



Funder Spotlight: BBSRC and support for Frontier Bioscience

The UCL bioscience community is world-leading. It is also very successful at winning funding from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC). BBSRC funding portfolio is classed as 'frontier' research, which is research that is not yet established but has the potential to lead to new discoveries. BBSRC funding is classed as 'frontier' research, which is research that is not yet established but has the potential to lead to new discoveries.

There is still room to grow the amount of funding that UCL researchers secure from BBSRC for fundamental, curiosity-driven bioscience research.

We have developed advice, in discussion with BBSRC, to address some challenges and perceptions that might deter the UCL bioscience community from applying for funding.

All the Research Committees fund frontier bioscience research

- o The team report on exciting frontier bioscience research that is funded
- o They also capture where frontier bioscience research was not funded and look at: whether there were problems with assessment; any barriers to this research being funded; and whether there are any specific research areas that are consistently struggling to get funded.

I G R Q ¶ W I H H O apply to BBSRC if my research G R H V Q ¶ W I L W R Q H R I W K H U H mode priorities

It is true that BBSRC have a set of priority areas for responsive mode applications that align with the Strategic Priorities, and also that fit with a Strategic Priority is an assessment criterion.

However, BBSRC have emphasised to us that it is truly the excellence of the science that is the topmost driver of whether an application gets funded. Fit with strategy is considered by the Research Committees; in reality it often comes into play to tease apart grants which otherwise (i.e. on the basis of excellence) are closely scored during review. In Responsive Mode, it is never used in isolation or as a primary assessment criteria.

The majority of U & ¶ V % % 6 5 & I X Q G L Q J S R U W I S C I E N C E R E S E A R C H Q A C D E S H ¶ D D O D G G U H V V D V W U D W H J L F S U L R U L W \ D Q G L Q R I A S % 6 5 & ¶ V underpinning research that did not sit in any strategic priority area. So, if you have an excellent bioscience research idea, you should not w R U U \ D E R X W W U \ L Q J W R P D N H L W I L W D

The Research C ommittee remits / membership are geared towards the Strategic Priorities D Q G G R Q ¶ W U H S U H V H I O S C I E N C E A S A P P O I N T Q W D O

A few things should be noted here:

- ¾ Frontier bioscience is funded by each of the four response mode committees.
- ¾ The core committee membership is only a subset of the people who actually attend each committee meeting and review the applications.
- ¾ BBSRC keep a core committee membership for continuity and consistency. Additional members are co-opted to each meeting from t