

# ERC StG experiences

Michael Cowley

School of Chemistry, University of Edinburgh

# MY PROJECT: ALCAT

**ERC Starting Grant 2016  
Research proposal [Part B1]**

## **Bond activation and catalysis with low-valent aluminium**

### AlCat

**Principal Investigator:** Dr Michael Cowley  
**Host Institution:** University of Edinburgh  
**Proposal duration in months:** 60

#### **Proposal summary:**

This project will develop the principles required to enable bond-modifying redox catalysis based on aluminium by preparing and studying new Al(I) compounds capable of reversible oxidative addition.

## CAREER

<b>2008</b>	PhD University of York	
<b>2008-2010</b>	Postdoc 1 University of York	
<b>2010-2013</b>	Postdoc 2 (inc Marie Curie IEF) Imperial/Saarbrucken	Marie Curie IEF
<b>2013</b>	Chancellors Fellow, Edinburgh	Marie Curie CIG
<b>2014</b>		
<b>2015</b>		
<b>2016</b>	open-ended contract	ERC StG

# PERSEVERE!

<b>2008</b>	PhD University of York	
<b>2008-2010</b>	Postdoc 1 University of York	URF (rejected) Ramsay Fellowship (rejected)
<b>2010-2013</b>	Postdoc 2 (inc Marie Curie IEF) Imperial/Saarbrucken	Marie Curie IEF
<b>2013</b>	Chancellors Fellow, Edinburgh	Marie Curie CIG
<b>2014</b>		ERC StG (rejected) URF (rejected)
<b>2015</b>		URF (rejected)
<b>2016</b>		ERC StG URF (rejected) EPSRC first grant (rejected)

## THE APPLICATION

You need to convince readers of three key things:

1. The **importance** of your project
2. The **success** of your project (feasibility)
3. Your **ability to deliver** the project

# THE ERC STARTING GRANT

## Information for Applicants to the Starting and Consolidator Grant 2018 Calls

### 1.1.1 Objectives and principles of ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants 2018

The ERC Work Programme 2018 sets out the objectives and principles of ERC funding. ERC Starting and Consolidator Grants are designed to support excellent Principal Investigators (PIs) at the career stage at which they are starting or consolidating their own independent research team or programme. Principal Investigators must demonstrate the ground-breaking nature, ambition and feasibility of their scientific proposal. ERC grants are open to researchers of any nationality who intend to conduct their research activity in any EU Member State<sup>4</sup> or Associated Country<sup>5</sup>.

The ERC's frontier research grants operate on a 'bottom-up' basis without predetermined priorities. Applications can be made in any field of research with particular emphasis on the frontiers of science, scholarship and engineering<sup>6</sup>. In particular, proposals of an interdisciplinary nature, which cross the boundaries between different fields of research, pioneering proposals addressing new and emerging fields of research or proposals introducing unconventional, innovative approaches and scientific inventions are encouraged.

## THINK ABOUT THE 'USE' OF THE APPLICATION

Your application will be read by:

- interested panel members
- uninterested panel members
- assigned panel members (B1)
- external referees (B2)

Your application will be read:

- in advance
- thoroughly
- last minute
- during your interview!

## WHY IS THIS AN ERC PROJECT?

What makes this an ERC project?

Why is it not just three research council responsive mode grants?

€60,000/minute

so practice!

## 'USING' THE GRANT

What I got:

50 % of my time for 5 years

5 years of postdoc

2 PhD students

1 day/week of technician time

but mostly... space and time to take risks