



2024 Call for proposals Early Career Researcher Program

Background

In 2023, the ISDR initiated a new grant scheme for Early Career Researchers. The call for proposals is open again for 2024, with £10,000 available for awards. The aim of program is to support ECR members of the International Society for Diatom Research (ISDR) by providing research funding and supporting scientific collaboration.

Early Career Researchers (ECRs) are defined as:

- ISDR members currently registered in a MSc or PhD programme
- ISDR members who are postgraduates within 8 years of the award of MSc or PhD or (extensions to this 8-year timeframe are permitted for periods of leave, including maternity, parental and sick leave).

Grant Types

Type 1: Luc Ector Student Bursary (3 awards worth £2,000 each)

This grant is named in memory of Luc Ector who was a prominent and prolific diatomist, known for his generosity and concern for young diatomists. The aim of the grant is to enable students to incorporate a new aspect into their research program (for example, travel to a conference, purchase of equipment, support publication costs, or another unfunded aspect of their work). Applicants submit a short proposal describing the proposed research, how the work will benefit the applicant's career and the ISDR, motivation and objectives, methodology, outcomes, and budget. Grants are awarded to an individual.

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must be registered in a MSc or PhD program.
- Applicants have not been a previous recipient of a Luc Ector ECR Bursary award.

Budget and project duration

Three Luc Ector Bursary grants will be awarded, of £2,000 per recipient. Funds must be spent within 2 years. The budget may cover consumables, non-consumables, and travel expenses required exclusively for the project. The proposal must include a budget documenting expenses.

Type 2: Networking Grant (1 award worth £4,000)

This grant is designed to support a collaborative project and must involve at least 3 ECRs. The aim of the grant is to promote collaboration and multidisciplinary research among ECRs. The grant application should outline the proposed project, how it will contribute to the individuals' careers and to the ISDR, contribution of each collaborator, motivation and objectives, methodology, outputs and a budget. Synergistic opportunities, interdisciplinary approaches, and innovative ideas are favoured for funding.

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must be current graduate students or postgraduates within 8 years of receiving their highest degree (extensions to this 8-year timeframe are permitted for periods of leave, including maternity, parental and sick leave).

Budget and project duration

One Networking Grant will be awarded, of £4,000. Project topics may include research, outreach, creation of new tools, and other topics. Funds must be spent within 2 years. The budget may cover consumables, non-consumables, and travel expenses required exclusively for the project. The proposal must include a budget documenting expenses. The project leader will receive 100% of the total budget at the beginning of the project.

Application procedure

Those interested in submitting a proposal should complete and submit the online application by **15 August 2024**:

- Type 1 - <https://forms.gle/ipH6RQcsYhHkLyqcA>
- Type 2 - <https://forms.gle/SrYNHfwyaWsuoFfJ7>

Proposal evaluation

Proposals will be collated and sent to Review Panel composed of three ISDR members (nominated by the Executive committee and the ECR representatives of ISDR Council) and confirmed by Council. The Review Panel will be selected to represent a diverse membership. The evaluation of proposals will follow the guidelines in the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA; see <https://sfdora.org/read/>). Projects will be reviewed by the panel and evaluated according to the following criteria.

General criteria:

- The scientific quality of the project (reasoning and objectives) and how it will contribute to improve our knowledge of diatoms.
- The feasibility of the project, taking into account the methodology, work plan, timeline, and budget.

Additional criteria for Luc Ector Student Bursary:

- Benefits of the project to the applicant's research and career
- How the funds will enable the applicant to enhance their research

Additional criteria for the Networking Grant:

- Synergistic opportunities, interdisciplinary approaches, and innovative ideas among ECR diatomists are favoured.
- Merit (either scientific merit, public outreach, development of new tools, or other outcomes), innovative nature, relevance and originality of the project.
- Planned outcomes of the work.

The decision of the Review Panel will be announced by 15 October, 2024. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application by email along with feedback from the Review Panel. Decisions of the Review Panel are final, with no options to appeal.

TIPS for applying for ECR grants

1. Read the description of the scheme carefully and ensure that you meet the criteria for applicants.
2. Ensure that you submit your application on the correct form, following all instructions fully and submit before the deadline.
3. It is important that you do not exceed word or page limits for different sections or forget to upload all relevant documents as requested. If you do your application may be rejected without being evaluated.
4. An abstract is required on the covering form, so do not repeat the abstract in your proposed research document (this wastes space unnecessarily).
5. Ensure that you address the relevant aspects of the project as requested. Use these aspects as headings in your proposal.
6. Remember that the application will be evaluated by individuals with diatom expertise, e.g. detailed descriptions of standard techniques are not needed. However, any new approaches should be described in sufficient detail for their value to be assessed.
7. Indicate how the work will be archived. Will samples / duplicate slides be sent to curated collections? Can you publish voucher images of your taxa for the benefit of others?
8. Write clearly and concisely throughout. It is a good idea to let your supervisor (or similar) read the application before you submit it. Another pair of eyes will pick up typographical and grammatical errors, catch if you have missed anything and help ensure you get your message across.