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25 August 2026

Dear ██████████

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00653

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 29 July in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I'm making the following request under the Freedom of Information.

Please share the number of equivalent full time postdoctoral research assistant roles funded by UKRI in 2025-2026 HESA reporting year ending on the 31st of July, and the previous years 2024-25, 2023-24, 2022-23, 2021-22, 2020-21, 2019-20, 2018-19, 2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-2016. This is not to ask the number of individuals in post, or number of individuals who have held those posts, but the total number of equivalent full time roles that could be funded across that year. Where the funding for postdocs is provided as, for example, a four year grant, this can be understood as the average funding per year across the four year grant, represented as an equivalent number of full time post doctoral research assistant roles. For each year, please share the breakdown of how many equivalent full time roles in a given year were funded for each research council. If some of the funding does not fit under a research council, please provide this under 'other' with a description of the funding.

Our response:

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) does hold information relevant to your request. Please see the information below.

The information you have requested is exempt from disclosure under Section 22(1) of the FOIA as it is intended for future publication. Section 22 is a qualified exemption meaning that it is subject to the public interest test.

UKRI understand that being transparent in regard to postdoctoral research funding is in the public interest. However, we consider that premature release would put undue pressure on UKRI to publish outside of our scheduled timeframes which would lead to a disproportionate burden on the organisation. This would not be in the public interest.

Published in June 2026, [UKRI doctoral studentships and fellowships, 2015 to 2025](#) notes in the 'Postdoctoral research assistants' section that UKRI is committed to publishing the numbers of PDRAs by research council and year:

"UKRI supports a large postdoctoral workforce through our grants, around 16,000 full-time equivalent per year. The data will be updated with additional graphs or tables similar to those for studentships and fellowships when available, noting that this will involve proxies for mapping postdoctoral research assistants to funding system roles."

It is hoped that the work required to present and publish this data will be completed within the next six months.

Your rights

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance

Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see [UKRI's complaints procedure](#)¹.

Yours sincerely,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>