

The Geological Society – Research Grants

Application Guidance

1 Introduction:

The Geological Society awards and administers a range of funds and grants for a broad scope of research activities. The grants cycle opens on **1 September 2026** and closes on **8 February 2027**.

All queries should be addressed to grants@geolsoc.org.uk. Please note that due to the large volume of queries we may not be able to respond immediately, especially close to the application deadline. Applicants are encouraged to consider this when preparing their application forms.

Eligibility:

You do not need to be a Fellow of the Society to **apply** for a research grant. If your application is successful, you will need to become a Fellow of the Geological Society to **receive** your grant.

Postgraduate MSc/PhD students are eligible to submit an application for a research grant, but this will only be considered if the project proposed is separate/additional to the degree. The Society **will not** consider applications for grants to compensate for insufficient funding of studentships or where there has been a failure by the research supervisor to seek the full cost of associated field or laboratory work. Please note the guidance stated on the student application form.

Applicants in receipt of NERC (or other UKRI) funding will need to make a strong case for funding, although new, innovative opportunities will be considered.

Subjects covered:

All subjects related to the Society's five broad science themes are eligible for support by Geological Society research grants. Within the research grant funding, we have several funds dedicated to supporting work within specific fields of geoscience, but applicants do not need to apply to a specific fund.

Finance:

In recent years, the average grant has been approximately **£1,750** but amounts up to **£4,000** will be considered if deemed reasonable and equitable.

Allowable costs include travel, local travel costs, specimen shipping costs, laboratory expenses (please justify with detailed rates), and training costs (please justify why they are necessary).

Non-allowable costs include attendance at committee meetings of IUGS and similar international bodies, conference attendance, tuition fees, funding for taught master's programmes, open access publishing costs, undergraduate field mapping projects, and subsistence. The purchase of equipment is typically not allowed, unless a specific case is made as to why it is vital to this research. Equipment should not be something permanent to be installed in an institution or laboratory.

Please note that food is not an eligible cost except for in situations in which, (1) no salary/stipend to cover such costs is available to the applicant, and/or (2) food costs will be particularly high during the field period of the project. If you wish to request food costs, please ensure that your case is clear.

Payments will generally be made by BACS. If your application is successful, we will require BACS details to make payment.

2 Applications and assessment:

Applications for Society grants should be made using the downloadable forms. Application forms must be accompanied by one supporting statement form, completed by a suitable person familiar with your work and proposed project.

Forms can be returned together or separately to grants@geolsoc.org.uk and must arrive no later than the closing date. Applications that arrive after the closing date without prior approval will be considered ineligible.

Application form:

Applications must be submitted using one of the two downloadable forms. If the applicant is a postgraduate master's or PhD student, please use the appropriate form. All other applicants should use the standard form. The forms ask applicants to consider a range of information, including:

- The scientific focus of the application, describing clearly the work to be done and its timeliness. Also explain the societal impact / relevance of the study.
- The methods and materials necessary to conduct the research.
- The project plan and cost breakdown of their proposed research. The role of the applicant must be stated if the application is part of a broader project (i.e., explain your role within the team and what it is that you will do).
- That all necessary permissions have been obtained, and the ownership of any specimens collected, including what will happen to these at the end of the project (e.g. lodged with a museum, disposed of).
- Confirm that an institutional risk assessment has been, or will be, carried out prior to any field or lab work. This is particularly important when working in remote areas.

Please complete all sections. Incomplete applications will not be considered. The project must have a clear title and, in the case of a PhD project, please include the title of that project and the names of the supervisors. The project description may not exceed the specified word limits and must be in a font size of 11 or larger. Applications exceeding word limits will not be considered. Please note that in-text citations do not count towards the word limits. Up to two visuals/diagrams can be included. Please do not exceed 10 references to support the application, in which you may include up to two additional references to your own work. You may use your preferred reference style in this section.

Supporting statement:

All applications are required to be submitted with **one** supporting statement from a suitable person. We strongly recommend getting a statement from someone suitably qualified and familiar with the details of the candidate's topic of study as the statement will be used for confirmation of ability of the applicant to carry out the proposed research (i.e. as a letter of reference) and for verification of the need for research grant funding. This individual does not need to be a Fellow of the Society.

The Supporting Statement Form should be emailed directly to grants@geolsoc.org.uk by the supporter.

Assessment:

Applications will be reviewed anonymously. Therefore, please avoid providing any personal details except for on the grants cover page.

- All applications are judged on the scientific excellence of the project. In deciding between those of equal merit, preference will be given to those who make the strongest case for financial support.
- Applications which the Committee considers to be premature, e.g. too early in the applicant's career path, will be ruled out.
- All applicants will receive a brief statement of feedback. This statement is intended to be constructive and to aid the applicant with future funding applications. No further feedback will be provided; however, feedback can be clarified if any comments are unclear to the applicant.

3 Expectations of the successful awardee:

All applicants are required to be Fellows at the time of receipt of the grant money. If you are not yet a Fellow, you must complete an application to receive your grant.

The grant may be used only for the purposes described in your application as approved by the Society's Research Grants Committee. If you are unable to use the grant for the specific purpose for which it was intended, please contact the Society before spending any portion of the grant.

If any significant changes are likely to be made to the project's scope or scale, before or during implementation, or if the project's timetable is delayed, it is important to inform us immediately and to obtain approval for any variations. If changes are made without our agreement, we may consider reclaiming any funds not used for the intended purpose.

Project report:

Successful applicants must produce a report, either interim or full, 12 months from the application deadline. If an interim report is submitted, then a full report should be submitted within the subsequent 6 months. Please use the template to format your report. The report should be no more than two pages, for a lay audience, clearly summarising:

- An account of how the money was spent and receipts where possible e.g. flights, laboratory costs, accommodation, equipment, fuel
- Any results/findings and any next steps, as well as the societal impact or relevance of the results
- Whether the awardee has had articles published or about to be published

Awardees **must** ensure acknowledgement of funding from the Society in all publications relating to the funded project. Successful applicants may be asked to write a piece for the Society's magazine, Geoscientist, and blog – reports may be published on the Society's website. *Failure to produce a report will make future applications ineligible and your supporter may be contacted and requested to chase the missing report.*

4 Timetable:

Call for applications open:	1 September 2026
Call for applications closed:	8 February 2027
Review:	March 2027

Final results:	End of March 2027
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5 Support:

Inquiries

For any inquiries about Society Research Grants that are not explained in this guidance document, please use the contact details below.

- E-mail: grants@geolsoc.org.uk

Disability support

We welcome applications from disabled applicants and will accommodate adjustments to the procedures to ensure that these applicants are able to participate fully in the selection process. Adjustments to the application procedure could include:

- Extension of the application deadline
- Additional support to complete the application form

If you have any queries about accessing the support described in this section, please use the contact details above.

6 Privacy statement:

The information that you submit with your form will be processed by the Geological Society for the purposes of administering your grant application. It will only be shared with external referees from the relevant committees as part of the review process.

For more information, please refer to our Privacy Notice on our website www.geolsoc.org.uk/privacy.

7 Our funds:

Mike Coward Fund

- For fieldwork in structural geology as applied to regional tectonics.

Annie Greenly Fund

- For detailed geological mapping.

Elsbeth Matthews Fund

- For members of the Society, for geological field-based research anywhere in the world. Preference will be given to early career applicants.

Joseph Burr Tyrrell Fund

- To assist geologists of Great Britain and Ireland to travel to and in Canada; or to assist in the publication of meritorious papers by geologists of Great Britain and Ireland upon the geology of Canada; or to assist such geologists in any other way best adapted to further this object.

Robert Scott Memorial Award

- CASP (formerly known as the Cambridge Arctic Shelf Programme) has generously bequeathed an endowment in memory of Robert Scott, one of their senior geologists, who died suddenly in 2012 of leukaemia. The interest earned will be used to support a single research award of £2,200 each year.
- To be eligible for the award, applicants must be UK-based and either (a) registered postgraduate students; (b) university postdoctoral researchers; or (c) university lecturers. Postdoctoral researchers and university lecturers should preferably apply within seven years of their first appointment to an academic position.
- Awards shall be made to support research under the following terms:
- At least 50% of the award should be spent directly on research fieldwork (transport, accommodation and field logistical support).
- Preference will be given to applications that are in regard of fieldwork in Arctic regions (field areas within the Arctic Circle).
- Preference will also be given to projects that focus on basin analysis studies including tectonics, structural geology, sedimentology, stratigraphy and provenance analysis.

Jeremy Ingham Fund

- An annual award of up to £2,000 will be made for the encouragement of research into engineering geology with preference being given to the study of construction materials and/or research incorporating the use of petrological techniques.

8 Our bursaries and other grants administered by the Society

Jeremy Willson Charitable Trust

- The Jeremy Willson Charitable Trust, and the Willson family, generously supports the Geological Society grants programme in memory of their son and brother, Jeremy.
- Jeremy was a great athlete, geologist and adventurer. He sadly died of new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) in March 2006. In the spirit of Jeremy's interests, the Jeremy Willson Award supports field-based projects with a distinct focus on the physical environment.

9 Join our Research Grants Committee panel

Are you interested in research funding awards and would like to learn more as part of our Research Grants Committee panel?

You are invited to submit your expression of interest to sit on the pool of Fellows that we call upon for our annual Research Grants Committee. You will work alongside other experienced Fellows and Society staff. The time requirement can vary depending on the number of applications received but is typically around eight hours per round.

Please submit an expression of interest (no more than 300 words), including details of current position and area of expertise, via email to grants@geolsoc.org.uk.

Expressions will be carried forward for a three-year period unless you indicate otherwise. Expressions of interest from Early Career Researchers are warmly welcomed.