The Faraday Institution ECR Award

(Collaboration and Proof-of-concept awards)

The Faraday Institution ECR Award provides grants of up to **£5,000** to support the professional development of PhD researchers and early career researchers (ECRs).

The award enables researchers to lead a small independent project that develops new collaborations, explores innovative research ideas, or investigates the commercial potential of their work. The scheme is designed to help researchers gain experience of applying for funding while strengthening future fellowship, academic and industrial career opportunities.

Applicants can apply through one of two pathways:

- **Collaboration (UK or international)**
- **Proof-of-concept**

Objective

- The ECR Award will provide a financial award to support Faraday Institution PhD researchers and research fellows to undertake independent research as lead applicants, creating new collaborations across the UK and internationally, or exploring opportunities for commercialisation.
- Enable independent research funding, promoting career development opportunities for early career researchers.

Grant details

- The Faraday Institution has allocated **up to £25,000** to support this call. Awards of **up to £5,000** are available.
- The number of awards made will depend on the quality of applications received, while ensuring an appropriate spread across institutions, funding pathways and the wider Faraday Institution community.
- Projects should run between **January and March 2027** and budgets must be spent by 31st March 2027.

Funding Streams

1. Collaboration Award

The Collaboration Award supports researchers wishing to develop new collaborations that strengthen battery research and create long-term partnerships.

Collaborations may be:

- Between two or more Faraday Institution projects.
- Between a Faraday Institution project and another UK research organisation.
- Between a Faraday Institution project and an international research partner*.
- Between a Faraday Institution project and an UK industry partner

*International collaborations should, where possible, align with the Faraday Institution's strategic international partnerships, including Japan, the EU, USA, Latin America and Battery Ambassador countries, India and Canada. (See scoring criteria).

Applicants should clearly explain how the proposed collaboration will benefit the participating research groups and contribute to the wider Faraday Institution community and its objectives.

To maximise the impact of the award, we are particularly looking for collaborations that develop new connections outside your own research institution, including with industry partners where a relationship has not yet been established.

Applicants are encouraged to contact Dom Grantley-Smith (training@faraday.ac.uk) for further information and potential introductions. The Faraday Institution has a number of international contacts, including Battery Ambassadors, who may be able to support or host exchanges.

Where possible, matched funding or in-kind contributions from international or industry partner are encouraged to maximise the impact and value of the award and will gain an additional point. (See marking criteria below.)

Examples of projects include:

- Research visits
- Collaborative experiments
- Learning new techniques
- Knowledge exchange
- Joint workshops
- Shared facilities

2. Proof-of-Concept Award

The Proof-of-Concept Award supports researchers wishing to explore the commercial potential of an early-stage research idea.

Projects should help demonstrate technical feasibility or generate evidence that could support future commercialisation funding.

Examples include:

- Proof-of-concept experiments
- Prototype development
- Market validation
- Technical feasibility studies
- Commercial opportunity assessment

In both awards:

A letter of support must be provided by the relevant Faraday Institution Principal Investigator, the ECR's supervisor and the collaborating third party if applicable.

Funding and Award Requirements

- Grant funding can be used to cover a range of costs, including travel and subsistence, consumables, access to facilities and small research costs. Funding cannot be used to cover salaries or directly allocated costs.
- Awardees will be required to submit a short report outlining the outcomes and benefits of the award at the end of the project and will be encouraged to present their findings at a Faraday Institution event. A reporting template will be provided.
- All research must be conducted to a high standard and in accordance with relevant research ethics, governance requirements and institutional policies.
- We do not anticipate that significant IP will be generated through this funding. The IP terms of this award will be consistent with the recipient's existing Faraday Institution grant.

Expected outcomes

Expected outcomes of successful ECR awards are expected to include:

Collaboration award	Proof-of-concept award
• New research collaborations established.	• Proof-of-concept data supporting commercialisation.
• Preliminary data for future funding applications.	
• New research techniques or capabilities developed.	
• Follow-on grant or fellowship applications	
Increased collaboration across the Faraday Institution network	

Successful examples of previous similar grants can be found here.

Eligibility

Primary applicants must:

- Be an Early Career Researcher, i.e. someone who is studying for a PhD or is within four years of their PhD award date at the application deadline. We accept appropriate extensions or pro-rata adjustments for circumstances such as parental leave, caring responsibilities, other career breaks and part-time working.
- Be a Faraday Institution PhD researcher or research fellow working on a Faraday Institution project for the duration of their project.
    - Industry and Entrepreneurial Fellowship, Sprint Projects and Faraday Institution PhD Enrichment scheme applicants are also eligible.
    - Applications should be limited to one per applicant.
    - Battery Ambassadors can host a placement but not be the primary grant holder.
- Have approval from their supervisor, their project Principal Investigator and, where applicable, the collaborating research group through letters of support submitted with the application.
- Complete the project during the award period (January to March 2027).

- Agree to submit a short final report (template will be provided).

Scoring Criteria

The Faraday Institution HQ team will score applications against the criteria below:

	Criteria	Score
Scientific merit	The merit of the proposed project and the applicant's ability to present a clear and compelling case for funding.	/5
Potential impact	The likely benefits of the project and its potential to create meaningful collaborations, strengthen networks, or deliver wider benefits to the UK battery community.	/5
Benefit for the Faraday Institution The extent to which the proposal supports the Faraday Institution's mission to advance battery research, skills development, market analysis and early-stage commercialisation.	Strength of collaboration for the Faraday Institution **(Collaboration)**	/5
	Commercial potential **(Proof-of-Concept)**	
Match funding	Yes/No 5K= 3 points 3K= 2 points 1K= 1 point	/3
Are they collaborating internationally and if yes which country	Yes/No Country:	

Timeline

- Opens: 13th October 2026
- Closes: 9th November 2026
- Winners notified: 3rd December 2026
- Grant to be spent, project completed and final report due 31st March 2027

How to apply

Please complete an application via Flexi-Grant.

For any questions relating to the Faraday Institution Early Career Researcher Award, please email training@faraday.ac.uk

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Faraday Institution aspires to create a truly inclusive environment where all its researchers can thrive and feel a sense of belonging whilst empowering everyone to have a voice. We celebrate individuality and know that combining the skills and talents of a dynamic and diverse community brings great strength. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group is looking at positive ways to ensure these values are lived out throughout our community.

The long-term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent and the Research Councils have together developed the ambitious UK Research and Innovation Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.

The Faraday Institution expects that equality and diversity is embedded at all levels as set out in our EDI charter and in all aspects of research practice. We are committed to supporting the research community in the diverse ways a research career can be built with our investments. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcome applications from academics who job-share, have a part-time contract or need flexible working arrangements