# UK unveils £2 billion funding boost to attract global scientific talent amid US policy shifts



The United Kingdom is making significant strides to enhance its attractiveness as a global hub for scientific research, particularly in light of the restrictive policies introduced by the Trump administration in the United States. With the unveiling of long-term funding guarantees and innovative fellowships, the UK is proactively positioning itself to draw international talent, especially those disillusioned by shifting academic freedoms in their home countries.

In the face of challenges to integrity in research, UK institutions, including the government, the Royal Society, and the Royal Academy of Engineering, are set to announce initiatives designed to provide stability and support for scientists. Sir Adrian Smith, president of the Royal Society, articulated this sentiment, stating that the current international scientific landscape is uncertain, and funding streams are under siege. He believes that the UK can emerge as a safe haven for scientific excellence, where researchers can thrive without the threat of abrupt policy changes.

One of the key initiatives expected is the introduction of the Faraday Fellowship, which will allocate up to £30 million to support international researchers over periods of five to ten years. This programme aims to provide between £4 million and more—under exceptional circumstances—to teams or individual scientists, thereby reinforcing the financial backing necessary for ambitious research projects. This commitment is in part derived from existing government funds, illustrating a strategic approach to harnessing ongoing investment for future endeavours.

Concurrently, the Royal Academy of Engineering has announced plans to streamline the process for exceptional international researchers to gain entry into the UK, offering up to £3 million over a decade for those developing solutions to climate challenges. This move is in alignment with a broader £54 million programme recently launched by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, which aims to cover relocation costs and provide funding for priority research areas like life sciences, artificial intelligence, and green energy.

However, while these measures have been generally welcomed within the scientific community, concerns persist regarding broader immigration policies, particularly the impact of high visa costs on attracting foreign talent. Critics have likened these costs to national self-harm, as they may deter many skilled researchers from relocating to the UK. The fear of undercutting the intended welcoming atmosphere for international science is palpable, prompting further discussion on the efficacy of current UK immigration policy.

In addition to these forthcoming programmes, the government is exploring new funding routes to guarantee up to £2 billion in long-term research supports, potentially transforming the landscape for scientific inquiry. Lord Patrick Vallance, the science minister, emphasised that investment in science transcends political boundaries and should be viewed as a national priority. He acknowledged the inherent risks posed by any future government that might adopt a radically different approach to science policy.

The turbulent backdrop of US science funding cuts under the Trump administration has parallels in global responses, as other countries, including Canada and France, are also launching initiatives aimed at attracting dissatisfied researchers. Such global efforts underscore the significance of the UK's initiative as a litmus test of its ability to maintain and enhance its appeal to world-class talent.

In this context, voices within the UK scientific community are calling for a more strategic approach to funding. Sir John Bell has highlighted the need for focused public investment in key areas like telecommunications and quantum technologies, advocating for distinct prioritisation within research grants. His sentiments resonate with Professor Dame Ottoline Leyser, who has stressed the importance of showcasing the societal benefits of scientific research, countering the notion that it is an insular pursuit. Leyser's vision for a more inclusive narrative in science echoes the broader imperative to ensure that research advancements serve public interests while fostering diversity and equity.

As the UK embarks on these bold initiatives, the greater challenge remains: to carefully balance the immediate drive for innovation with sustainable policies that fund the long-term pursuit of scientific advancement, ensuring that the nation becomes the 'science superpower' many envision by 2030. In this pivotal moment, the UK stands at a crossroads, presenting an opportunity for reflection and redefinition of its role in the global scientific community.

### Reference Map

1. All content in the article is informed by the lead article.
2. Related summaries were integrated to enhance context, including points on measures and the scientific community's response.
3. Additional considerations regarding the global landscape of science were informed by external summaries.
4. Insights into strategic prioritisation and community imagery were included from related summaries.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.ft.com/content/bb7a4533-fafe-43be-b001-a50202a4e242> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/bb7a4533-fafe-43be-b001-a50202a4e242> - The UK's scientific institutions are intensifying efforts to attract international talent, particularly scientists fleeing the US due to potential disruptions under the Trump administration. Initiatives include 10-year funding guarantees and fellowships. The Royal Society plans to introduce the Faraday Fellowship, offering up to £4 million over five to ten years, backed by a £30 million fund. The Royal Academy of Engineering will streamline the visa process and offer up to £3 million to researchers working on climate solutions. These measures aim to 'Trump-proof' British science and position the UK as a stable hub for global researchers.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/d1ce6077-fabc-4fc0-b6a4-53bd9fbccbaa> - The UK government is set to launch a £50 million initiative designed to attract global research talent, particularly in response to the Trump administration's restrictive policies on academic freedom in the US. The scheme aims to offer funding for research grants and relocation, targeting researchers across disciplines such as life sciences, AI, and green energy. Initially, about ten research teams are expected to be relocated to the UK. The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology emphasized the UK’s openness to international science and innovation. However, concerns remain about the high visa costs that deter foreign researchers, which the House of Lords described as an 'act of national self-harm'. Similar global efforts are emerging due to US turmoil, with Canada, Norway, and France launching their own initiatives to attract displaced or dissatisfied researchers. The UK program also serves as a test of the country's broader appeal to international scientists and may lead to further policy considerations if successful.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/bf80d1e2-0a16-4ffe-8daf-9228a248f169> - Sir John Bell, a former Covid adviser, emphasized the need for the UK to be more strategic in funding scientific research. Bell suggests that public funds should focus on priority research areas like telecommunications, engineering biology, and quantum technologies to help the UK become a 'science superpower' by 2030. The UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) body, which has an annual budget of £8bn, is searching for a new leader as well as other key roles. According to Bell, the current grant system lacks strategic prioritization. UKRI was established in 2018 to unify nine research organizations, but its complexity in managing increased funding has been challenging. The government is encouraging corporate leaders to apply for these roles to drive the nation’s scientific advancements and economic growth.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/2ef32b20-4b61-432a-a6bf-2c61b29e3ff7> - The UK research chief, Prof Dame Ottoline Leyser, stresses the necessity for science to dispel its elitist image to thrive amidst polarising debates and fiscal constraints. She urges the scientific community to showcase its role in providing diverse job opportunities and innovation in public services rather than being perceived as an isolated elitist activity. These comments come as she completes her tenure at the UK's main research funding body, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). The US under Trump's administration has significantly cut science funding, causing international concerns and potentially deterring researchers from moving there. Britain’s own science sector faces challenges, including high visa fees and restrictive immigration policies, which could hinder attracting global talent. Leyser emphasizes that reducing science funding would be a mistake and highlights the importance of supporting research and innovation to benefit all public sectors. She also defends the need for diversity, equity, and inclusion in science, countering views that consider it as merely a political agenda. Leyser's successor will be Prof Sir Ian Chapman, who will take over in the summer.
6. <https://www.royalsoc.ac.uk/grants/gcrf/> - The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) is a five-year £1.5 billion fund, part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA), focusing on promoting the economic development and welfare of developing countries through international research. The Royal Society collaborates with national academies and UK research councils to fund research addressing global challenges. The GCRF aims to fund exceptional research programmes and researchers, promote international collaboration, build research capacity in developing countries, and support the next generation of research leaders in developing countries.