

A guide to the Bell Burnell Graduate Scholarship Fund

A new 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

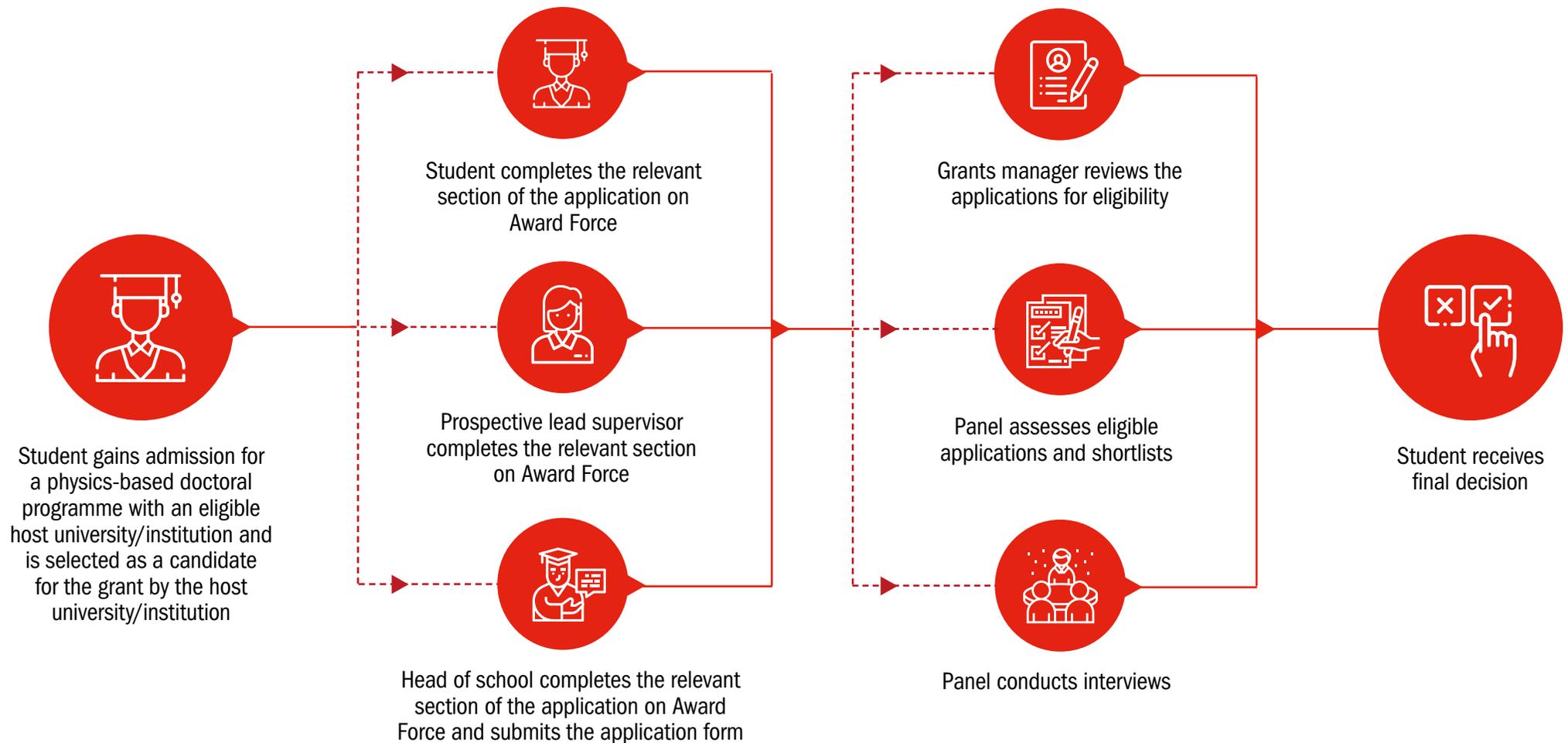
Thursday 1 October 2020.

Applications close

Friday 22 January 2021.



The process



Eligibility criteria

A full set of terms and conditions can be found by visiting

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;

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

- 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 will normally be limited to submitting a single student application. Queries about submitting more than one should be addressed to the grants manager as soon as possible;
- students may apply for one grant award only (an extension may be permitted in special circumstances at the discretion of the panel);
- two levels of award can be requested: a co-funding award for the doctoral programme with a fixed maximum of £35k 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 and;
- successful doctoral students can study either part-time or full-time.



How to apply

To apply, you must have an academic offer 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.

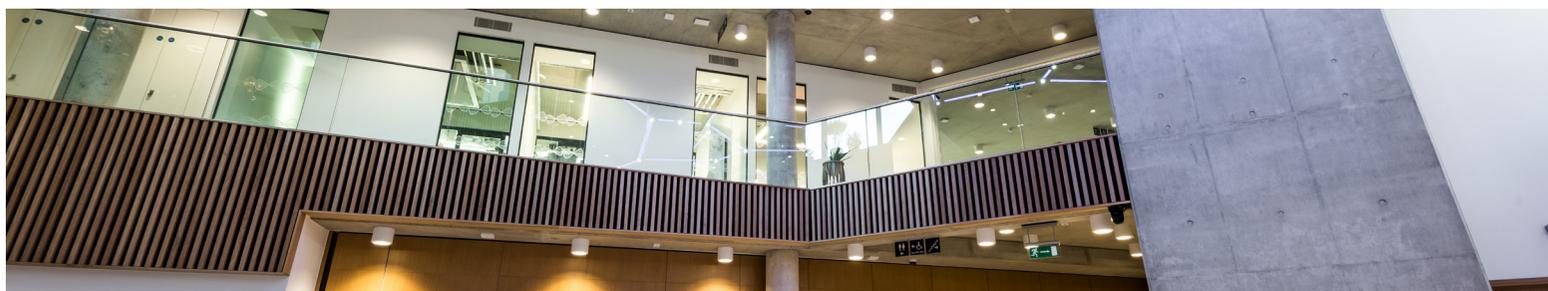
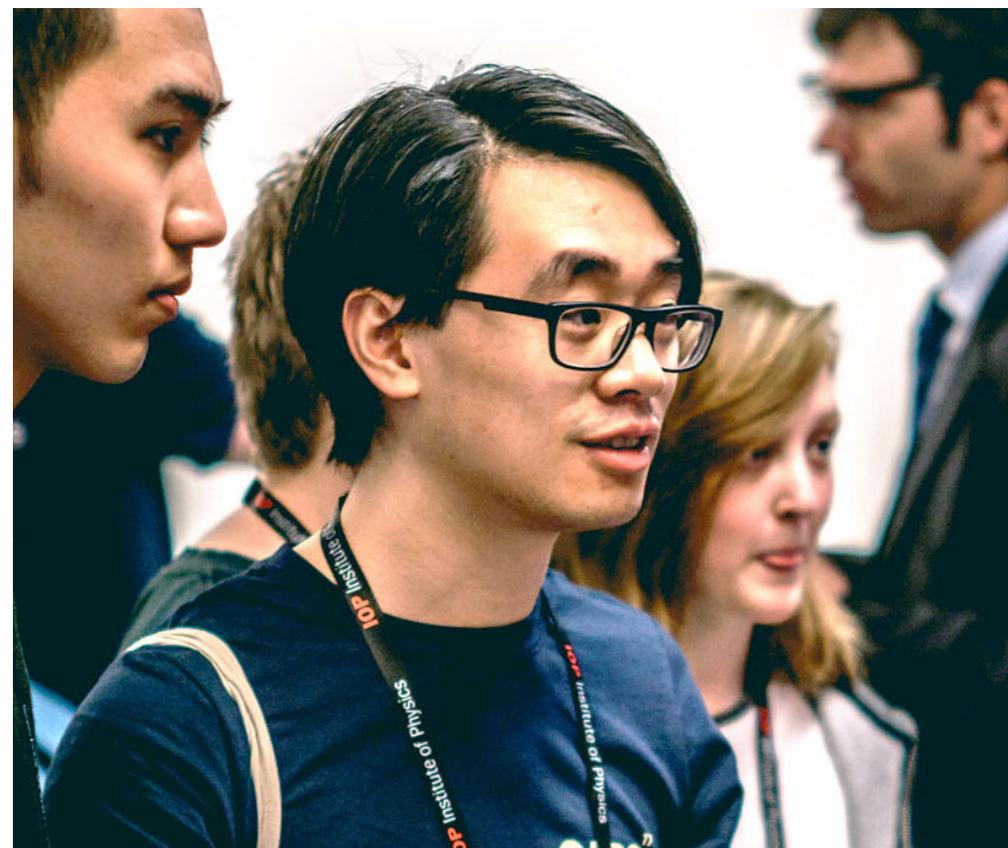
As part of the application process, there are three independent parts that need to be completed by the student, prospective lead supervisor and the Head of School (or equivalent).

The application link and all the documentation for the Fund is available to download from Thursday 1 October 2020 by visiting iop.org/bellburnellfund

Application deadline

5pm BST Friday 22 January 2021.
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



Head of school or equivalent submits application on Award Force



Grants manager reviews applications for eligibility



Panel assesses eligible applications and shortlists



Panel conducts interviews for shortlisted candidates

Selection criteria

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

Student section

- 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 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 new 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 £35,000 or the equivalent for Ireland in line with UKRI/IRC rates.

Other Funding

Students awarded 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.



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 EPSRC/UKRI Irish Research Council rates.

Each host university/institution will normally be limited to submitting a single student application. Queries about submitting more than one should be addressed to the grants manager as soon as possible.

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 2020

Fund go-live with a call for applications through an online grants system - Award Force

25 January 2021 – 26 February 2021

Grants Manager reviews applications for eligibility

12 April 2021

Interview of shortlisted applicants

22 January 2021

Interview of shortlisted applicants

1- 12 March 2021

Panel's assessment of eligible applications and shortlisting

End of April -

Awardees Notified

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.

Get in touch

For more information, visit
iop.org/bellburnellfund

And if you have any queries about any aspect of the Fund, please email
bellburnellfund@iop.org