CaSDaR

Careers and Skills for Data-driven Research

CaSDaR Funding Call 1:

Large £70K 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. Executive Summary

Prospective Project Leads are invited to apply for CaSDaRs £70K Data Stewardship Large Projects, geared towards upskilling established individuals who are interested in enhancing their career progress in roles aligned with data stewardship. 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 information. These projects can be **6–9 months** and must **start by the 1st June 2026 and finish by the 30th February 2027**. These projects must showcase the value of data stewardship, and the successful applicants will benefit from an opportunity to showcase their work at a data stewardship event as well as writing a report and contributing to research to further knowledge on careers and skills for data stewards.

2. Purpose

CaSDaRs £70K Data Stewardship Large Projects are aimed at individuals who have established careers, however, would like to display the benefit of data stewardship to their organisation, or to upskill themselves to enhance their career prospects. The purpose of the projects is for individuals and teams to show the value of embedding data stewardship practices in a process, project, collection, or organisation.

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 successful project leads to network with other individuals who are experiencing similar career trajectories and enable knowledge exchange.

3. Benefits for Host Organisation & CaSDaR

- The Host organisation will benefit from:
    - Development of a project to support a business case for embedding data stewardship in the organisation
    - Support from peers and from the CaSDaR team to complete the project and embed it into organisational workflows
    - Networking opportunities with other project groups to support development
    - 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](#))

  - A report 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 **6-9 months**, and must **start by the 1st June 2026**, and **finish by the 30th February 2027**.

- We anticipate that most of the money will be used to fund the wages of individuals fulfilling data stewardship roles data steward, however the project lead can budget for consumables (e.g. travel to a conference or collaborator or running a small collaborator meeting) 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 but are not limited to:

  - Work experience as a data steward embedded in a department

  - A project to advance recognition of the data stewardship roles at an organisation

  - Framework for recognition of data stewardship activities in aligned roles e.g. librarian, technician

  - Promotion of stewardship as a concept in disciplines with under-developed recognition of data

  - Upskilling an individual to address an identified need to fulfil data stewardship responsibilities, including buying out some time for CPD (it will be expected that individuals would be able to describe contributions at the national level through this development)

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

5. Applicant Criteria & Descriptions

Applications should be submitted by the project lead in collaboration with the organisation proposing to host this project. Applicants for projects can request up to £56,000 (80%FEC). Applications should be submitted via the [CaSDaR £70K Large Projects Submission Form](#), and requires an upload of the document: [CaSDaR £70K Large Projects Application Form](#).

- **Primary Applicant (Project lead):** The Project Lead **must** 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 [subsidy control regulations](). Applicants should be aware that funding may be subject to additional checks. **Project Leads must be able to demonstrate relevant knowledge of data stewardship for the proposed project.**

- **Co-Applicant:** These are additional team members who will have the relevant expertise to support the project lead to either develop the project or to upskill the individual to enhance their career prospects.

- **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.

- **Staff:** If you are requesting salary for a person currently working for the host organisation of the primary or co-applicants then this person will be considered staff in your application. If the person requires a secondment then please seek guidance from your organisation before submitting this application.

- **Sub-Contractors:** If you have tendered the position required for your project and ascertained that the best person for the job is someone from a commercial company then this person will be considered a sub-contractor in your application.

- **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.

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 up front and will only be assigned to review calls that can be judged impartially and 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 local or national setting

- 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 degree to which the project outlines how the impact of the project will be sustained beyond the funding period.

- The degree to which the application represents a timely intervention for the area of work

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. Project Management and Expectations

The CaSDaR Network+ coordinator Dr Louise Saul will liaise with the successful CaSDaR Project Leads undertaking these projects. The successful applicants will be required to produce a midway report and a final report (templates will be provided), which will be published on the CaSDaR website and on the CaSDaR Zenodo repository, describing 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 would like a member of the project team to present their progress at a data stewardship conference that will be organised by CaSDaR in late 2026/early 2027.

8. 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/trusted-research-and-innovation/

- https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/UKRI-170821-TrustedResearchandInnovationPrinciples.pdf

- 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.

9. Key Dates

- Call formally announced via webinar – 5th November 2025

- Deadline for applications (submitted via the CaSDaR £70K Large Projects Submission Form, and requires an upload of the document: CaSDaR £70K Large Projects Application Form) – 22nd January 2025

- Successful applicants will be notified by 11th March 2026

- Successful projects should be prepared to start by the 1st June at the latest. The projects can run from 6-9 months, and must be completed by the 30th February 2027, subject to completing the CaSDaR Network+ £70K Large Projects Award Agreement.

- Project leads will be expected to present some of the outcomes/activities from their project report at the Data Steward Conference in Winter 2026 (Dates TBA)

- Project Leads, in collaboration with a team if relevant, are expected to provide a midway project report detailing the project progress by the 1st October 2026 (this date will be confirmed upon notification of successful applications), for which a template will be provided.

- Project Leads, in collaboration with a team if relevant, are expected to provide a final project report detailing the activities and outcomes of the project one month after the conclusion of the project (latest date 31st March 2027 - note that this date will be confirmed upon notification of successful applications), for which a template will be provided.

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 CaSDaR £70k Projects Funding Page

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

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 Project Leads 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.

In order 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.