



fsbi
An International Society
for Fish Biology

Registered Charity 256475

The Society will be represented by the Chair of the Research Grants Committee, on behalf of the FSBI Council, in all communications concerned with the appointment and administration of FSBI research grants.

Please read these guidelines carefully. They contain important information relating to your application for funding, and not following these guidelines may result in your application being invalid.

1. What we fund

We will fund scientific studies with clear aims and objectives (ideally with clearly stated hypotheses) where the methods are clearly explained, robust, and appropriate to answering the questions asked within the application.

Applications may cover any aspect of fish biology and so relevant to the Society's objectives; however, the FSBI will look especially favourably on areas where there are particular difficulties in funding research from national or local sources.

All applications are expected to fulfil the following requirements:

- You must be an FSBI member
- Applications are from individuals only, not from organisations
- The applicant must be the principal investigator for the study
- The research must be of high scientific quality
- The research must be interesting, innovative, or a potentially high-impact piece of work
- The project must be feasible in terms of resources and time allocated
- The applicant must be competent to undertake the research
- The project must have a clearly justified budget
- The project must be a stand-alone research project, where the amount being sought is a high percentage of the total project budget (see item 2 below). In cases where the proposal builds on ongoing work, such as PhD research, it is important to explain how

this is a distinctive addition to the previously planned work and has the potential to deliver tangible added value, rather than funding intended to support work already in progress.

- We rarely fund projects where the FSBI contribution is only a small percentage of a very large budget, e.g., requests for £2,000 towards a larger project costing say £40,000 .

We do not fund:

- Applications from non-FSBI members
- Applications from organisations
- University administrative overheads or other fees
- Species inventories, i.e., site-based surveys to document species' occurrence
- Studies of the abundance of a species at a particular site where there is no wider scientific aim
- Distribution surveys, which do not address wider ecological questions
- Descriptive studies
- Baseline studies or the setting up of long-term monitoring schemes
- The salary or course fees of the applicant (see item 7 below)
- Attendance at conferences or meetings (Funding available via the FSBI Travel grants scheme: <https://www.fsbi.org.uk/funding/travel-grants/>).
- Applications where only the cost of travel and subsistence are being sought (Funding for this can be sought from the FSBI Travel grants scheme: <https://www.fsbi.org.uk/funding/travel-grants/>).
- Publications

2. Who can apply?

Grant competitions are open to any member of the Society, regardless of their geographical location or citizenship. However, to be eligible, you must be a paid-up member of the FSBI at the time of making a grant application.

Applications are solely from individuals who are principally responsible for undertaking the work outlined in the application. Demonstrating the applicant's experience in undertaking the proposed research is important (assessed through the provision of a CV). We do not accept applications from organisations.

Researchers at the start of their careers, including holders of an [FSBI studentship](#), will be favoured in competitions for Research Grants, however research must still meet the following criteria –

- a) where the applicant is a PhD candidate, the project must be a stand-alone element and not the wider research programme (i.e., forming one chapter or paper, rather than contributing to the entire thesis), and the applicant must clearly state how FSBI funding will make a difference to the project;

b) the research (not travel) costs applied for are not fully supported by the studentship or research council award.

The FSBI may also consider applications from existing projects for funding exceptional requirement(s)/opportunities which were unforeseen at the planning/start of a project, but which arise during the work.

Applicants for a Wyn Wheeler Grant must be FSBI members who are retired from full-time employment.

3. When are applications accepted?

Applications are considered three times a year with closing dates on the 05 January, 01 May, and 02 September. Late applications will not be considered. All applicants, whether successful or not, will be informed by the chair of the Research Grants Committee; however, this may not occur for up to two months after the closing date. Please do not contact the Administration Office until two months have elapsed. Correspondence regarding the award should be directed to the chair of the Research Grants Committee via the Administration Office.

4. Length of project

As the FSBI Research Grants are aimed at funding small projects, it is anticipated that most will be completed within a year. Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a project timeline which includes a date for submission of a final report to the FSBI on the outcomes of the research.

While associated field work may be seasonal and so determine the start of the project, it is also expected that research will commence within a year of confirmation of funding.

5. Size of FSBI grants

FSBI Research Grants are aimed at funding small projects in their entirety or part-funding small-to-medium sized projects.

The FSBI has limited funds at its disposal, and grants are normally awarded to a maximum of £10,000 (£10,000 for the Wyn-Wheeler Grants). Grants are normally paid directly to the successful applicant but may be made payable to the applicant's institution if this is appropriate.

The FSBI receives more applications than we can afford to support. Competition is strong, but this should not deter applicants with good projects. The Research Grant Committee reserves the right to decide on the suitability of potential research projects, and its

decision is final. See the FSBI web pages (<https://www.fsbi.org.uk/funding/small-research-grants/>) to view details of past FSBI grant recipients.

6. Subjects

Research can be undertaken on any finfish species. As part of your application, you are required to provide details of the key species your project aims to study. Projects examining the influence of non-fish taxa on fish biology through interactions are eligible (e.g., bitterling/mussel interactions; effects of parasites on fish health; impacts of fish-eating birds on fish populations; impacts of invasive crayfish on fish behaviour), but the focus of the research must be fish biology.

7. Project costs/budgets

As part of the application, you are required to submit a credible budget, which details the total project costs, the amount requested from the FSBI, any funds already obtained, any other funds applied for, or where additional funding will be obtained. Please clarify how any short-fall between the total budget costs and the amount already obtained, plus that requested from FSBI, will be met. Please be as transparent as possible, cost your project, and the items for which funding is being sought from the FSBI, as carefully as possible.

Total project costs must include all the costs of running the entire project (excluding the salary or stipend of the applicant) and not just the total for the items for which funding is being sought from the FSBI. Where the cost of equipment is being sought from the FSBI, please provide an itemised breakdown (and for other budget headers as necessary). The FSBI needs to be able to accurately assess the size of any contribution it may wish to make to a project.

The Committee has knowledge of project costs and can often easily calculate if a project, or an individual component, for which funds are being sought, is not accurately costed. Some past applications have been jeopardised by a lack of transparency and accurate costing of the project.

Eligible costs include items directly relevant to the project, including special items of equipment, field work expenses (including work abroad), computing costs peculiar to the project, the cost of hiring short-term assistance, and specialist books such as identification keys.

The grant will not cover the purchase of computers for general use, project applications where the sole or disproportionate use of FSBI monies is for travel and subsistence, travel to conferences (for which support may be available under the [FSBI Travel Grants programme](#)), the salary of the applicant, publishing costs, fees, patents, or other related costs, and any form of administrative overheads incurred by the applicant.

8. FSBI Mission Statement

Applicants should note the FSBI's objectives and mission statement.

The FSBI is an international, non-political, learned Society, based in the United Kingdom, that supports scientific activity in fish biology and management through charitable sponsorship. Membership is open to anyone interested in these objectives.

- Convene and provide financial support for meetings on appropriate aspects of fish biology, fisheries science, and conservation.
- Disseminate research and technical information through the agency of the Society's journal, the Journal of Fish Biology, and by other means.
- Support research in, or connected with, fish biology and fisheries management, including the provision of travel bursaries, PhD studentships, small research grants, and sponsorship.
- Collect and disseminate information on all matters affecting the activities mentioned and exchange such information with other bodies having similar objects, whether in this country or overseas.

9. Submitting your application

Use the application form provided. Complete the fields requested and save as – 'FSBI grant application - <insert your surname/family name here> (e.g. FSBI grant application – Dudley).

Within the Application Form please identify yourself as one of the following:

- a) Student (Undergraduate)
- b) Student (Masters)
- c) Student (PhD)
- d) Early Career Researcher (up to 10 years post PhD)
- e) Mid-career scientist (Researcher, University Lecturer, Assistant/Associate Professor)
- f) Senior Scientist (Full Professor, Research Director, Principal Investigator)
- g) Industry

Your application must be accompanied by a 2-page (max) CV.

10. Assessment of Applications

Small Research Grants are allocated on a competitive basis, in relation to funds available. Applications are evaluated by the FSBI's Research Grants Committee, who then make its recommendations. Applicants will be contacted directly to inform them of the outcome of their application. The Committee's decision is final, and they are not able to enter

into dialogue about the evaluation. However, candidates are free to apply again in subsequent rounds.

Small Research Grant applications are assessed based on the following criteria:

1. Scientific excellence
2. Novelty
3. Feasibility
4. Wider implication(s) of the research
5. Cost effectiveness
6. Clarity of the proposal
7. Ethics

Whether the project is 'standalone' and whether the proposal is a resubmission may also be considered in the final ranking of all proposals.

11. Ethics Statement

Each application must also include an Ethics Statement, and this is similar to the guidelines developed for papers submitted to our own Journal of Fish Biology.

The FSBI takes its responsibility towards animal welfare very seriously, whether it concerns fish collection, predator-prey interactions or invasive surgical procedures. Therefore, when a Small Research Grant is received that involves animal experimentation or harm is submitted to FSBI for funding, the applicant is accepting and acknowledging that appropriate permits for animal collections and animal welfare issues were sought and approved by the local committee(s) responsible for such permits. If an application is received from a country where no such permitting is required, then any decision with regards to ethics rests solely with the Small Research Grants Committee, who will seek advice from other qualified scientists as needed.

Furthermore, as specific evidence of the permitting, a clear ethical statement must be provided in the Methodology section of the Proposal under a subheading 'Ethical Statement' for any submissions to the Small Research Grants committee. This statement may take a form similar to the following:

The care and use of experimental animals complied with [Insert the local or national body] animal welfare laws, guidelines and policies as approved by [Insert the local or national permitting authority and the permit reference number].

Independent of any such permits, the Small Research Grants committee reserves the right to reject applications for funding on an ethical basis should valid concerns emerge from the contents of the research proposal. Therefore, it is essential that within their ethical statement authors clearly identify any welfare implications arising from their experimental design including steps taken to minimise impact on fish welfare. Studies which may require additional information in the ethical statement include (but are not limited to) those where: fishes were collected as part of faunal surveys; experimental conditions caused severe distress or lasting harm to sentient fishes (e.g. predation studies, toxicity testing, disease trials); surgical procedures were used; sentient un-anaesthetised animals were subjected to chemical agents that induce neuromuscular blockade, such as muscle relaxants. In addition, ethical statements should say whether fishes were killed at the end of the experiment (e.g. for tissue sampling).

12. Taking up an award

All applicants will be informed of the outcome via email. If your application is successful, the grant will normally be paid in pounds Sterling or its equivalent in the local currency by direct electronic transfer into the recipient's personal bank account. Correspondence regarding the transfer of the funds should be directed to the FSBI Treasurer (treasurer@fsbi.org.uk).

The grant holder is responsible for the grant administration and final report.

Research Grants may be paid to the recipient's institution, but only on condition that the host institution agrees that no administrative overheads or other fees are taken from the grant, and that the entire amount is to be used by and for the recipient's proposed research

Acceptance of an award indicates acceptance of these and any other terms detailed in the award offer from the FSBI.

13. Reporting back to the FSBI

Acceptance of an award is acceptance of the condition to adequately report back to the FSBI. As a charity, and in order to comply with charity regulations, the FSBI needs to demonstrate where our funds have been spent, and that this spending complies with charity legislation. Failure to adequately report back to the FSBI will render you ineligible to apply for future funding from the FSBI.

In such circumstances, the FSBI also reserves the right to request that the award to be returned in full.

Reporting to the FSBI is done in two parts:

- A report must be completed by the grant holder within six months of the end of the grant period. The grant period is the point at which the project has been completed and this should be stated within the project application. Citations to papers arising from the grant award, either in press or published, will be accepted in lieu of a separate report, but these should be made known to the FSBI. The summary report (or references to publications) will be published on the website and may be published in the Society's newsletter, subject to agreement with the newsletter editor. Please supply a Word document of your summary report to the FSBI Administrator (Email enquiries@fsbi.org.uk). A grant holder who fails to submit a report will be ineligible for further grants until such time that the report is submitted and this may impact the success of future applications from your institution
- An account of their expenditure should also be submitted, and all receipts must be retained for 3 years after the grant award in case the Society is subjected to an audit of expenditure that requires the receipts. Only actual expenditure, backed by receipts, is acceptable under Charities Law.

The financial support of the FSBI will be acknowledged in any publications arising from the research and on any poster or oral presentation made at a conference (if successful, you will be given a grant number to include in funding acknowledgements). A pdf copy of publications must be emailed to the chair of the Research Grants subcommittee.

Successful applicants will be provided with a reporting form and further guidelines on reporting back to the FSBI.

14. Withdrawal of an award / return of an award

If the FSBI is not satisfied that the funds it has awarded have been spent as per the application for which funding was sought, or a suitable report is not submitted to us, then the FSBI reserves the right to request, for the award, in part or in full, to be returned.

An award cannot be transferred to a third party. If the original recipient is unable to complete the project for which the award was made or is unable to undertake the project in the timescale agreed (i.e. as detailed in their application) then the award must be returned in full.

15. Unsuccessful application

If your application has been unsuccessful, then you will receive notification of this by email, but this may not be for up to two months after the closing date. Due to the number of

applications, we are unable to provide additional feedback as to why an application is unsuccessful (beyond that in the initial correspondence). No additional correspondence will be entered into with regards an unsuccessful application.

The FSBI look forward to receiving your proposal.