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| ISSF3 Consolidation and Independence Panel: Consolidator Award Guidance for Applications |

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| **1. Background – Consolidator Awards** **(up to £50K, including up to 5K allocated for consumables)** |
| **IMPORTANT INFORMATION:** **This Round F of ISSF3 will be the final full launch of all ISSF3 research focused schemes (this does not include Public Engagement). Some additional scheme specific calls may still operate to help balance our portfolio of projects and deliver on Wellcome Trust grant expectations, but this will be entirely budget dependent. ISSF3 was awarded in 2016 and will continue to operate as a programme until 2021.** **The programme successfully completed its mid-term review to unlock the full £7M allocation from Wellcome Trust. However, the programme must complete its project spend within the programme period (30th June 2021) and so funded projects need time to recruit, implement and deliver project outcomes. As a result, the budget is profiled to commit the majority of resource by this stage of ISSF3. Some additional schemes may run in 2020 but the timing, which schemes and the budget allocation will not be guaranteed. Public engagement calls are profiled separately so will continue to run into 2020. If you have innovative project ideas, then please submit them during this final full round to avoid any future disappointment.**Following on from the College’s successful award of a third round of Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund (ISSF), funding is available for Wellcome Trust ISSF3 Consolidator Awards. The Consolidator Award is a new ISSF3 funding scheme that has been introduced to support early career researchers who are already demonstrating the potential to become subsequent leaders in their field. Consolidator awards can be applied for during the following time-window, designed to ensure that the applicant remains eligible for key early career fellowships. **Earliest time point for the application**: individuals must be well into the final writing up stage of their PhD (e.g., no more than four months from submitting their thesis). **Latest time-point for the application**: Eighteen months after the date of the applicant’s PhD viva. Due to employment restrictions, awards cannot start until the PhD thesis has been submitted. **Successful applicants should be able to demonstrate:**1. A strong early career publication track-record
2. Relevant skill-set(s) to work towards submission of an early career research award (e.g., a Sir Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellowship).

The awards will allow researchers time to write up papers from their completed PhD in order to strengthen their CV, engage in training to support public engagement, as well as develop and implement a small-scale research project working with a new research sponsor at Cardiff University (the latter designed to broaden their research experience and help with the move towards independence). The project must demonstrate a clear pathway to sustainable external funding, and enable acquisition of new skills that would underpin this future research application. Applications must be written by the early career researcher, with guidance provided by the project’s research sponsor. Interviews may be held if we have a strong competitive field. Sponsors of applicants should demonstrate their ability to support the career development of the individual and be based in the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences. Early career researchers from outside of the College of Biomedical and Life Sciences are able to apply for these awards assuming there is a strong biomedical focus to their research project and they are looking to move towards a future career in biomedical research. Applicants who wish to move to Cardiff University from other Institutions are also encouraged to apply, identifying a suitable sponsor for their project prior to the application. Joint sponsors supporting interdisciplinary skill development will be viewed positively, aligned to our wish to support interdisciplinary research via the ISSF3 award. These individuals, however, must not have been involved in the applicant’s PhD research (e.g. supervisor). Grant holders would be expected to incorporate salary costs at Grade 6 to cover their own expenses (School level research offices can assist with these CAP form calculations).**Summary:** The Consolidator Award will fund exciting projects which have the potential to underpin a strong application to obtain a subsequent early career researcher led award focused on early independence.  |

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| **2. Application Guidance and Top Tips** |
| The application has different sections, which we use to evaluate your project and complete Wellcome Trust reporting requirements. **Please use the suggested word limit**.Title of your PhD and PhD Summary – The summary can be cut and pasted from your thesis, where this has been submitted. Publications/ Conference Presentations – We require information about your current and planned publications, including a timeline for submission of the latter. Please also tell us how you think these publishing plans will place you in a competitive position for your planned early career application. Lay Summary – This new section will be made available to external visitors to the Cardiff University ISSF 3 website. Please write a summary of your project for a non-technical audience, and ensure the importance of the activity is clear. For guidance on how to write a lay summary, please click [here](http://www.dcc.ac.uk/resources/how-guides/write-lay-summary).Project Outline - To enable comparison between submitted projects, please provide information about your project using our requested headings: nature of the project, objectives, research plan, hypotheses and expected scientific outcomes. Dissemination of these scientific outcomes will be one of the measures of success that we will report to the Wellcome Trust. **Please provide a timeline for delivery of key research tasks in an Appendix (e.g., Gantt Chart).** Enabling Career Transition – This section provides an opportunity to outline how you see this project supporting your research skill development and subsequent competitiveness for external funding.  Research Sustainability – Please provide a clear pathway to submission of your early career funding application, including your proposed timeline. A common error here is for applicants to list a range of different funding schemes. We are looking for evidence of a more focused approach to sustainability where you have identified one or two clear funding opportunities where your research aligns to the strategic priorities of that funder and there is a suitable call within a relevant timeframe of completion of your award. The information you provide here will be one of the sustainable measures of success for the project, and provided for monitoring purposes to the Wellcome Trust.Public Engagement – All successful applicants for this scheme will be supported to develop their public engagements skills and ensure they can include engagement as part of their applications to funders. Here, we wish to learn more about your prior experience and expertise in this area.Justification of Resources – We often receive applications that pay cursory attention to finances, and many that ask for the full amount possible without any justification of this request. It is critical to justify your requested finances, and to provide a clear breakdown using the suggested headings. Consumables, equipment use etc. should be justified individually rather than providing a single lump sum request. Where finances are not sufficiently detailed, applications will not be considered at the relevant Panel. Applicants should discuss project costings with the Sponsor(s) to ensure accurate and appropriate budgeting. This should be done via normal School procedures, informed by the Sponsor(s). Please note, conference costs are not able to be supported for ISSF projects.ISSF project association or resubmission - Within the ISSF programme we have specific rules from Wellcome Trust that prevent continuation funding. Within the programme we also aim to ensure that the portfolio of projects does not include double funding or overlapping projects (from overlapping project teams). This question aims to provide applicants with an opportunity to declare associations with other ISSF projects and submissions. If the idea or concept is similar to other ISSF projects of previous submissions, then please clarify how this new project is substantially different and occupies a separate niche. Within ISSF we welcome reformulations of previously submitted grants, however resubmissions should have responded in a significant and substantive way to the previous feedback. This question will ensure the panel are aware of the efforts you have made to position your project and respond to feedback. Please also ensure you are familiar with the eligibility criteria details surrounding applicants not being able to apply for another scheme in the same pillar grouping in the same round i.e. you cannot be a named PI in the same pillar in the same round.Statement of Support from Consolidator Award Sponsor(s) – We would like to learn more about how your Sponsor *(academic staff appointment at least at lecturer level or equivalent, in post for duration of the award)* will support your career development, including any training, additional resources and guidance they will provide for you during the award. We would also like to know how their expertise will help you work on, and obtain, an early career award. This section should be written by the Sponsor after joint discussion with the applicant around these needs. Peer Review – To support high-quality peer review, we are providing information about call deadlines well in advance to enable appropriate preparation of grants. We have requested information, therefore, about the individual who has peer reviewed your application, and a tick-box to ensure that School peer review and costing procedures have been followed. |

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| **3. Application Process & Review** |
| All applications should be submitted on the appropriate application form, with attention paid to the requirements for each section. Please note that additional information/appendices (beyond our requested timeline, see Project Outline) are **not** allowed and will be excluded from the application at review. Applicants should **not** exceed the permitted word count for each section (including table and figure legends); if they do, the application will not be considered at the Panel. Similarly, a lack of detailed justification of research costs will result in the application not being submitted to the Panel. Applicants should **not be Lead PI** on an application for more than one funding scheme within the Consolidation and Independence Panel at the same time. For example, an applicant for a Consolidator Award would not be permitted to also apply for a Mobility & Skills Training Award within the same call. This restriction is designed to reduce the number of applications the panel has to review, and encourage researchers to consider applications aligned to the right scheme at the right time in the research delivery timeline. All applications will be reviewed by an experienced and representative panel of Cardiff University staff. For these panels we aim to ensure representation from across the College, both in terms of scientific expertise, diversity and seniority. Early career researchers may attend these panels as observers, and be provided with applications (in confidence) to help them learn more about grant reviewing processes.Alongside assessment of the scientific quality of the project, and potential to deliver sustainable external funding, the panel will be encouraged to consider alignment with the Wellcome Trust ISSF 3 career framework and College research priorities. They will also consider the benefit to early career researchers of all applications (e.g., growing skills and capacity in key interdisciplinary research areas).Strategic decisions when applications are tied for funding will be made based on College research priority and consideration of current PI-held Wellcome Trust ISSF 3 funding. Regarding the latter, we are keen that the Wellcome Trust Funds are used to the maximum benefit for the many talented researchers we have in the College, and researchers should consider carefully which schemes to apply for aligned to their research aspirations. Similarly, consideration of budgets can mean that the full requested amount of funding may not be awarded.  |

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| **4. Governance and Panellists** |
| Wellcome Trust ISSF Schemes are reviewed by separate panels aligned to career stage (currently Training, Consolidation & Independence, Collaboration and Public Engagement). The Consolidator Award is considered at the Consolidation & Independence Panel.Our panellists are all experienced at grant reviewing, with each panel including representation from both junior / senior researchers, as well as across all Schools in the College. Panellists undergo equality and diversity training to ensure a fair and transparent process of assessment.Panels provide recommended decisions which require ratification by the Wellcome Trust ISSF3 Board. Panellists are not allowed to provide information about outcomes from panel decision-making, similar to external grant reviewing panels. The contact for all queries relevant to applications, panels and outcomes is via ISSFAdmin@cardiff.ac.uk.Due to the high number of submissions to our Wellcome ISSF2 Panels it has not previously been possible for the College to provide detailed feedback to applicants. For ISSF 3, we hope to ensure that early career researchers obtain feedback from applications to help them develop their skills in grant writing. This will be developed as we start to understand the demand for our dedicated early career researcher schemes, and how we might best enhance the opportunities for our more junior researchers.  |

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| **5. Submission Deadline** |
| All applications should be submitted to ISSFAdmin@cardiff.ac.uk by **17:00 GMT, Monday 4 November 2019.** Applications submitted after this time will **not** be accepted. All applications need to be subjected to the normal review and costings procedures within the submitting School. Please submit a Microsoft Word version of the application.  |