LES Fellowship Cohort

Session 2

BBSRC / Wellcome Trust / MRC
ESRC / Leverhulme Trust / British Academy

Fellowship Schemes
In this session

- Biosciences, medical and biomedical fellowships
- Social sciences fellowships
- Person, project, place
- What makes a good application
- Why applications fail
Why go down the ‘independent fellowship’ route?

DISCUSS IN GROUPS

5 minutes
Why fund fellowships?

- Investment in training
- Highly skilled researchers are vital to maintain a strong science base in the UK
- Helping people at transition points in their career – early, establishing independence, career re-entry/flexible working, developing business skills
- Developing LEADERSHIP, SCIENCE, IMPACT
Career Stages

**EARLY** (~up to 5 years postdoc experience)
WT Henry Wellcome; BBSRC Future Leaders; MRC Skills Development; BA Postdoc; Leverhulme Early Career; ESRC New Investigator

**ESTABLISHED** (~4-5+ years of postdoc experience)
WT Henry Dale; BBSRC David Phillips; MRC Career Development
Biotechnology and Biosciences Research Council (BBSRC)

- Future Leaders Fellowship – ‘future potential’
- David Phillips Fellowship – ‘upward trajectory’
- Enterprise Fellowship – ‘business skills development’
- Daphne Jackson Fellowship – ‘career re-entry’
Future Leaders Fellowship (FLF)

- Set up independent research in host lab
- Bottom up – any topic within BBSRC remit
- Awards for 3 years, **12 awards annually**
- Summer deadline annual – usually early-mid May
- £300k max funded at 80% FEC (FEC £375K)
- Candidates must have completed their viva by the time of award (Nov) and have a max of 5 years post-PhD research experience
- Any nationality, mobility optional but desirable
David Phillips Fellowships (DPF)

- To set up first independent research group and establish yourself in the field
- Bottom-up, any topic within BBSRC remit
- Awards for 5 years, 5 awards annually
- £1M at 80% FEC (£1.25M FEC)
- Summer deadline, annual – usually May
- At least 3 years postdoctoral research experience, should not hold or have held academic position, no limit to number of years post-PhD
- Any nationality, mobility optional but desirable
What can you apply for?

- Personal salary
- Travel and subsistence
- Training
- Research consumables
- No equipment for FLF, capped at £300k
- Note: substantial contribution from host institution expected – access to facilities, lab and office space, training, mentorship, avenues for career development – ALL FELLOWSHIPS

Value for money important for the BBSRC!!
Medical Research Council (MRC)

- Skills Development Fellowships – process changing, institutions will bid to become centres of excellence, fellows will apply directly to them
- Career Development Award – can range from basic science with relevance to mechanisms of disease to translational or clinical research
MRC Skills Priorities

- Recently identified cross-cutting skills priorities that will be met through fellowships:

- **Quantitative skills** (mathematics, statistics, computation, developing digital excellence) as applied to variety of data sources (from ‘omics’ to health records)

- **Interdisciplinary skills** (at all interfaces including chemical/physical/engineering, social/economical and clinical, including for example imaging, health economics, antimicrobial resistance and translational medicine).

- **Whole organ/organism physiology** (including *in vivo training*)
Career Development Award (CDA)

- No postdoctoral experience limits
- No funding limits, most costs allowable
- 5 year awards
- Joint funding with other bodies can be sought
- Any nationality, bottom-up research
- Deadlines twice a year
- Focus on collaboration, cross-sector working (supports placement overseas, in other institutions or industry)
- 2015-16 – 99 applications, 9 awards made
Wellcome Trust

- Fund biomedical science, population health
- Grant-making policy is different to Research Councils UK
- Sir Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellowships
- Sir Henry Dale Fellowships
- Range of fellowships across career stages
Henry Wellcome Fellowships

- £250,000 for up to 4 years
- Final year PhDs or very early postdoc (max 2 years)
- UK or EEA nationals
- Strong mentor/host, external to current research environment
- Interdisciplinary, collaborative and/or cross-sectoral focus
- Deadlines twice a year (May/Oct)
Henry Dale Fellowship (Royal Society)

- 5+3 years of funding
- PhD + significant postdoc experience
- Research impact important criteria for assessment
- Mobility optional, move from current PI/supervisor mandatory
- Non-linear career trajectories considered – document on website with case studies
- Substantial host support expected
aim to provide career development opportunities for those who are at a relatively early stage of their academic careers, but who have a proven record of research

- Fund blue-skies research of a fundamental nature
- Covers all disciplines except applied medical research
- Must be within 4 years of PhD.
- Duration: 3 years on a full-time basis (can be part time over a longer period provided justification).
- Applicants must hold a PhD from a UK university or be on a fixed-term post at a UK university
- Undertake significant piece of publishable work and lead to a more permanent academic position.

Up to 100 awards to be offered

https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/funding/grant-schemes/early-career-fellowships
What can you apply for?

- 50% salary for 3 years up to a maximum £24k per annum. Remaining salary needs to be met by host institution.

  *Usually an internal selection process*

- Non-FEC

- £6,000 per annum for research expenses
  - Travel & subsistence
  - Fieldwork costs
  - Individual items of equipment below £1,000
  - Conferences / workshops
opportunities for outstanding early career researchers to strengthen their experience of research and teaching in a university environment to improve their prospects of obtaining permanent lecturing posts

- Social sciences, humanities, psychology
- Must be within 3 years of PhD
- Duration: 3 years on a full-time basis
- UK / EEA national / have completed PhD at UK university
- Open once a year (autumn time) – 2 stage process
- Primary emphasis is on completion of a significant piece of publishable research

Up to 45 awards to be offered (5% success rate)

http://www.britac.ac.uk/british-academy-postdoctoral-fellowships
What can you apply for

- Full salary at 100% FTE
- Full Economic Cost (covers institutional overheads)
- Time of a mentor (one hour per month)
- £6000 in research expenses over full 3 years (so small scale)
  - Travel & subsistence
  - Fieldwork costs
  - Small items of equipment
New Investigator
(not technically a fellowship…)

supporting those looking to make the transition to independence through managing their first major research project

- Open call – can apply anytime
- Up to £300,000 (Full Economic Cost)
- Duration: 3 years
- Open to anyone from anywhere within 4 years of PhD
- Can be interdisciplinary but social sciences must be at least 50%
- Co-Investigators allowed – but PI leadership is integral

30-35 grants to be made

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/new-investigator-grants/
What will it cover?

- Your salary up to 100% FTE
- Institutional overheads (pros & cons)
- Research assistance (casual / postgrad RA)
- Equipment
- Consumable, fieldwork costs etc.
- Training (career development plan = essential)
- Travel & subsistence – fieldwork and mobility (undertake visits to other labs etc.)
- If applying as fellow will require host contribution to salary costs
Let’s discuss leadership and independence!

- Different career trajectories/bench mark against your specific research area
## Skills table*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career stage</th>
<th>Training (PhD students)</th>
<th>Early career</th>
<th>Transition to independence</th>
<th>Transition to leadership</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Relevant scheme(s) | Clinical Research Training Fellowships ¹  
PhD studentships ² | Skills Development Fellowships | Career Development Award ³  
Clinician Scientist Fellowships ³  
New Investigator Research Grant ³ | Senior Non-Clinical Fellowship ⁴  
Senior Clinical Fellowship ⁴ |
| Key criteria | Planning to pursue a research career  
Clear understanding of how the research project will progress knowledge within the field | Plans for a coherent and integrated training programme  
Delivered previous research projects and have evidence of outputs | Productivity across past appointments and an upward trajectory  
Clear plans to establish own research ‘niche’ | Track record of nationally competitive research and managing own independent research group  
Clear plans to develop into an internationally recognised leader in the field |
| 1. Research vision | Individuals should:  
Have a clear understanding | Individuals should:  
Have a clear understanding | Individuals should:  
Have their own research plans | Individuals should:  
Develop an ambitious |

[https://www.mrc.ac.uk/skills-careers/skills-needed-to-win-support/](https://www.mrc.ac.uk/skills-careers/skills-needed-to-win-support/)

Generic Criteria - can be applied to other fellowship schemes
What about vision? Yours?

Let’s discuss!

- What does vision look like?
- Write your own, map steps to get there
Assessment process – BBSRC case study

- Proposal submitted
- Office checks
- External expert peer review (focused on the proposed science)
- Committee E meeting: Sift stage - selects candidates to invite for interview (aim to invite ~3x more people to interview than awards), uses referee reports
- Committee E meeting: Interview stage
# Fellowships and the 3Ps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Track record</td>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td>Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership potential</td>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>Track record</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous research</td>
<td>Timely</td>
<td>Academic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>Good value</td>
<td>Strategic fit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference presentations</td>
<td>Pilot data</td>
<td>Collaborations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Well planned</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Potential value of results</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What makes a successful grant application?

View from a former Committee Chair

- Is it top quality internationally competitive science?
- Is it addressing an important problem?
- Is it novel and exciting?
- Is it timely and does it address any strategic priority areas?
- Are the aims and potential outcomes of the grant crystal clear from the case for support?
- Does the accompanying data support the proposal?
- Is the work feasible – are there contingencies?
- Have appropriate resources been requested?
- Has the applicant considered the potential impacts of the research?
- Can a non-specialist understand why the work is important?
Common reasons why proposals fail*

- Failure to follow submission guidelines
- Poorly written proposals – grammar, spelling
- Failure to immediately address the purpose of the proposal
- The scientific investigation is not methodical, repeatable and verifiable
- Not stating the research objectives appropriately
Homework

- Read successful apps
- Draw out common factors
- Map the 3Ps against your application
- Benchmark yourself against competition
- Talk to a wide range of people – previous applicants, potential reviewers, any Committee members, research office staff, etc.
Useful presentations
