

CaSDaR Funding Call 1:

Mini £5K Project Scheme 2025 **Guidance Document**

Call Open: 05/11/2025

Application Deadline: 22/01/2026

Successful Project Announcement: 11/03/2026

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1. Summary

Prospective Project Supervisors are invited to apply for CaSDaRs £5K Data Stewardship Mini Projects, geared towards upskilling prospective trainee data stewards. These applications must be made by an organisation based in the UK (or the UK office of a multinational corporation) proposing to host this project. Organisations that are not normally eligible for UKRI funding may be considered for support through this flexible funding call. However, any funding awarded must comply with UKRI's subsidy control regulations. Applicants should be aware that funding may be subject to additional checks, and they may be asked to provide more information. These projects must be 8-10 weeks and must showcase the value of data stewardship. We intend for the trainee data stewards to benefit from the CaSDaR Data Stewardship Training, Tutorials & Careers Events that will run across July and August whereby they will be given training in a range of data stewardship skills alongside informative career-based events, and therefore recommend that projects run between 6th July 2026 and finish by the 10th September 2026. However, we will consider projects that run outside of this timescale if there is suitable justification as to why, in which case they must run between the wider timescales of between 1st June 2026 and 30th February 2027. We are hoping to fund up to 8 projects in this round.

2. Purpose

CaSDaRs £5K Data Stewardship Mini Projects are intended to give individuals some experience in data stewardship, complemented by some training that will be delivered by the CaSDaR team and associates. Through these projects, we aim to upskill individuals in data stewardship, whilst giving them exposure to the career paths of data stewards and roles involving data stewardship. The purpose of the projects is for individuals to complete a project or task within an organisation, showing the value of embedding data stewardship practices in a process, project, or collection.

We intend that these projects will form an evidence base to display the relevance of introducing data stewards in the UK across multiple disciplines and organisations, as well as providing an opportunity for the trainee data steward to gain experience in data stewardship.

3. Benefits for Host Organisation & CaSDaR

- The Host organisation will benefit from:
 - Training in data stewardship practices to support professional development of the trainee data steward
 - Development /enhancement of data stewardship practices at the host institution
 - o Support from peers and from CaSDaR team to complete the project

- Networking opportunities with other trainee data stewards to support development
- o Financial support for a member of the project to attend CaSDaRs data stewardship conference in late 2026/early 2027
- CaSDaR will benefit from:
 - Gathering information on data stewardship needs across disciplines and organisations to inform CaSDaR's future activities (University of Southampton Ethics/ERGO number: 108977 – see Participant Information Sheet)
 - Short reports from the trainee data steward and supervisor, which can inform project evaluation and strengthen the case for refining the data steward role in the UK

4. Project Criteria

- Individual Projects must be between 8-10 weeks and should start by the 6th July 2026, and finish by the 11th September 2026 if they are to benefit from the CaSDaR Data Stewardship Training, Tutorials & Careers Events that will run across July and August. However, we will consider projects that run outside of this timescale if there is suitable justification as to why, in which case they must run between the wider timescales of between 1st June 2026 and 30th February 2027.
- We anticipate that most of the money will be used to fund the wages of the trainee data steward, however the project supervisor can budget for consumables (e.g. travel to a conference or collaborator) if relevant to the project, however please see here for more information on costs the UKRI considers appropriate: Other costs – UKRI.
- Projects must showcase the value of data stewardship; examples of potential topics could include:
 - o Cataloguing or resource building for an existing collection e.g. archive, tissue collections, sample collections
 - o Creating workflows for accurate metadata cleaning and enrichment
 - Creation of a checklist to promote FAIR data at the point of data collection
 - Generating README templates for file types/techniques commonly used across a group or project
 - Supporting sensitive data sharing within a project or group by creating a process to get consent

Whilst we encourage applications across any setting or discipline; we will strongly consider applications from disciplines and organisations that are under-represented in the field.

5. Applicant Criteria & Descriptions

Applications should be submitted by the project supervisor in collaboration with the organisation proposing to host this project. Applicants can request up to £4,000 (80%FEC). Applications should be submitted via the <u>CaSDaR £5K Mini Projects Submission Form</u>, and requires an upload of the document: <u>CaSDaR £5K Mini Projects Application Form</u>.

- Project Supervisors: Project Supervisors would typically be employed for the duration of the grant at an organisation based in the UK (or the UK office of a multinational corporation) proposing to host this project. Organisations that are not normally eligible for UKRI funding may be considered for support through this flexible funding call. However, any funding awarded must comply with UKRI's <u>subsidy control regulations</u>. Applicants should be aware that funding may be subject to additional checks. Prospective Supervisors must be able to demonstrate relevant knowledge of data stewardship for the proposed project.
- Project Partners: Projects may also include collaborators referred to as Project Partners. Project Partners are defined as collaborating organisations who will have an integral role in the proposed research. This may include in-kind or cash contributions such as expertise, staff time, use of facilities, etc. Project Partners cannot receive funding directly from the grant; the only exception to this is where a Project Partner is providing services or equipment that will go through a formal procurement process audited by the host research organisation. The Project Partner cannot receive any other funds from the grant, such as travel and subsistence. Letters of support can be included to demonstrate project partner support.
- Trainee Data Stewards: If you request salary for someone currently employed by (or to be hired by) the Primary Applicant's host institution, that person will be considered the trainee data steward. They will carry out the core project work and can be named if already employed, or they can be open with planned recruitment via the host institution post funding. Whilst these projects could be structured as an internship, they are equally well-suited for staff members or PhD researchers seeking to enhance their skills in data stewardship. NB: PhD students are only permitted provided they a) suspend their studies and take a secondment for the duration of the role and b) the project is not a continuation of their PhD.
- Collaboration Agreements: We require agreements to be made on GDPR compliant
 policies and Data Processing Agreements between the applying institution and their
 collaborators. If these cannot be agreed within a certain timeframe, we reserve the
 right to cease the contract process and choose another application.
- These projects are intended for those who are inexperienced in data stewardship and therefore require a project supervisor.

6. Assessment Criteria & Process

The reviewers will be made up of members of the Network+ Team and carefully selected external reviewers who have expertise in the project area. All reviewers will have declared any conflicts of interest and will only be assigned to review calls that can be judged impartially scored from 1-5, considering the criteria below:

- The feasibility of the project: whether the outcomes are realistic within the given timeframe and budget
- The degree to which the application addresses and explains the challenges that affect data stewardship in their area of work and how this relates to the objectives of CaSDaR
- The degree to which the project proposal convincingly explains the impact of the project on the individual
- The degree to which the project will advance an area that is currently underrepresented in data stewardship
- The suitability of the organisational infrastructure and expertise available to support the project

The projects will be ranked based on scores then ranked before final decisions will be made by a review panel. Please visit our website to view our reviewer guidelines.

7. Trusted Research

Trusted Research supports research integrity in undertaking collaborative research projects. In your application, you will need to show how you will identify any risks associated with security as it relates to integrity and how those risks will be mitigated.

In this process you will find these resources useful:

- https:/www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/trustedresearch-and-innovation/
- https:/www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/UKRI-170821-<u>TrustedResearchandInnovationPrinciples.pdf</u>
- https:/www.npsa.gov.uk/specialised-guidance/trusted-research
- https:/www.npsa.gov.uk/system/files/npsa_tr_checklist_final_web.pdf

If you have any concerns about this, then contact the relevant authority at your organisation. If your project is selected for funding, the requirement is on you to ensure that your activities are compliant with the National Security and Investment (NSI) Act 2021; you may also be asked for additional information to prove that you will effectively manage the risks associated with your planned work. CaSDaR has the right to remove funding awarded if you do not effectively ensure that your research is complying with these requirements.

8. Project Management and Expectations

The CaSDaR Network+ coordinator Dr Louise Saul will liaise with the CaSDaR Mini Project Leaders and trainee data stewards undertaking these projects. The trainee data stewards will be required to produce a poster (which can be presented at the CaSDaR Poster Symposia & Networking event in August 2026 (Dates TBA) if their project runs within that timeframe) and to take part in the CaSDaR Data Stewardship Training, Tutorials & Careers Event Programme that will run across July and August 2026 (if their project runs within that timeline). Trainee data stewards, and Project Supervisors will need to submit a short report (templates will be provided) on the activities and outcomes of the projects, alongside the project invoice within a month of the end of the project (payment is conditional on receipt of report). These reports will then be used to create high level case study summaries by CaSDaR. We will also provide funding for a member of the project team to attend and present their poster at the CaSDaR Data Stewards Conference in late 2026/early 2027 if they wish to do so.

9. Key Dates

- Call formally announced via webinar 5th November 2025
 - Deadline for applications (Submitted via our <u>CaSDaR £5K Mini Projects Submission</u> Form, using our CaSDaR £5K Mini Projects Application Form) – 22nd January 2025
- Successful applicants will be notified by 11th March 2026
- Successful projects should start by the 6th July 2026, and finish by the 11th September 2026 if they are to benefit from the CaSDaR Data Stewardship Training, Tutorials & Careers Events that will run across July and August. However, projects can be proposed that run outside of this timescale if there is suitable justification as to why, in which case they must run between the wider timescales of between 1st June 2026 and 30th February 2027. The projects can run from 8-10 weeks, and must be completed by the 30th February 2027, subject to completing the CaSDaR Network+ £5K Mini Project Award Agreement
- Trainee data stewards will be expected to present a poster at the CaSDaR Poster Symposia & Networking event in August 2025 (Dates TBA) (if their project runs within that timeline).
- Both trainee data stewards and project supervisors will be expected to provide a short project report at the end of the project.

10. Contacts

For more information on the CaSDaR Network+ visit our website: www.casdar.ac.uk

For specific information about this funding call visit our <u>CaSDaR £5K Projects Funding Page</u>

If you have any questions please contact the CaSDaR Team at <u>casdar@soton.ac.uk</u>

11. GDPR Statement

The CaSDaR Network is hosted at the University of Southampton and their privacy statement can be found here: https://casdar.ac.uk/privacy-policy/

Please be aware that as part of CaSDaRs Research on Data Stewardship Needs (approved via University of Southampton Ethics/ERGO number: 108977) we will be retaining information about applicant institutions, the domains in which the applicants work, and the details about their need for data stewardship within their institution for the duration of the Network+ in order to create statistics on engagement with our funding call.

Successful Supervisors will be invited to take part in a focus group after the projects have ended to discuss the ongoing impact of data stewardship in their organisation.

12. ED&I

The CaSDaR Network+ is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities and fair treatment for all students, workers, staff and applicants. As such, we will be circulating optional ED&I forms to all of our trainee Data Stewards once they have all been appointed.

We will also run additional online webinars before the submission deadline to support applications, and the funding call will be discussed in EDI sessions run by CaSDaR to ensure that we receive feedback from diverse voices within the community.

To promote applications from all areas, where an applicant perceives that they may have issues acting as a recipient of funding, we will offer to support the individual in liaising with the relevant bodies in their organisation.