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EPSRC Post-doctoral and Open Fellowships FAQs

Focus on Discovery Science, Innovation, Instrumentation/Technique development, Software Engineering

Q: What does a focus on discovery science, innovation, instrumentation/technique development or software engineering mean?

For the first time, EPSRC is providing ongoing fellowship opportunities for people who want to focus on innovation, instrument/technique development or software engineering. Our current definition of research quality is very broad and could be equally applied to any of these areas of focus, hence the assessment criteria and process for each area of focus are the same.

There is no pre-defined target number for each potential area of fellowship focus and no ring-fencing of budgets. EPSRC is looking to support excellence and a balanced portfolio across all themes and all types of Fellowship. The scheme will provide opportunities for different types of Fellowships to be undertaken, as relevant to the applicant's background, their career development needs, and research, innovation and/or technical interests.

To help ensure that your proposal is reviewed by members of our peer review college who have expertise in the identified area(s) of focus, we are asking applicants to identify in JeS the area(s) of focus of their fellowships application as outlined below:

Fellowships with a focus on **discovery science** should lead to fundamental science furthering an existing, new or emerging field. They will advance the frontiers of knowledge and, longer term, contribute to increased economic impact and/or social prosperity.

Fellowships with a focus on **innovation** should include collaboration/engagement with public, private or third sector organisations, or focus on routes to IP capture and/or commercialisation. These proposals will be able to describe likely routes to contribute to current or future UK economic success and/or enable the future development of key emerging industries, but still be within the remit of EPSRC.

Fellowships with a focus on **instrumentation/technique development or software engineering** will look to support and expand technologies and techniques to further both academic and industrial research capability. Applications for instrument/technique development or software engineering must still fit into the EPSRC remit, both from a scientific and technological development perspective.

Q: Can you identify two areas of focus for an Open Fellowship proposal (e.g. discovery science with some instrument development), or is it a case of picking just one?

Yes, you can include more than one area of focus in an Open Fellowship proposal. You are asked to identify the areas to help ensure that your proposal is sent to suitable reviewers.

Q: What level of TRL would be acceptable in terms of 'software engineering and technique development'?

Instrumentation/technique development and software engineering proposals will need to be in EPSRC remit and therefore will typically be TRL 1-3.

Open Fellowships

Q. Are the Open Fellowships for all career stages?

Open Fellowships are for all career stages beyond post-doctoral level and include researchers from those who are on the cusp of their first academic appointment, to early- and mid-career, to those with vast amounts of experience or those applicants who are leading technical development. Applicants will need to justify how the fellowship adds value to their career beyond other funding routes available. Applicants who have not acquired enough experience to be close to their first academic appointment nor led the development of technical skills may wish to consider applying for a post-doctoral level fellowship.

Q. What counts as evidence of leadership in an area of technical development?

An example could be a research software engineer who is driving the development of high-quality research software and demonstrating leadership in embedding the vital role of software in disciplinary and institutional research cultures.

Q: As an early career researcher working in EPSRC's remit, what Fellowship options are available to me in UKRI?

The standard [to distinguish from particular theme opportunities] fellowship opportunities available for an early career researcher are UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships and EPSRC Open Fellowships. Applicants should carefully consider the details of each funding opportunity and apply for whichever fits them best. The UKRI FLF scheme is a minimum of 4 years (pro-rata) and up to 7 years in duration, with an expectation of increasing host organisation funding in the later years. EPSRC Open Fellowships are also flexible in duration (up to 5 years) and, optionally, allow applicants to spend a substantial proportion of time (up to 50%) on non-technical elements to create positive change in the research community (such as equality, diversity and inclusion or responsible research and innovation), or to hold the fellowship at less than 100% of their working time." Applications for EPSRC Open Fellowships must be made through a research organisation eligible to apply to EPSRC. UKRI FLFs may be held in wider range of organisations including business.

Q: What is the difference between postdoctoral, new academic, early career and established career?

Post-doctoral fellowships are for those who have recently started formulating their own research ideas and want to demonstrate research independence. New academics/early career researchers and established career researchers would all be suitable for the Open fellowship scheme.

Q: Should a new lecturer be pointed towards the Open fellowship scheme rather than the postdoctoral fellowships?

It depends on the career path of the applicant. If the applicant has already demonstrated research independence and has been conducting research based on their own research ideas, they would not be eligible for the post-doctoral scheme but could consider the Open fellowship scheme. Applicants should liaise with their Research Office to help decide which scheme is most appropriate for their

skills and experience but should be aware that prioritisation panels will be able to reject proposals if they deem the applicant has already demonstrated research independence.

Q: Can a senior postdoc apply for an Open Fellowship?

It depends on the career path of the applicant. If the applicant is on the cusp of being able to apply for their first academic appoint and has already demonstrated research independence and been delivering elements of their own research ideas, then the Open Fellowship might be suitable. Applicants should discuss which fellowship is suitable for them with their head of department and/or research office staff.

Q: I am an early career researcher; how could I be competitive against an established professor with an Open fellowship application?

Parts of the application are assessed with reference to the career stage of the applicant. For example, the assessment of Team Leadership (line management/development of others) is carried out relative to the career stage of the applicant. Experienced researchers would be expected to have significant examples of how they have nurtured the development of staff whereas less experienced researchers might not have managed staff before so could reference occasions where they have supported colleagues in their learning and development or supervised Masters project/PhD student etc.

Applicants will need to justify how the fellowship adds value to their career beyond other funding routes available and this will be assessed relative to career stage at the interview panel. The application guide contains some diverse examples of career enhancement via the Open Fellowships mechanism with outline examples including:

- An early career researcher wishing to start their own research group
- A researcher with a sustained period of part time working patterns wishing to increase outputs to be competitive at applying for traditional funding
- A research technical professional who wants to collaborate with researchers from different scientific disciplines to apply their techniques
- Experienced researcher wishing to transfer knowledge to a different discipline
- Researcher moving from industry to academia

It is also worth noting that during our extensive consultation exercise, the community were divided on who the removal of careers stages would benefit – some thought it would benefit early career researchers, and some that it would favour more experienced applicants. The assessment of applicants at different career stages is going to be very closely monitored as time progresses.

Q. Does my proposal need to fit into a certain research area?

Open Fellowships are open across the whole of EPSRC's remit. Post-doctoral fellowships are open in specified areas. Postdoctoral fellowships are currently open for applications to Energy and to Mathematical Sciences, and there is also a call open with the engineering theme in Synthetic Biology.

Q: Are Open fellowships available for research that will also involve the remit of a different research council?

Yes, so long as the majority of the research proposed falls within EPSRC remit. If you are unsure, please submit a remit query via the EPSRC website, ahead of submitting your application.

Q: What counts as a 'significant grant' for Open Fellowships eligibility?

A significant grant is usually defined as those which included PDRA time, capital equipment or were in excess of £100,000 (FEC). Please note that this figure is indicative and is not a hard limit – it is intended as guidance to help applicants decide which scheme fits them best. If you would previously have applied to an early career fellowship you would most likely be suited to the Open fellowship. A number of applicants may also be in a position to apply for the Open fellowships without ever having held a grant of over £100,000. This could include research technical professionals or applicants who have worked on their own research idea as part of a larger grant.

Q: What is the difference between 'community leadership' and 'community champion'? What needs to be demonstrated for 'community leadership'?

'Community leadership' is part of the assessment criteria at the review stage and the interview stage for all Open and Open Plus fellowships. This criterion seeks demonstration of leadership by example in matters relating to the modern research environment, good communication skills across a range of stakeholders, and clear plans for advocacy during the Fellowship award. Further detail can be found in the assessment criteria section of the application guidance on the EPSRC website.

'Community champion' is applicable only to Open Plus fellowships and refers to the applicant championing and undertaking work in an area of research culture as part of the fellowship e.g. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Responsible Research and Innovation, Public Engagement.

Q: I am applying for an Open Fellowship without the Plus Component. How much time do I need to spend on advocacy activities?

As a typical guide, around 5% of your time might be spent on advocacy work but this is flexible and not a definitive guide or a fixed time allocation requirement.

Q: What constitutes institutional support? Is there a matched funding component, or would a letter of support suffice?

The guidance on host institution support is available on our website:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/fellows/hostorganisationobligations/>.

For Post-doctoral fellowship applications, Research Organisations must:

- Make sure that the aims and aspirations of the applicant are suitable for a fellowship application.
- Support the applicant to ensure they have:
 - Identified areas they need to improve on and how they intend to gain experience to meet these needs
 - Considered their knowledge of ethical, responsible and inclusive research culture and thought about how they could further this knowledge
 - Considered if they need a mentor, and what aspects of their development their mentor will help with.

For Open fellowship applications, Research Organisations must:

- Make sure that the experience, aims and aspirations of the applicant are suitable for a fellowship application;
- Commit to supporting the applicant to ensure their knowledge and expertise in implementing good practice in creating a modern and inclusive research environment is continually updated;
- Identify the additional support the Research Organisation will provide to ensure successful project delivery and opportunities for the applicant to expand or enhance their current role;
- For those applicants who are choosing to add the Plus component, indicate how the topic the applicant has chosen to champion fits the work your organisation is doing in this area, and how you will assist the applicant to lead their chosen area.

Open Plus Fellowships

Q. What does the “Plus” component mean and why has it been added?

The Plus component should be selected when the applicant plans to spend 20-50% of their time in the fellowship to create positive culture change in the research community beyond their proposed scientific project and research group. Some examples of the types of activities this might comprise are provided in the application guidance.

This option has been included as EPSRC recognise there is a need to support research leaders within the community who are also equipped with the time and skills to develop understanding of significant research culture challenges, as well as raising awareness of the related issues and opportunities within the community. This will provide capacity to support the implementation of new ideas and initiatives to increase the pace of change. Applicants are encouraged to develop collaborations with other groups or bodies working in similar areas, such as learned societies, think tanks etc.

Q: What are EPSRC’s ambitions for the “Plus” model? What positive outcomes are envisaged for this strand within the new scheme?

Our ambitions are to see genuine, positive step changes in research culture throughout the sector, with support and recognition for work relating to the advancement of things such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Responsible Research and Innovation, and Public Engagement (among other areas). A key indicator of success would be that university promotion criteria are broadened from the current focus on publications and funding record to look at the additional work undertaken by the individual to improve research culture, both within their own institution but also within their discipline, and in the research community more broadly.

Q. How should I address the Plus component? What level of detail is required in the application for the Plus component?

If selecting the plus component, you are provided with an additional 2 pages within your case for support. These two pages should be used to describe your plan for this component. Your plan should include the approaches and activities you will employ, and importantly how these activities, combined with your leadership role, will deliver positive research culture change on your chosen topic within your research community. You should demonstrate a clear understanding of the challenges you will face, identify the desired outcomes and your approach to achieving these, including engagement with appropriate stakeholders. The desired outcomes should be realistic, and appropriate time and resource should be allocated to address the challenge(s). You should ensure that your track record in the area you will be addressing is included within your narrative CV.

Q: Does the Plus component allow extra time or is it still limited to 5 years?

The duration is limited to a maximum of 5 years (extended pro-rata if you are working part time) for Open Plus fellowships.

Q: Is there a separate budget for Open Plus fellowships?

No. Fellowships are funded through individual Themes' budgets, which encompass all funding schemes. Themes manage their budgets taking advice from peer review and Strategic Advisory Teams, according to excellence and strategic need.

Q: There was an EPSRC 'Equality, Diversity & Inclusion champion' fellowship introduced last year in Physical Sciences. Is this opportunity now closed and replaced by the Open Plus fellowships?

Yes - we are looking to encourage Fellows to champion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I) through the Open Plus route, across the whole of EPSRC's remit.

Post-doctoral Fellowships

Q: For researchers deciding between a post-doctoral and Open fellowship, particularly for those coming from outside the UK, what advice would you give to help decide which fellowship to apply for?

The advice for these applicants is the same as for applicants applying from within the UK. Applicants should liaise with their Research Office to help decide which scheme is most appropriate for their skills and experience. Post-doctoral fellowships are for those who have recently started formulating their own research ideas and want to demonstrate research independence. If the applicant is on the cusp of being able to apply for their first academic appoint and has already demonstrated research independence and been delivering elements of their own research ideas, then the Open Fellowship might be suitable. The emphasis is on the skills and experience the applicant has acquired rather than the amount of funding that they have already obtained. Some applicants for the open fellowship scheme may not have previously obtained funding directly, especially if they are a research technical professional.

Q: Can you indicate whether post-doctoral fellowships will be available beyond Energy and Mathematical Sciences soon? How often do you expect to open calls for post-doctoral fellowships in new themes?

Areas for post-doctoral fellowships will be identified and opened when a clear strategic need arises, and any decision to open an area will be evidence-led. Calls for post-doctoral fellowships may be opened at any point throughout the year and they will be advertised in advance of the call opening. Synthetic Biology (in Engineering) will also be accepting applications for post-doctoral Fellowships when the new scheme is launched. This has been opened due to the recommendations in the UK roadmap for this area.

Q: Is the post-doctoral fellowship eligibility point on having a PhD at the point of application, or award (i.e. can you apply while still a PhD student)?

Applicants may apply before the awarding of their PhD, but they will need to have successfully completed their PhD before they could begin the fellowship.

Q: Can a lecturer (without any significant funding but who has a small research group) be eligible for a post-doctoral fellowship?

If you already have a small research group and have been delivering research based on your own research ideas, it is likely that peer review would judge you to be too experienced for a post-doctoral fellowship and you would be better suited to the open fellowship scheme. The emphasis is on the skills and experience the applicant has acquired rather than the amount of funding that they have already obtained. Some applicants for the open fellowship scheme may not have previously obtained funding directly, especially if they are a research technical professional.

Q: Can a Research Software Engineer (RSE) apply for a postdoctoral fellowship?

If the RSE was working in an area that is open for postdoctoral fellowships (currently Energy, Maths, Synthetic Biology) then yes. If you are a research software engineer who is driving the development of high-quality research software and demonstrating leadership in embedding the vital role of software in disciplinary and institutional research cultures, you could consider applying for an open fellowship.

Q: If an applicant had previously been a Researcher Co-I on a project, would this disqualify them from applying for a postdoctoral fellowship (due to the condition regarding not having had significant grant funding)?

If the applicant has already demonstrated research independence and has been conducting research based on their own research ideas, (which would be likely if they have been a researcher Co-I) they would not be eligible for the post-doctoral scheme but could consider the Open fellowship scheme. Applicants should liaise with their Research Office to help decide which scheme is most appropriate for their skills and experience but should be aware that prioritisation panels will be able to reject proposals for post-doctoral fellowships if they deem the applicant has already demonstrated research independence.

Part Time Fellowships

Q: Can I apply for a part time fellowship?

Yes. Fellowships can be held part time at a minimum level of 50%. Where an applicant is ordinarily employed part time, your EPSRC fellowship may be held part-time at a minimum level of 50% and your fellowship will be extended accordingly (pro-rata), for example 120 months at 50% FTE.

Applications

Q: I recently applied to the old EPSRC fellowship scheme. Can I now apply for the EPSRC Open fellowship scheme as well?

You cannot apply to both schemes at the same time. Applicants that apply to the current scheme will still be subject to our policy on only applying for one UKRI fellowship in a rolling 12-month period.

Q: Can I apply to the EPSRC fellowships scheme in parallel with other UKRI Fellowship schemes, e.g. the UKRI FLF scheme?

No. Applicants may only have one fellowship application under consideration by UKRI (which also encompasses schemes led by any of the Research Councils and/or Innovate UK) at any point, unless expressly permitted in the Research Council/Innovate UK scheme's call documentation.

Q: Will there be institutional limits on the number of applications?

In the spirit of openness and flexibility, EPSRC will not initially be setting quotas for the number of proposals that can be submitted by an individual research organisation. However, EPSRC will be monitoring the number and quality of proposals received from institutions and reserves the right to discuss ongoing submission behavior with individual institutions and enforce a quota if necessary.

Q: What are the differences between Future Leader Fellowships (FLFs) and Open Fellowships?

The UKRI FLF scheme awards are a minimum of 4 years (pro-rata) and up to 7 years in duration, with an expectation of increasing host organisation funding in the later years. EPSRC Open Fellowships are also flexible in duration (up to 5 years) and, optionally, allow applicants to spend a substantial proportion of time (up to 50%) on non-technical elements to create positive change in the research community (such as in equality, diversity and inclusion, or responsible research and innovation), or to hold the fellowship at less than 100% of their working time. Applications for EPSRC Open Fellowships must be made through a research organisation that is eligible to hold EPSRC funding. UKRI FLFs may be held in a wider range of organisations, including business.

Deadlines and submission times

Q: Will there be new deadlines for submission, or will previous deadlines apply?

There are no hard deadlines for fellowship submission dates but each theme does have advised submission dates for each fellowships panel – see the application guide for more details. These are unchanged from the previous fellowship scheme submission dates. Applications can be submitted at any time and will be processed on a rolling basis. However, there may be some exceptions for specific fellowship calls.

Q: Will advised submission times continue to vary across disciplines?

Yes - each theme runs their own panels and interviews. The applicant should look in the application guidance at the indicative submission periods for whichever theme is likely to represent the majority of the research. Please be aware that these dates illustrate typical timelines only and we cannot guarantee applications going to specific panels. Submitting a proposal early (4-6 months prior to a panel) will give the best possible chance of the postal peer review being completed before the intended panel meeting.

Case for Support and Resources

Q. What do you mean by “non-technical” aspects in the case for support?

There are up to two pages in the case for support to address the non-technical (or non-scientific) aspects of the assessment criteria. The non-technical aspects of the assessment criteria are those largely assessed in the interview criteria but can also include aspects related to the management of the project.

Q: Can resources be requested for project partners, such as costs to cover travel?

No. Applicants cannot request any resources for project partners as they are supposed to be formally contributing to the project either in cash or in kind, and they cannot receive funds from the EPSRC award.

Q: Would EPSRC pay for staff acting as a supervisor or mentor?

No, we would not pay for staff resource acting in a supervisory or mentoring role.

Q: Can relocation costs be included?

Relocation costs (under Travel & Subsistence) are allowable for fellows (and other named staff on grants) as the Funding Guide states:

“Relocation costs may be included for staff who are named in the proposal form. Relocation costs for un-named staff should be found from the Indirect Cost element of the grant.”

It would be up to the applicant / host organisation to determine what reasonable cost is in this regard and justify accordingly.

Q: Can funds for PhD students be requested on a fellowship?

No. Fellowships operate on the same basis as responsive mode EPSRC proposals in this regard. Student allocations are determined from within host organisations, according to their local arrangements, with funding drawn from either UKRI or non-UKRI sources.

Q: Is there a maximum number of postdoctoral researchers / technicians I can request when applying for a fellowship?

There is no maximum number of postdoctoral researchers you can have on your proposal, but they must all be fully justified in terms of the scientific/technical requirements and the resource you are requesting.

Q: Is there a maximum amount I can apply for?

There is no upper limit to the amount you can apply for, but all resources must be fully justified in the Justification of Resources. You can see details of funded fellowships in your area using the [Visualising our Portfolio](#) section of the EPSRC website.

Q: How much does the host institution need to contribute towards Equipment?

This will depend on the cost of the equipment. Our process and full guidance can be found here: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/equipment/process/researchgrants>

Q: Can I include a CV as a separate attachment, as well as track record information?

Information that would previously have been contained within your CV and track record are now to be included as part of the 4-page ‘Narrative CV’ document. Additional, separate CV documents will not be accepted.

The submitted document must be no longer than 4 sides of A4 in total, and there is not a prescribed length for each section. The headings and descriptors have been adapted from the Resumé for Researchers tool developed by the Royal Society. Further information on what is required can be found on our website: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/funding/calls/2020/open-fellowship-narrative-cv-and-track-record/>.

Project Partners

Q: Can a project partner be from the same Research Organisation as an applicant?

No. Project partners cannot be from the same Research Organisation and any listed will be removed if the application is successful. If you want to reference collaborators from the host organisation, then please refer to them in the Host Organisation Statement.

Peer Review and Panels

Q: Will the fellowships all be ranked/competing together? Will the applications with a Plus component be assessed alongside the applications without a Plus component?

Post-doctoral, Open and Open Plus fellowships will be assessed at the same panel meeting but, as they have different criteria, they will be ranked on separate lists.

Q: How will peer review panels be managed when there may be applications to both the old fellowships scheme (Early Career/Established Career) and the new scheme (Open/Open Plus/postdoctoral) at the panel?

Proposals will be ranked on separate lists at the meeting. While there is still a mixed economy of proposals being considered at a meeting, there will potentially be up to six lists for Fellowships at the panel:

- Postdoctoral (old funding scheme – open in specific areas)
- Early Career (old funding scheme)
- Established Career (old funding scheme)

- Open fellowships (new scheme)
- Open Plus Fellowships (new scheme)
- Postdoctoral fellowships (new scheme – currently open for Energy; Mathematical Sciences; Synthetic Biology)

Q: Will early career academics be competing alongside more established researchers?

The Open Fellowships are open to all career stages beyond postdoctoral level. The fellowship vision assessment criterion asks reviewers to comment on how the award of the fellowship will progress the career of the applicant over and above their current trajectory, and why the applicant needs this award in order to achieve this career progression.

The career progression afforded by the Open Fellowship is likely to vary considerably across career stages and therefore some examples of how a fellowship could progress your career are provided in the application guidance on our website: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/files/funding/calls/2020/epsrc-postdoctoral-and-open-fellowships-guidance/>.

Parts of the application are assessed with reference to the career stage of the applicant. For example, the assessment of Team Leadership (line management/development of others) is carried out relative to the career stage of the applicant. Experienced researchers would be expected to have significant examples of how they have nurtured the development of staff whereas less experienced researchers might not have managed staff before so could reference occasions where they have supported colleagues in their learning and development or supervised Masters project/PhD student etc.

It is also worth noting that during our extensive consultation exercise, the community were divided on who the removal of careers stages would benefit – some thought it would benefit early career researchers, and some that it would favour more experienced applicants. The assessment of applicants at different career stages is going to be very closely monitored as time progresses.

Eligibility

Q: Can fellowships be held at Research Council Institutes?

Yes. An EPSRC fellowship can be hosted by any organisation that is eligible for EPSRC funding. To check your eligibility for the Research Institutes and other Independent Research Organisations (IROs), [visit the UK Research and Innovation website](#).

Q: Can a fellowship have more than one host organisation?

Fellowships must have one lead host organisation. You may work closely with other organisations as part of the project.

Q: Can I apply for a fellowship even though I am not a UK National citizen?

Yes. All successful EPSRC Fellowship applicants who require a visa to work in the UK will be eligible to be considered under the fast-track [Global Talent Visa](#) route. This visa route is designed for researchers/ innovators and gives the holder flexibility to pursue their research and collaborations.

The grant of any visa is always subject to the standard Home Office general grounds for refusal of a visa. Please contact fellowtier1info@rcuk.ac.uk for further details

Q: Can senior staff apply to the open fellowships from overseas?

There are no nationality restrictions imposed by EPSRC on who can apply for a fellowship. However, you will require the support of a UK University (host organisation) and must be resident in the UK (once the fellowship has commenced) in order to hold the Fellowship.

Q: I have been working in industry since obtaining my PhD; can I still apply for a fellowship?

Applications are welcomed from candidates who wish to re-establish themselves in academia after working in industry, after a career break or other period of absence from active research. Please see our application guidance.

Q: My fellowship application was rejected; when can I reapply?

You may only apply for one EPSRC or EPSRC supported fellowship in any 12-month period, the date being taken from the date the original (first) proposal was submitted to EPSRC. EPSRC does not accept uninvited resubmissions so you would need to make sure a new proposal is substantially different from the original proposal. Please see our website page on resubmissions.

Q: Can I submit a fellowship application to different funders at the same time?

Applicants may only have one fellowship application under consideration by UKRI (which encompasses all fellowship schemes led by UKRI, any of the Research Councils and/or Innovate UK) at any point, unless expressly permitted in the Research Council/Innovate UK call documentation.

Applicants may apply simultaneously to other funders' fellowship schemes (those funders outside of UKRI) but cannot hold fellowships which fund their working time simultaneously.

Applicants may simultaneously seek grant support for other projects, from UKRI or other funders, while their EPSRC fellowship application is under consideration, however;

-A substantial part of the fellowship programme may not be under consideration as a proposal with any of the constituent parts of UKRI, while under consideration for an EPSRC fellowship award.

-Any funding secured from UKRI or other funders must comply with the EPSRC Fellowship terms and conditions, including the time commitments.

Q: I have had a previously unsuccessful EPSRC fellowship application - can I resubmit to the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship (FLF) scheme?

There is currently no restriction on resubmitting previously unsuccessful EPSRC fellowship applications to the UKRI FLF scheme. However, before submission, applicants should carefully consider previous feedback they have received on the proposal from reviewers and/or panel members and whether their original EPSRC proposal meets the criteria for the UKRI FLF scheme. It is likely that any unsuccessful proposal will need substantive changes/development from the original submission.

Please note that if you apply to the UKRI FLF scheme and you are unsuccessful this would be classed as a first submission under the EPSRC resubmissions policy and therefore you would not be able to subsequently submit that same fellowship proposal to the EPSRC Fellowship scheme.

Q: As EPSRC restricts the number of fellowship applications to one application within a 12-month period, if I apply to the UKRI FLF scheme does this mean I cannot apply for an EPSRC fellowship for 12 months from FLF submission date or vice versa?

This 12-month period only applies to EPSRC fellowships. Therefore if you submit to the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship (FLF) scheme this would not count as your one fellowship application for the 12 month period from EPSRC's point of view and conversely if you applied for an EPSRC Fellowship you would not be restricted to the 12 month wait to apply for an FLF. However please note that you cannot apply in parallel to UKRI FLF and any EPSRC Fellowship schemes so you would need to wait until the outcome of one application is known before submitting to the other scheme.

Please also note that if you apply to the UKRI FLF scheme and you are unsuccessful this would be classed as a first submission under the EPSRC resubmissions policy and therefore you would not be able to subsequently submit that same fellowship proposal to the EPSRC Fellowship scheme.

Q: If I apply for a fellowship, would I be eligible for a New Investigator Award (NIA)?

If you are an unsuccessful EPSRC fellowship applicant you can subsequently apply for a NIA, providing you meet the other NIA eligibility requirements. (Bear in mind the EPSRC resubmission policy; the same proposal cannot be submitted again albeit to a different scheme).

Current holders of early career level and above fellowships which include PDRA time are not eligible; Current holders of early career level and above fellowships not including PDRA time are eligible if they meet the other [eligibility criteria](#)

Q: Can I apply for a New Investigator Award (NIA) as well as one of the new fellowships simultaneously?

If you are intending to apply for a New Investigator Award in parallel with your EPSRC Fellowship application, please note that:

- A substantial part of the fellowship project may not be under consideration as a grant proposal with any organisation within UKRI, while under consideration for an EPSRC fellowship award.
- Any funding secured from EPSRC or other funders must comply with the EPSRC fellowship terms and conditions if awarded, including the time commitments. Therefore, if you were awarded both the NIA and EPSRC Fellowship and were not able to conduct the NIA within the time commitment conditions of the fellowship (no more than six hours/week on non-fellowship commitments) then you will need to decline one of the awards.
- Applicants must inform EPSRC if these submissions are subsequently funded and must withdraw their application from EPSRC consideration if the project has already been funded elsewhere.

Q: Can international facility time count as the significant grant funding requirement for the Open fellowship?

The emphasis is on the skills and experience the applicant has acquired rather than the amount of funding that they have already obtained. Some applicants for the open fellowship scheme may not have previously obtained funding directly, especially if they are a research technical professional.

Post-doctoral fellowships are for those who have recently started formulating their own research ideas and want to demonstrate research independence. If the applicant is on the cusp of being able to apply for their first academic appoint and has already demonstrated research independence and been delivering elements of their own research ideas, then the Open Fellowship might be suitable.

Q: Is there any age limit for applying for a fellowship? Would someone in their 60s be able to apply, for example?

There are no limits regarding an applicant's age at the time of application. Age is not a barrier to holding a fellowship award. As with all fellowship applications, applicants need to be able to justify how the fellowship adds value to their career beyond other funding routes available and this will be assessed relative to career stage at the interview panel.

Further application guidance

Q: Am I allowed a Co-Investigator (Co-I) on my fellowship?

Co-Investigators are not permitted on postdoctoral fellowships as you are expected to demonstrate independence, however collaborators (project partners) are permitted.

Open Fellowships can include a Co-Investigator if this is justified. A Co-I is expected to bring complementary and different skills to that of the Principal Investigator.

Q: As a fellow can I be a PI or Co-I on another grant?

If you are a Fellow under the open fellowship scheme you would be eligible to act as PI on an EPSRC research grant, assuming you meet all of the other requirements. However, the required resource cannot be duplicated – salary should not be costed to the new proposal for any overlapping time period, and estates and indirect costs would need to be reduced accordingly.

You would need to be able to convince peer review that this would not adversely impact the delivery of your fellowship and that the research grant project is feasible whilst having a zero hours' time commitment. This is usually the case where the research grant project is heavily related to the fellowship, so the administrative time needed on the grant is able to be covered by the time on the fellowship.

Q: Can I go on long visits overseas?

You can spend up to 12 months of the fellowship elsewhere, although caution would need to be taken with costing (i.e. no estates costs for the period of absence). A visit longer than 12 months plus additional conferences may be considered but this could raise questions at peer review, for example, regarding supervision of the staff on the fellowship.

Q: Can named visiting researchers on a fellowship apply for their own EPSRC Fellowship?

Yes, subject to the other eligibility requirements being met, and they will need to make sure there is no salary duplication if there is an overlap of time spent on different projects. They will need to be supported and hosted by an eligible research organisation in the UK.

Q: How many hours of teaching can I do if I am a 100% FTE fellow?

Provided the teaching is related to the research project on which you are currently working, you may, during normal working hours, undertake teaching and demonstrating work, including associated training, preparatory, marking and examination duties, for up to an average of 6 hours a week (pro rata for part-time staff) calculated over the period that you are supported on the grant.

Where a fellow changes their conditions of employment with their host institution to work part time during the Fellowship, it can be converted to a part time award, at a minimum of 50% FTE during the course of the Fellowship.

Q: Can non-project partner letters of support be included in the application?

Letters of support should only come from named project partners. If you would like to reference third parties in your proposal without adding them as project partners, you can refer to them in the Host Organisation Statement. In this case, they are not project partners and hence letters of support cannot be included.

In exceptional circumstances, EPSRC may accept a Letter of Support that does not meet the requirements for a Project Partner Letter of Support. This is on a case-by-case basis and is only permitted if you have contacted the portfolio manager for the theme you are applying to in advance and have been given explicit permission to do so.