



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

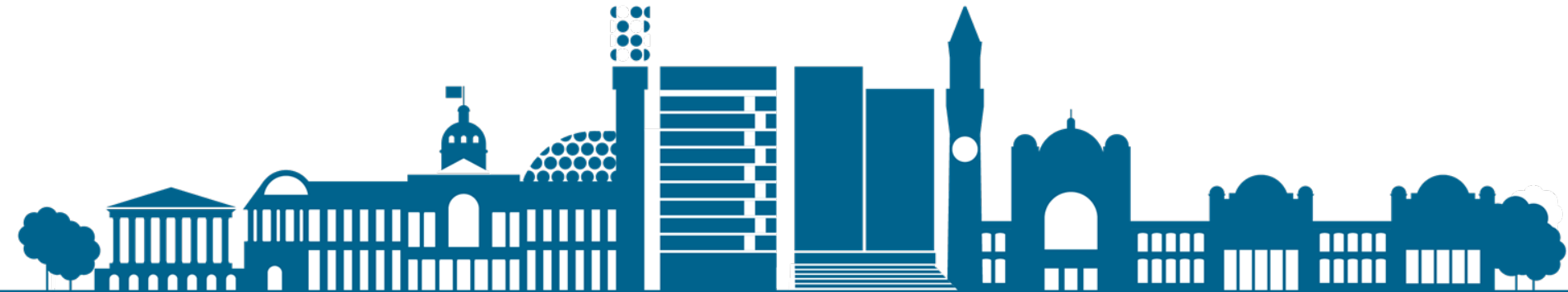
LES Fellowship Cohort

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





The Leverhulme Trust

Early Career Fellowship

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



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





BRITISH
ACADEMY

for the humanities and social sciences

Postdoctoral Fellowship

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)***



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





*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



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!

Lets Discuss!

- Different career trajectories/bench mark against your specific research area



Skills table*

Career stage	Training (PhD students)	Early career	Transition to independence	Transition to leadership
Relevant scheme(s)	Clinical Research Training Fellowships [↗] PhD studentships ^{↗1}	Skills Development Fellowships	Career Development Award [↗] Clinician Scientist Fellowships [↗] New Investigator Research Grant [↗]	Senior Non-Clinical Fellowship [↗] Senior Clinical Fellowship [↗]
Key criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning to pursue a research career Clear understanding of how the research project will progress knowledge within the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans for a coherent and integrated training programme Delivered previous research projects and have evidence of outputs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Productivity across past appointments and an upward trajectory Clear plans to establish own research 'niche' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a clear understanding 	Individuals should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a clear understanding 	Individuals should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have their own research plans 	Individuals should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an ambitious

<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

Person



- Track record
- Leadership potential
- Previous research
- Publications
- Conference presentations
- Qualifications
- Collaboration

Project



- Realistic
- Novel
- Timely
- Good value
- Pilot data
- Well planned
- Potential value of results

Place



- Facilities
- Track record
- Academic environment
- Strategic fit
- Collaborations



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

- <https://franciskadevries.wordpress.com/2014/12/02/how-i-got-my-fellowship-and-how-you-might-get-yours/>
- <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/documents/fellowships-presentation-pdf/>

