

# UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships

## **Details of the Scheme**

The UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Future Leaders Fellowships (FLF) scheme will support early career researchers and innovators with outstanding potential. The support of the Institution will be a critical component of all Fellowships which will enable the fellow to transition to or establish their research/innovation independence in any area supported by UKRI.

The objectives of the scheme are:

* To develop, retain, attract and sustain research and innovation talent in the UK
* To foster new research and innovation career paths including those at the academic/business and interdisciplinary boundaries, and facilitate movement of people between disciplines, organisations and sectors
* To provide sustained funding and resources for the best early career researchers and innovators
* To provide long-term, flexible funding to tackle difficult and novel challenges, and support adventurous, ambitious programmes.

The support offered will be long-term and flexible, with seven years of support available on a 4+3 model, with a review in year 4. The case for support should make clear the long-term aims of the programme, and why they matter – while providing more specific plans and costings for the first four years.

Successful applicants will have the intellectual and financial freedom to develop and change direction over this period. The host organisation must commit significant institutional support, which includes a commitment to a follow-on position by or at the end of the Fellowship - subject to satisfactory progress.

## **Eligibility**

This scheme aims to support excellent and high potential future research and innovation leaders. Applicants must demonstrate within their application how the UKRI FLF award will support and enable their long-term career goals and clearly demonstrate that their skills and experience at the time of application match those expected.

1. Applicants are expected to hold a doctorate by the start date of the Fellowship or to be able to demonstrate equivalent research experience and/or training. These Fellowships are for early career academics and innovators who are transitioning to establishing independence. Senior academics and innovators are not permitted to apply. There are no eligibility rules based on years since PhD or whether the applicant currently holds a permanent/open-ended academic position or job role. Applicants should use the person specification (below) to assess and justify their suitability for the scheme with reference to the objectives of the programme. Z
2. Applicants must have significant support from their hosting organisation(s). Host organisations are also encouraged to use the scheme to bring outstanding individuals to the UK from abroad.
3. Applications are welcome from those returning to research or innovation from a career break or following time in other roles; there are no time limits in respect of time spent outside a research or innovation environment.
4. Fellowships may be held on a part-time basis in order to combine research/innovation with personal responsibilities. Applicants can propose to hold a Fellowship on a part-time basis for four years or can choose to request a part-time Fellowship over a longer time-period which would have equated to four years full-time as they wish; job shares are also possible.
5. It is expected that Fellows’ full working time will be committed to these Fellowships or activities related to the Fellowship from the start of the award. Those with substantial ongoing research commitments as a result of participation in other grants must relinquish these in order to hold a UKRI FLF award.

## **Person Specification**

FLF applicants should:

· Demonstrate broad knowledge of the area of interest and offer a compelling vision for the excellence and importance of the proposed research or innovation

· Take advantage of the long-term and flexible support offered, justify how the proposal would have wider influence in the field

· Have their own original and ambitious plans / ideas, which do not significantly overlap with their proposed collaborators, or former supervisors’

· Demonstrate the suitability of the proposed environment(s) for their research or innovation and its impact

· Provide an approach to maximising the impact and influence of the proposed work, in the short and/or long-term. This may involve co-production of knowledge and implementation of this knowledge with the business, public sector, civil society sector or the wider community

· Be capable of leading and developing a team or taking a leading role in their field; and show an ability to identify and maximise potential in others

· For academic applicants, have secured the backing of an institution that is prepared to host them and commit to an open-ended position for the individual at the end of the Fellowship

· Demonstrate the ability to choose and develop appropriate collaborations and networks nationally, internationally or across disciplines.

Experience and Potential

* Applicants must have the necessary level of skills, knowledge and experience to take forward the proposed project / programme
* Have a track record of producing challenging, original and productive research and/or innovation outputs that stands out in their field
* Demonstrate flexibility to adapt to opportunity and embrace new directions.

Personal Development

* Have identified and proposed opportunities for their own development as impactful and influential research or innovation leaders. This could include time for work in other environments, international links etc., development of new skills (e.g. in policy impact or commercialisation)
* Have identified opportunities to access career development support, e.g. mentoring and professional training and development, and relevant training courses that will underpin their future career ambitions and learning. A clear programme of skills development is an essential component of this training.

Fellowship Skills

* Have strong communication and interpersonal skills and aim to develop these through engagement with different audiences
* Demonstrate how the outcomes of the Fellowship will be communicated and used within and outside their immediate community.

## **Key Assessment Criteria**

Applicants should note the assessment criteria, and the points below.

***Research & Innovation Excellence***

* Excellence of the research and innovation
* Importance, novelty and feasibility of the proposed programme of work (and whether long-term Fellowship support is needed to enable this)
* Robust methodology and appropriate consideration of research and innovation reproducibility, openness, governance and ethical / social responsibility issues
* Overall potential of the fellowship to establish or maintain a distinctive and outstanding research/innovation activity.

***Applicant & their Development***

* Be recognised to be of the highest standard relative to their career stage and on a trajectory to become world-class
* Clear evidence of independence and thought leadership, which may go beyond the level normally expected of their current position
* Demonstrate an ability to be, or become, a clear communicator and disseminator of knowledge and innovation, able to inspire and lead others; and ability to develop new relationships and influence across multiple disciplines and sectors
* A broad understanding of the research / innovation landscape at both the national and international level and clarity on how their research / innovation will contribute to it
* A clear plan to support the training and development of the fellow (and, if applicable, their team) and for gaining advice or mentorship; supporting not only the programme but also their broader professional development
* Demonstrate an ability to identify and implement good practice in matters relating to the modern research environment such as Research Integrity, Responsible Research and Innovation, and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

***Impact & Strategic Relevance***

* Importance and potential impact of the research / innovation for society and / or the economy:
* What are the potential short or long-term impacts, and how significant are they?
* Are the pathways to achieving this impact well understood, and are the plans for maximising impact (from the applicant and host organisation) proportionate, timely, and credible?
* Where the Fellowship proposal aligns with a specific priority area identified by UKRI I (such as the seven technology families, as launched in the [UK’s Innovation Strategy](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-innovation-strategy-leading-the-future-by-creating-it)), the assessment will also address how strongly the proposal fits with the aims for the area; and what it will contribute alongside other proposals and activities in the same priority area.

***Research and Innovation Environment & Costs***

· A demonstrable commitment from the host organisation to realising the potential of the fellow; and establishing them as a research / innovation leader

· Consideration has been given to equality, diversity and inclusion aims of UKRI in support for the fellow and, if applicable, their wider team, and in using the Fellowship’s provision for flexible working

· Plans for supporting the fellow’s programme of work; enabling the time commitment needed; ensuring access to space, equipment/facilities, other resources and other relevant programmes; and enabling the applicant to maximise the social / economic impact of their work

· Funding requested is appropriate and fully justified

· The project plan and management arrangements are proportionate to the scale and complexity of the activity to be undertaken.