

C-DICE Postdoctoral Research Fellowships 2022

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Type: Invitation for proposals

What is a C-DICE Fellowship?

The Centre for Postdoctoral Development in Infrastructure, Cities and Energy (C-DICE) invites applications for C-DICE Postdoctoral Research Fellowships from outstanding postdoctoral researchers and early career researchers (ECRs). These Fellowships are designed to promote research aligned to infrastructure, cities and energy, that will accelerate the progress towards a net-zero society by 2050, whilst providing the opportunity for researchers to develop their independence, with significant support from C-DICE. A multidisciplinary approach would be an advantage. There are up to three C-DICE Fellowships available for a 2022 start.

The C-DICE Postdoctoral Fellows will create their own research project of 1 year, if worked full-time, or pro-rated accordingly, if worked part-time. The Fellowship will support the transition of postdoctoral researchers and ECRs to fully independent research leaders by developing and expanding their research experience and research portfolio through the Fellowship project. Alongside this, the C-DICE Fellows will need the support of a named academic Mentor, as well as accessing a cohort of C-DICE Fellows and other support from the C-DICE project. The Fellowship can be worked full time, part time or flexibly. The C-DICE Fellow will need to be hosted at a C-DICE partner university and will preferably be encouraged to utilise UKCRIC and/or ERA facilities during the research. The research will ideally take place in partnership, for example, with industry (with a big company, an SME, or a start-up), with policy makers (in government or with a local authority), at a non-profit organisation, at other suitable universities, in a research facility, or a combination of these. Each application for Fellowships is capped at a maximum grant of £140,000 (at full economic costing). Matched commitments from external partners are encouraged, and a Statement of Support from the host institution will be required.

For shorter-term (6 months or less) C-DICE opportunities, go to: [C-DICE placements and secondments](#).

C-DICE is committed to diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all under-represented groups. It is C-DICE's policy to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged or receives less favourable treatment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. If you have special needs requiring assistance with the application process, please email Amy Beierholm at a.beierholm@cdice.ac.uk.

To support applicants during the preparation of their proposals, C-DICE will hold two information webinars (on 2nd December 2021 from 14:00-14:45 and on 5th January 2022 from 11:00-11:45).

It is a condition of funding that C-DICE Fellows engage with C-DICE in relation to the funded activity. C-DICE Fellows are expected to participate in C-DICE events and attend C-DICE Fellow Cohort meetings for the duration of the project. C-DICE Fellows will also be invited to present at the C-DICE Annual Conference, will be expected to run an activity to benefit other postdoctoral researchers and ECRs, and will be asked to present a Case Study at a C-DICE Business Engagement Event.

Fellowships are intended to fund an individual to progress their research career with the expectation that this will lead to a full fellowship application via UKRI or similar. The funding can be used to support the eligible activities normally supported under UKRI research funding, including but not limited to staff time, travel, subsistence, and overheads. The applicant is encouraged to seek matched funding for consumables and experimental costs. These costs may be admissible for C-DICE funding in exceptional circumstances. All costs must be fully justified as relevant to the research. The funding is provided by Research England Development Fund and information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive Research England funding is available in the following [T&Cs](#).

C-DICE Themes

The overarching goal of C-DICE is to accelerate progress towards a net-zero society by 2050 by building and sustaining the advanced skills base required to create a pipeline of world-class talent for the Infrastructure, Cities and Energy sectors. C-DICE Fellowships must contribute to the acceleration of progress towards a net-zero society by 2050 and align with two or more of the following:

- Research in infrastructure, cities and/or energy.
- Research using the UK Collaboratorium for Research in Infrastructure and Cities (UKCRIC) and/or the Energy Research Accelerator (ERA) facilities. Priority will be given to proposals which bridge ERA and UKCRIC.
- Knowledge exchange between collaborating C-DICE HEIs.
- Development and networking benefits for postdoctoral researchers and ECRs.

Benefits of a C-DICE Fellowship

A C-DICE Fellowship introduces postdoctoral researchers and ECRs to new perspectives, skills, and techniques, while giving them new opportunities & responsibilities. A C-DICE Fellow can “sector-hop”, test innovative thinking and skills in a different environment, and gain access to world-leading facilities and research teams. Furthermore, a C-DICE Fellowship allows for mobility to gain breadth of experience. They can combine academic research with an industrial placement to suit their needs. Sector-hopping may include a short-term placement in an industrial setting. Mobility may include visiting a research lab in another university or developing skills in an ERA or UKCRIC facility. It would also be possible to access multiple universities in one region – e.g. the C-DICE Fellow may do their research with two local C-DICE universities and an industrial partner. Note that Statements of Support must be obtained from all delivery partners.

A C-DICE Fellowship is a unique tool for career development and a means to expand the C-DICE Fellow's network. A distinct benefit will be the support provided to the C-DICE Fellows through cohort activities and additional support from within the project.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Applicants must have either a PhD or at least four years' experience as a postdoctoral researcher in a relevant field by the start of your fellowship.
- PhD students are eligible to apply but must have been awarded their PhD (or passed the viva with minor corrections) before 14 February 2022 or the Fellowship offer will be withdrawn.
- Applicants must not hold a permanent academic position before the start of the C-DICE Fellowship.
- The C-DICE Fellow must be hosted at a C-DICE university, although partnership with other organisations is encouraged.

- The applicant must identify an academic Mentor, who is different to their PhD or postdoctoral research supervisor.
- Before submitting an application, it is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the host institution(s) and gain the formal approval from the relevant head(s) of department/school in the form of a Statement of Support.
- Note that the lead host institution must provide a Statement of Support stating that they will provide an employment contract for the duration of the Fellowship.
- Statements of Support must also be included from other named partners.
- C-DICE Fellowships must commence as soon as possible after 15 March and no later than 15 October 2022, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The duration of the Fellowship is one year full-time, calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time awards. All awards must be completed by 31 August 2024. Requests for a shorter C-DICE Fellowship will not be accepted, please view the [placement or secondment scheme](#) for short placement opportunities.
- There are no nationality and age restrictions for applicants. The lead host institution is responsible for securing all necessary visas, work permits, and related costs for the C-DICE Fellows.

Mentoring and Monitoring

The C-DICE Fellow should choose an academic Mentor who is not their PhD or postdoctoral research supervisor, ideally from a C-DICE university. The Mentor will support and provide independent expert advice throughout the research fellowship about research and career development. The C-DICE Postdoctoral Research Fellows must submit a progress report every three months throughout the duration of the Fellowship. The reports summarise the research accomplishments during the C-DICE Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, including publications, papers presented, conference participation, knowledge transfer and other aspects of the research outcomes. A template will be provided for the report. The release of payments is dependent upon the receipt of reports by C-DICE. In addition, the Research Fellow, a C-DICE representative, and Mentor will meet within two weeks of receipt of each report to discuss the reports, identify progress being made and make plans. The Research Fellows are responsible for arranging the annual progress report meetings with their Mentors.

The C-DICE Research Fellow will be invited to present at the C-DICE annual conference during the period of the Research Fellowship. The C-DICE Research Fellow will be encouraged to hold one or more training sessions to other researchers in their area.

Deliverables

C-DICE Fellows will be required to produce:

- Progress reports every three months throughout the duration of the Fellowship. The reports summarise the research accomplishments during the Fellowship, including publications, papers presented, conference participation, knowledge transfer and other aspects of the research outcomes.
- The last progress report (final report) will also summarise key outcomes, which will be used to verify completion and inform future activities. The final report is due within 3 months of the completion date of the project.
- The release of payments is dependent upon receipt of progress and final reports by C-DICE.
- A summary of project activities or findings to be published on the C-DICE website. This can be in the form of a blog post or a short research video.

Funding Level

Applications can be submitted for projects up to £140,000 in value calculated under the full economic costing model of UKRI. Eligible costs are as defined in the standard UKRI [terms and conditions](#) for research grants and should be justified in the application. Fellowship funding can be used to cover the same cost categories. Project awardees can invoice 100% of the full economic costs quarterly in arrears.

Assessment process

We aim to score fellowship proposals by at least three reviewers. The reviews and scores will be reviewed by the C-DICE Development Strand team who will create an interview shortlist, informed by the reviews received. A panel interview process will be conducted for the shortlisted candidates where the candidates will be asked to deliver a presentation (max 10 minutes) pitching their research proposal.

Applications are welcomed from all sections of the research community. C-DICE encourages diversity in applications and awards. We would particularly encourage applications from those early in their research career or returning from career breaks, and members of the core management group may therefore personally invite proposals from applicants in these or other under-represented groups whom they think might otherwise not apply. These applications will subsequently be processed, reviewed and ranked in the same way as other proposals.

Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Quality of science
- Novelty, originality and contribution to knowledge
- Alignment to C-DICE themes
- Pathway to impact
- Career development for applicant
- Promotion and dissemination including engagement with C-DICE such as training of younger researchers
- Project management
- Value for money
- Partnership(s) and/or collaborations if any

Timeline

Call Issue	19 November 2021
Info webinar (optional)	2 December 2021 from 14:00-14:45
Info webinar (optional)	5 January 2022 from 11:00-11:45
Closing date for submissions	19 January 2022 at 16:00
Interview dates	w/c 14 February 2022

Award decisions made by Review Panel Meeting	23 February 2022
Offer letters and contracts issued	2 March 2022
Project acceptance required by	9 March 2022
Earliest project start date	15 March 2022
Latest project completion date	31 August 2024

How to apply

- Sign up to Inkpath and link to C-DICE. For more details on how, click [here](#).
- Apply using Inkpath, search for C-DICE activity code DFAB0001 or click [here](#).
- When you sign up for the activity, you will receive a link to an online application form.
- If you need additional assistance with completing an application or Inkpath, contact Amy Beierholm at a.beierholm@cdice.ac.uk
- You will need:
 1. Applicant and host institution details
 2. Narrative CV and track record
 3. Research proposal concept and objectives (max 1000 words)
 4. Cover letter, including alignment to C-DICE themes (max 250 words)
 5. Budget justification and requested funding
 6. Career development plan (max 250 words)
 7. Statement of support
 8. Letters of reference

1. Applicant and host institution details

- Applicant name and preferred correspondence details.
- Details of the host university (or universities) where the C-DICE Postdoctoral Research Fellowship will be held.
- Confirm which is the 'lead' host university.
- Details of academic Mentor (preferably from lead host university)
- Details of any non-academic delivery partners, if applicable.

2. Narrative CV and track record

- For guidance on writing a narrative CV and track record, go to this [UKRI page](#).

3. Research proposal concept and objectives

The research proposal has a word limit of 1000, and includes:

- Research area (*separate section, not included in word limit*)
- Project title (*separate section, max 30 words, not included in 1000 word limit*)
- Abstract (*must be understandable to a non-specialist reader*)
 - Statement of problem
 - Brief outline of the basic facts of the problem, explain why the problem matters

- Background and relevance to previous work (*must be understandable to a non-specialist reader*)
 - Make clear what the research problem is and exactly what has been accomplished
 - Give evidence of your competence in the field
 - What similar research is being/has been undertaken, and how does your project differ?
- General methodology
 - Detailed description of the exact work to be completed
 - Detail the methodology to be used in pursuit of the research and justify this choice
- Project Management
 - Skills to manage the project / professional development
 - Project impact / engagement
 - Key milestones and deliverables
- Diversity and inclusion
 - What does diversity and inclusion mean to you and your research?
 - What are you doing to address it?

4. Cover letter, including alignment to C-DICE themes

- Word limit 250

5. Budget justification and requested funding

- Costed by lead host institution
- Salary should be at a level commensurate with skills, responsibilities, expertise, and experience of the C-DICE Fellow
 - No other staff salaries can be requested
- Travel and subsistence
 - Travel and subsistence costs for the C-DICE Fellow to participate in activities directly linked to the research project
- Estates and indirect costs may be covered, although in-kind contributions from host institutions to cover part of these costs would be welcome
- Consumables and experimental costs may be admissible for C-DICE funding in exceptional circumstances, but the applicant is encouraged to seek matched funding for these costs
- Justification of costs
- If you have any queries about eligibility of costs, please raise these early with Amy Beierholm (a.beierholm@cdice.ac.uk)

6. Statement of Support

- Confirm that the host institution/s will support the C-DICE Fellowship
- Include a Statement of Support from each research partner/host institution
- Note that the Statement of Support from the lead host institution must state that they will provide an employment contract for the duration of the Fellowship

7. Career Development Plan

- Well thought out development plan detailing how the C-DICE Postdoctoral Research Fellowship will contribute to your career development
- Word limit 250

8. Letters of Reference

- Provide two letters of reference in digital form. At least one letter should be from a current or past supervisor (e.g. PhD supervisor)

Application will be made by online form. You will receive a link to the application form when you sign up to activity DFAB0001 on Inkpath. The following application template is to help you focus your thoughts before making the actual application. Use of this template is optional.

Application Form Template

Applicant Details
Name: Email: Home Organisation: Address: Telephone:
Do you have a PhD? (yes/no) If not, have you passed your viva with minor corrections? (yes/no) If not, when is your viva scheduled? If not, do you have at least four years' experience as a postdoctoral researcher?
Research Area
<i>Please add the discipline(s) that your research covers</i>
Project Title
<i>Please add a short title for your project so that it can be easily identified (max 30 words)</i>
Research Proposal Concept and Objectives
<i>Please see guidance (max 1000 words)</i>
Proposed Start Date: Proposed End Date: Proposed %FTE:
Cover Letter
<i>Please describe how your project aligns with the C-DICE themes (max 250 words)</i>

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Career Development Plan

Well thought out development plan detailing how the C-DICE Postdoctoral Research Fellowship will contribute to your career development (max 250 words)

Delivery Partners

Please list partner organisations (including non-academic partners), key contacts and contact information. Clearly identify the lead host university and Academic Mentor.

Partner Organisation	Key Contact	Contact Details

Budget Justification / Resources Requested

Total Project Costs:

Provide a brief cost summary and justification of resources. Note that costs (including salary costs) should be calculated on a full economic costing basis, up to a maximum of £140,000. Costings from your lead host university must be submitted by 19 January 2022.

Resource Category	Justification	Full economic cost
TOTAL		

The following items will be emailed as attachments:

- Research Proposal Concept and Objectives
- Narrative CV and track record
- Statements of Support from Lead Host institution and any delivery partners (including any in-kind or cash contributions)

- Letters of Reference