

Young Scientists Fund

The Young Scientists Fund is an important funding scheme under NSFC's talent funding system. It supports young scientists to freely choose their research topics within the funding scope of NSFC to conduct basic research, fosters the ability of young scientists to independently undertake research projects and do creative research, stimulates creative thinking of young scientists and trains backup talents for basic research.

Eligibility of applicants:

- (1) Have experience of doing basic research;
- (2) Have senior professional position (title) or PhD degree, or be recommended by 2 researchers in the same research area with senior professional position (title);
- (3) Be less than 35 by January 1 of the year of application (born on or after January 1, 1981). For female applicants, be less than 40 by January 1 of the year of application (born on or after January 1, 1976).

Full time PhD students who satisfy the above criteria may apply through their host institutions with the consent of their supervisors, but full time master degree students can not apply. Those who are the PIs of ongoing NSFC projects or have undertaken projects of Young Scientists Fund, including one-year small fund for exploratory studies, and terminated or withdrawn projects, can not apply again.

The Young Scientists Fund adopts the same application, evaluation and management mechanism as the General Program. The creative potential of the applicant is mainly evaluated. Applicants should follow the outlines of proposal for Young Scientists Fund when preparing applications. They may be up to 2 collaborating units within one proposal and the research period is 3 years in general. The funding period for applications submitted by post-doctors is decided in consideration with the letter of commitment from their host institutions.

In 2015, the Young Scientists Fund supported 16,155 projects with a total funding of 3.1946 billion yuan and the average funding for direct costs was 197,700 yuan per project. The average success rate was 24.58%, which is 0.68% lower than that of 2014.

In 2016, the average funding for direct costs will be around 200,000 yuan per project. Please refer to actual funding scale in each department when submitting proposals.

Funding for the Young Scientists Fund in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

Department	No. of applications	Awards				Success rate (%)
		No. of awards	Funding for direct costs	Average funding for direct costs	Share of NSFC' total funding for direct costs (%)	
Mathematical and Physical Sciences	5,399	1,733	35,350	20.40	11.07	32.10
Chemical Sciences	5,253	1,428	29,990	21.00	9.39	27.18
Life Sciences	9,469	2,214	44,310	20.01	13.87	23.38
Earth Sciences	5,419	1,582	33,200	20.99	10.39	29.19
Engineering and Materials Sciences	11,194	2,900	59,160	20.40	18.52	25.91
Information Sciences	7,327	1,943	39,640	20.40	12.41	26.52
Management Sciences	3,273	675	11,800	17.48	3.69	20.62
Health Sciences	18,388	3,680	66,010	17.94	20.66	20.01
Total	65,722	16,155	319,460	19.77	100	24.58

Please refer to sections in each department introduction in this Guide to Programs for funding scope, funding statistics in recent years and relevant requirements.

Department of Mathematical and Physical Sciences

The development of young scientists is particularly important for the development of mathematical and physical sciences. The Department has always been paying attention to fostering and supporting young scientists, and the funding rate of the Young Scientists Fund has always been higher than that of General Program projects. In 2016, the Department will maintain a higher funding rate for the Young Scientists Fund so as to give more young people the opportunity to do independent research, and to foster outstanding talents for basic research.

Funding for projects of the Young Scientists Fund in the Department of Mathematical and Physical Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

Divisions		Projects	Direct cost	Funding rate (%)
Mathematics	Mathematics I	295	5,284	33.64
	Mathematics II	292	5,236	30.51
Mechanics	Basic problems and methods in mechanics	2	44	20.00
	Dynamics and control	55	1,159	32.16
	Solid mechanics	119	2,562	31.65
	Fluid mechanics	76	1,643	31.93
	Bio-mechanics	19	428	32.20
	Explosive and impact dynamics	37	814	31.36
Astronomy	Astrophysics	47	1,049	34.81
	Astrometry and celestial mechanics	50	1,101	31.25
Physics I	Condensed matter physics	228	4,986	31.93
	Atomic and molecular physics	43	919	32.33
	Optics	140	3,060	32.11
	Acoustics	28	605	34.57
Physics II	Fundamental physics and particle physics	68	1,255	33.17
	Nuclear physics, nuclear technology and its application	85	1,843	32.82
	Particle physics and nuclear physics experimental facilities	82	1,876	29.71
	Plasma physics	67	1,486	33.84
Total		1,733	35,350	32.10
Direct cost funding per project		20.40		

Department of Chemical Sciences

The Department of Chemical Sciences upholds the principle of people first and fosters innovative talents, brings into full play the maintaining and fostering role of the Young Scientists Fund, and steadily expands the funding scope with the idea of controlling a proper funding intensity and further raising the funding scope to young scientists. The Young Scientists Fund stresses on supporting research projects with innovative ideas and gives less weight to research accumulation and the quality of the relevant research teams, so as to facilitate the growth of young scientists.

Funding for projects of the Young Scientists Fund in the Department of Chemical Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

Divisions		Projects	Direct cost	Funding rate (%)
Division I	Inorganic chemistry	203	5,263	27.69
	Analytical chemistry	162	3,402	27.74
Division II	Organic chemistry	242	5,083	27.72
Division III	Physical chemistry	285	5,986	27.67
Division IV	Polymers	106	2,226	27.82
	Environmental chemistry	170	3,570	27.69
Division V	Chemical engineering	260	5,460	25.05
Total		1,428	29,990	27.18
Direct cost funding per project		21.00		

Department of Life Sciences

In 2015, the Department of Life Sciences received a total of 9,469 applications for the Young Scientists Fund. 9,263 applications were accepted and 2,214 projects were funded with a funding rate of 23.38%. The average direct cost of funding was 200,100 yuan per project. The Department will continue to follow the principle of “stabilizing research teams, fostering young talents, stimulating innovative thinking and supporting independent research” for the Young Scientists Fund, and provide steady support to researchers in the early stage of their academic career. In 2016, the funding for the Young Scientists Fund will be 250,000 yuan per project. For application details and special notifications, please refer to the section of General Program of the Department in this guide.

Funding for projects of the Young Scientists Fund in the Department of Life Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

Divisions		Projects	Direct cost	Funding rate (%)
Division I	Microbiology	157	3,141	25.32
	Botany	144	2,889	25.44
Division II	Ecology	164	3,282	29.23
	Forestry	124	2,485	18.99
Division III	Biophysics/Biochemistry/Molecular biology	107	2,139	29
	Immunology	61	1,222	31.12
	Biomechanics and tissue engineering	61	1,224	21.18
Division IV	Neurosciences	50	996	23.15
	Psychology	57	1,146	21.84
	Physiology & integrative biology	45	901	23.08
Division V	Genetics and bioinformatics	115	2,302	27.12
	Cell biology	75	1,496	30.36
	Developmental biology and reproductive biology	51	1,018	24.52
Division VI	Agriculture and crop sciences	183	3,653	21.45
	Food science	192	3,844	18.68
Division VII	Plant protection	125	2,510	22.4
	Horticulture and plant nutrition	126	2,513	20.69
Division VIII	Zoology	76	1,513	31.02
	Animal husbandry and grassland science	109	2,193	20.76
	Veterinary medicine	116	2,327	25.95
	Aquaculture	76	1,516	19
Total		2,214	44,310	23.38
Direct cost funding per project		20.01		

Department of Earth Sciences

In 2015, the Department of Earth Sciences received 5,419 applications for the Young Scientists Fund from 796 research institutions. Among them, 2,980 were from universities, accounting for 55.0%, and 2,264 from research institutes, accounting for 41.8%. Totally, 1,582 projects were funded with a fund of 332 million yuan (direct cost and hereinafter). The average funding was 210,000 yuan per project and the funding rate was 29.2%. Among the projects funded in 2015, 838 were obtained by universities, accounting for 53.0%, and 693 by research institutes, accounting for 43.8%. One of the most important goals of NSFC is to foster outstanding young scientists continuously and steadily. The Department will further strengthen the funding for young scientists, especially outstanding young scientists. The main function of Young Scientists Fund is “cultivation”, and to provide more opportunities for young scholars at the very beginning of their career, especially for the researchers who were just awarded the PhD degrees and started their basic research. In 2016, the average funding will be about 250,000 yuan per project.

In 2016, a standardized selection of “application code”, “research field” and “key words” will be tried out continuously in Division I (Geography). When filling out the application forms, applicants should choose “application code 1 (D01 and subordinate codes)” and relevant “research field” and “key words” precisely according to the “list of application code, research field and key words for trial disciplines” and make sure their applications in accordance with the funding area of Division I. The list of the application code, research field and key words are available from the “special focus” under the item of “application acceptance” on the official home page of the NSFC (<http://www.nsf.gov.cn/>).

Funding for projects of the Young Scientists Fund in the Department of Earth Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

Divisions		Projects	Direct cost	Funding rate (%)
Division I	Geography (including soil science and GIS)	607	12,731	29.21
Division II	Geology	347	7,285	29.18
	Geochemistry	124	2,610	29.11
Division III	Geophysics and space physics	143	3,008	29.12
Division IV	Marine science	225	4,717	29.22
Division V	Atmospheric science	136	2,849	29.25
Total		1,582	33,200	29.19
Direct cost funding per project		20.99		

Department of Engineering and Materials Sciences

In order to encourage and foster innovative young researchers, the Department will continue to carry out favorable funding policy for the Young Scientists Fund. In 2015, the Department received 11,194 applications (274 rejected) for the Fund with an increase of 3.73%. 2,900 projects were funded with a total direct cost of 591.60 million yuan. The average funding was 204,000 yuan per project with a success rate of 25.91% (28.13% in 2014).

Please refer to the General Program and other related parts of this Guide to Programs for detailed requirements on application.

Funding for projects of the Young Scientists Fund in the Department of Engineering and Materials Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

Divisions		Projects	Direct cost	Funding rate (%)
Materials sciences I	Metallic materials	231	4,747	25.47
Materials sciences II	Inorganic and non-metallic materials	353	7,255	25.62
	Polymer materials	232	4,737	25.66
Engineering sciences I	Metallurgy and mining science	299	6,141	24.07
Engineering sciences II	Mechanical engineering	506	10,294	25.84
Engineering sciences III	Engineering thermo physics and energy utilization	227	4,643	26.12
Engineering sciences IV	Architecture, environmental and structural engineering	585	11,786	27.03
Engineering sciences V	Electrical science and engineering	193	3,972	26.47
	Hydrology and marine engineering	274	5,585	26.27
Total		2,900	59,160	25.91
Direct cost funding per project		20.40		

Department of Information Sciences

In 2015, the Department of Information Sciences received 7,327 applications for the Young Scientists Fund, which was decreased by 3.15% compared with that in previous year. 1,943 projects were funded with success rate of 26.52%. The total direct cost funding was 396.4 million yuan and the average direct cost funding was 204,000 yuan per project. In 2016, the Department will continue to pay attention to the Young Scientist Fund, and increase the funding rate in a moderate way. The direct cost funding intensity will be 200,000 yuan per project.

In 2016, a standardized selection of "application code", "research field" and "key words" will be tried out continuously in Division 1. When filling out the application forms, applicants should choose "application code 1 (F01 and subordinate codes)" and relevant research field" and "key words" precisely according to the "list of application code research field and key words for trial disciplines" and make sure their applications in accordance with the funding area of Division 1. The list of the application code, research field and key words are available in the "Special focus" under the item of "Application acceptance" on the official home page of the NSFC (<http://www.nsf.gov.cn/>).

Funding for projects of the Young Scientists Fund in the Department of Information Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

Divisions		Projects	Direct cost	Funding rate (%)
Division I	Electronics and technology	167	3,500	26.94
	Information and communication system	191	3,835	27.25
	Information acquisition and processing	173	3,453	26.99
Division II	Theoretical computer science, computer software and hardware	130	2,661	28.20
	Computer application	256	5,194	28.07
	Network and information security	162	3,307	28.13
Division III	Control theory and control engineering	201	4,136	25.64
	Systems science and system engineering	59	1,206	20.07
	AI and intelligent system	164	3,369	24.37
Division IV	Semiconductor science and information devices	173	3,531	26.66
	Information optics and photoelectric devices	126	2,571	26.81
	Laser technology and technical optics	141	2,877	26.65
Total		1,943	39,640	26.52
Direct cost funding per project		20.40		

Department of Management Sciences

In the recent years, the application quality and research level of the Young Scientists Fund in the Department of Management Sciences have shown significant improvement. Most applicants paid attentions to scientific frontier areas, proposed appropriate research methods and have published high-level academic papers. On the other hand, some applicants still lacked the understanding of NSFC's policies; therefore, the proposed research content could not be completed with the limited budget or within the proposed time period. Some other applicants repeated their PhD or postdoctoral research work, or failed to provide information as required by NSFC.

In 2015, the Department received 3,273 applications for the Young Scientists Fund, equivalent to the figure in 2014, 675 projects were funded with a funding rate of 20.62%, and the average funding for direct cost was 174,800 yuan per project.

In 2016, the Department will continue to follow the principle of "expanding the funding scope properly and limiting the funding intensity" for the Young Scientists Fund. The average funding for direct cost in 2016 will be 190,000 yuan per project, and the executive period will be 3 years.

Please note that the requirements given in the general description section of the General Program of the Department of Management Sciences in this Guideline are also applied to the Young Scientists Fund, so please read carefully before submitting proposals.

Funding for projects of the Young Scientists Fund in the Department of Management Sciences in 2015

Unit: 10,000 yuan

Divisions		Projects	Direct cost	Funding rate (%)
Division I	Management science and engineering	197	3,444	21.44
Division II	Business administration	186	3,252	21.14
Division III	Macro-management and policy	292	5,104	19.81
Total		675	11,800	20.62
Direct cost funding per project		17.48		

Department of Health Sciences

The Department of Health Sciences mainly supports basic and fundamental of clinical research on the occurrence, development, outcome, diagnosis, therapy and prevention of diseases.

Eligible young scientists are encouraged to submit proposals to the Department for funding. Applicants are expected to have the ability to undertake and complete research project independently, and the ability to propose creative scientific questions and research schemes. The PDF copies of no more than five representative papers relevant to the application should be attached to the proposal. More detailed information is to be referred to sections in the Young Scientists Fund and General Program in this guide.

The funding intensity for the Young Scientists Fund has been increased along with the continued increase of national investment in basic research, and the direct cost per project for the Young Scientists Fund in 2016 will amount to around 200,000 yuan.

An overview of the award number, funding, and success rate of the Young Scientists Fund in 2015 by the Department is listed in the table below.

**Funding for projects of the Young Scientists Fund
in the Department of Health Sciences in 2015**

Unit: 10,000 yuan

Divisions		Projects	Direct cost	Funding rate (%)
Division I	Respiratory system, circulatory system, blood system	393	7,047	21.28
Division II	Digestive system, urinary system, endocrine system/ metabolism and nutrition support, ophthalmology, otorhinolaryngology head and neck science, oral and craniomaxillo-facial science	510	9,143	19.84
Division III	Neurological and psychiatric diseases, gerontology	312	5,597	21.27
Division IV	Reproductive system/ Perinatology/Neonatology, medical immunology	217	3,895	21.03
Division V	Medical imaging and biomedical engineering, special medicine, forensic sciences	205	3,678	21.20
Division VI	Medical pathogenic microorganisms and infection, orthopedics and sports medicine, emergency and intensive care medicine/Trauma/ Burns/Laboratory medicine/Plastic surgery/ Rehabilitation medicine	320	5,740	18.93
Division VII	Oncology (leukemia not included)	748	13,407	18.85
Division VIII	Skin and appendages, preventive medicine, endemiology, occupational medicine, radiology	196	3,522	24.90
Division IX	Materia medica and pharmacology	275	4,938	24.77
Division X	Chinese medicine, Chinese materia medica, integrated Chinese and western medicine	504	9,043	17.08
Total		3,680	66,010	20.01
Direct cost funding per project		17.94		