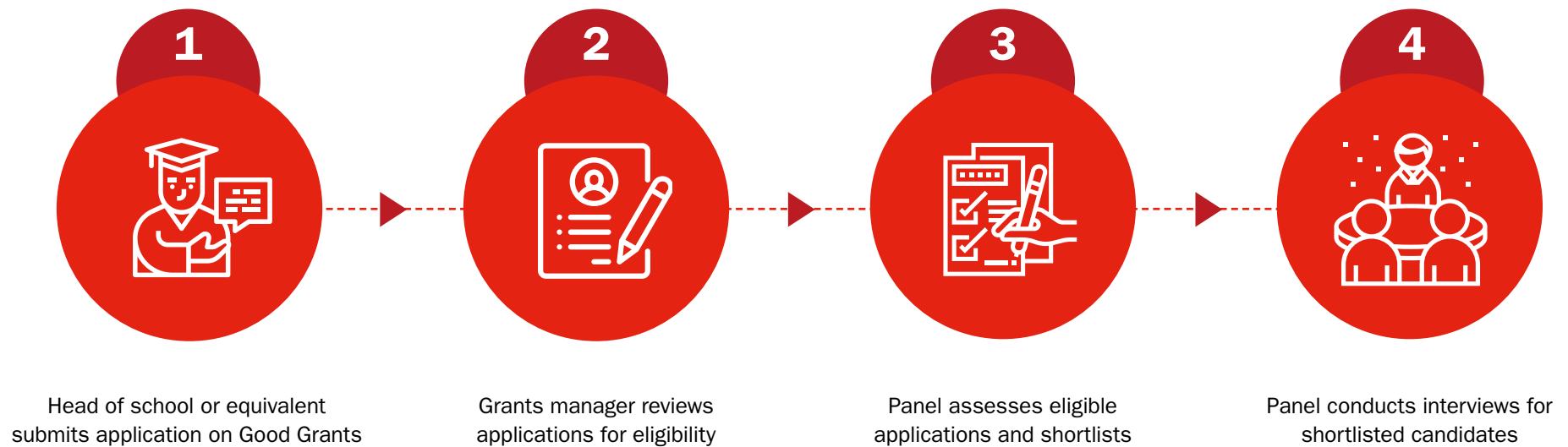
### Application deadline

5pm BST Monday 20 January 2025  
Late applications will not be assessed.

The Bell Burnell Graduate Scholarship Fund Panel will assess applications which meet the eligibility criteria and shortlisted applicants will be invited for interview in the spring.



## Review and assessment



## Selection criteria

The panel will assess eligible applications against, but not limited to, the following criteria:

### Student section (primary selection criteria)

- Student's academic performance (CV)
- Potential benefits to student  
(Why do they need the grant and what would it do for them?)
- Student's motivation
- Student's potential for being an ambassador for the Fund

### Lead Supervisor's section

- Supervisor(s) track record
- Supervisory team's commitment to equality and diversity
- Quality of research environment

### Head of School or equivalent's section

- Clarity of university/institution's student selection process for the Fund
- Quality of university/institution and department's support for student training and development

## Interview

As part of the assessment process, the panel interviews students who are shortlisted from the eligible applications.

The interview is in two parts:

- a narrated presentation by the student
- a question and answer session with members of the panel.

The interview will be a chance to explore more details of the project and the ambassadorial plans as well as other aspects of the application.

The Grants Manager will provide additional details on how the interviews will be conducted to shortlisted students.





## Information for students

We will monitor and evaluate the experiences, satisfaction and performance of students to ensure they are receiving suitable levels of supervision, training and support. This will help us support you in your studies and career development.

All students and lead supervisors will need to submit progress reports throughout the programme and at the end.

We would like to develop an alumni network to inspire others and engage with the physics community and the public on an ongoing basis. As an ambassador for the Fund, you will be expected to attend alumni events and take opportunities to engage people of all backgrounds in physics. You will support our strategy of championing diversity and promoting public dialogue to help us achieve and sustain our impact in the UK and Ireland.

### Bell Burnell Graduate Scholarship Funding

Successful students can expect payment from their host university/institution (you will not be paid directly by the IOP).

Funding is provided as a contribution for up to four years of study (or an equivalent if part-time), agreed as part of the application process, and paid quarterly from the allocation. Top-up requests can only be funded up to £10,000 and full time studies up to £38,000 or the equivalent for Ireland in line with UKRI/IRC rates.

It is also expected that the co-funding from the university/institution is in line with UKRI/IRC rates for the duration of the programme.

### Other Funding

Students supported by the Fund may also apply for other IOP grants, such as the carer's fund, travel bursaries and research conference grants. These may help you carry out relevant activities and additional responsibilities during your studies.

For more information, visit [iop.org/supportandgrants](https://iop.org/supportandgrants)



## Information for universities/institutions

The Fund operates as a **joint-funding** model; therefore, it is mandatory that the host university/institution commits to paying normally at least 50% of the full costs of the doctoral programme for its entire duration. We expect total costs to be in line with UKRI/Irish Research Council rates. It is also expected that the co-funding from the university/institution is in line with UKRI/IRC rates for the duration of the programme.

Funding awarded must cover between 3.5 to 4 years.

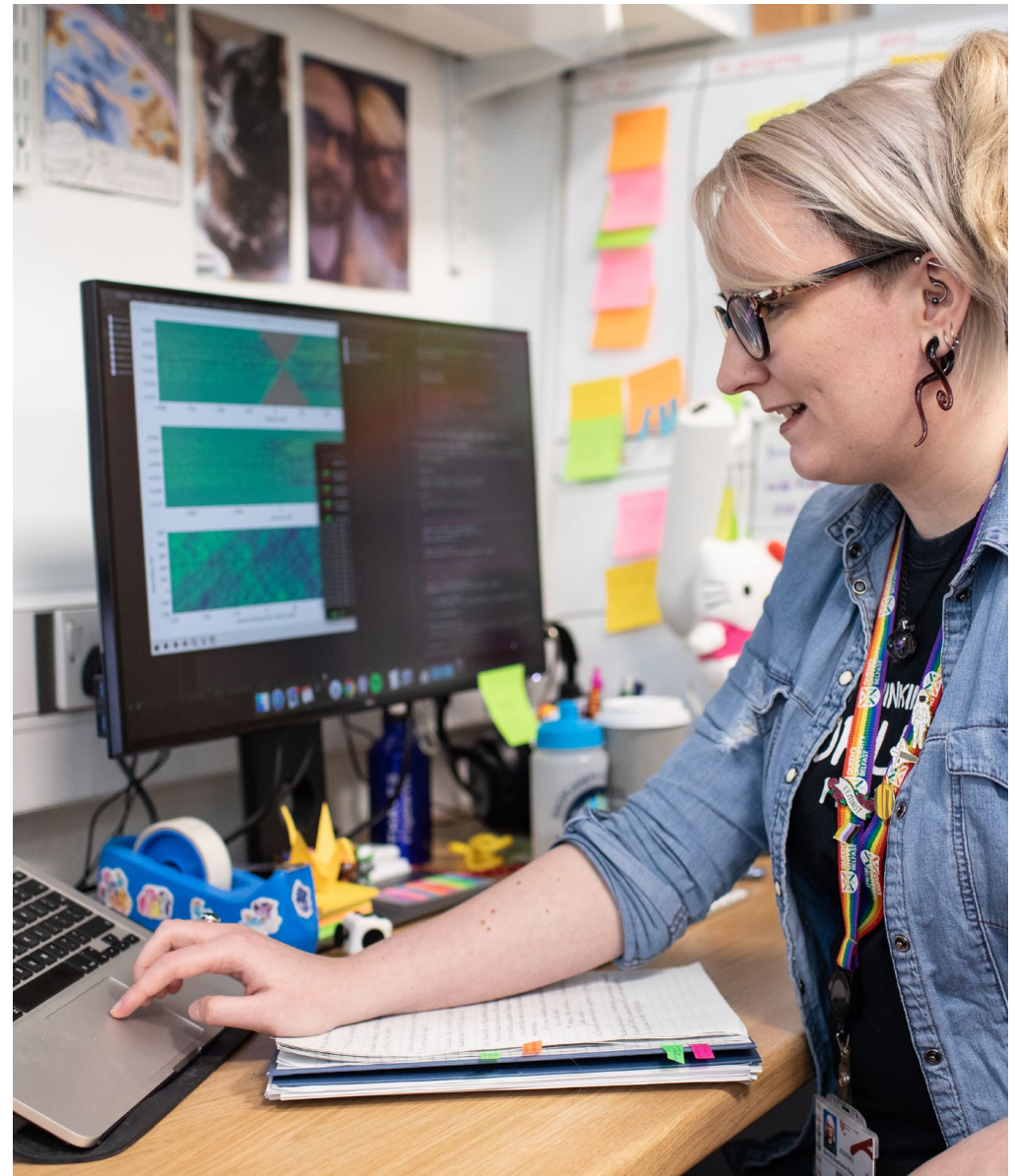
Each host university/institution will normally be limited to submitting two student applications. If two applications are submitted at least one must be an external candidate - both applicants can also be external. The Fund will only support studies in a physics department, school or faculty at a recognised postgraduate degree

awarding institution in the UK or Ireland.

The department must hold either/both Juno or Athena Swan status, current at the date of enrolment of the student on the course. The grant is linked to the student. If the student transfers to another eligible host university/institution, the awarded grant moves with them.

You are expected to agree to the terms and conditions of award before the funds are paid.

You will be sent an award letter and acceptance of grant form, which must be signed and returned before the funds are paid.



## Grants calendar

### 1 October 2024

Call for new applications submitted through the online grants system - Good Grants

### 20 January 2025

Application submission deadline

### 11 - 21 February 2025

Panel's assessment of eligible applications and shortlisting

### End of April - Awardees Notified

### Early December 2024

Panel Q&A session with public (virtual link will be on BBSF webpage)

### 21 January - 10 February 2025

Grants Manager reviews applications for eligibility

### 27/28 March

Interview of shortlisted applicants

## About the Institute of Physics

The Institute of Physics (IOP) works to advance physics for the benefit of all.

The IOP is the professional body and learned society for physics in the UK and Ireland. We seek to raise public awareness and understanding of physics and support the development of a diverse and inclusive physics community.

As a charity, we are here to ensure that physics delivers on its exceptional potential to benefit society.

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## Get in touch

For more information, visit  
**[iop.org/bellburnellfund](https://iop.org/bellburnellfund)**

And if you have any queries about any aspect of the Fund, please email  
**[bellburnellfund@iop.org](mailto:bellburnellfund@iop.org)**