

EPSRC Fellowships Framework

Application Guidance

This guidance aims to provide an overview of the EPSRC Fellowship scheme, its key features and the application process. Please read the whole document for guidance.

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1. Overview

Aim of Scheme

The EPSRC Fellowship is a personal award which enables applicants across the postdoctoral, early and established career stage to design a flexible package to facilitate delivery of a novel and outstanding piece of world-leading research in an area of current strategic importance. Fellows should be provided with an appropriate level/an appropriate type of support and training for the duration of their fellowship to enable them to develop new or enhance existing research leadership skills, raise the profile of STEM and EPSRC and gain the experience required to enable them to advance to the next stage of their career.

Eligibility

Applicants are expected to hold a PhD by the start date of the fellowship or have equivalent research experience. There are no eligibility rules based on years of post-doctoral experience or whether the applicant holds a permanent academic position. Consideration will be given to applicants who have taken a non-standard career path after their primary degree. Applications are also welcomed from candidates who wish to re-establish themselves after a career break or other period of absence from active research.

There are no nationality restrictions imposed by EPSRC.

For further details on eligibility please see our [FAQ document](#).

EPSRC reserves the right to reject, at any stage, applications that do not fit the remit, eligibility or ethos of this scheme.

Location and Host Organisation

Fellowships can be held at any UK university or similar Higher Education Institution (HEI) that is eligible for Research Council funding, please see <https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/> for a full list of eligible research organisations. The Fellowship must be costed and submitted by the host organisation. For further guidance please refer to the EPSRC Funding Guide: <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/fundingguide/>

Career Stages

Our fellowship is available at three different career stages. Before applying, the applicant should select the career stage they are applying for in consultation with their host institution and considering the stated aim of each career stage in the table below. Applicants will be scored against the assessment criteria with reference to the aims of the applicant's stated career stage. Applicants are advised that they may be asked to evidence how their skills and experience would have satisfied the aims of previous career stages as part of this assessment process.

Key aims and outcomes of an EPSRC fellowship by career stage		
Post-doctoral aims	Early career aims	Established career aims
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver high quality research in an area of current strategic importance To achieve transition to research independence To undertake training and development to prepare for a career in research & innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver high quality research in an area of current strategic importance which fits with other responsibilities held by the applicant To achieve transition into a recognised research leader who advocates for STEM and EPSRC To undertake training and development for continued professional development (e.g. public engagement, media, line management, leadership, grant writing etc) To develop networks and establish a position in the community which could include building and/or expanding a research group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver high quality research in an area of current strategic importance which is uniquely shaped by the knowledge, experience and community standing of the applicant To utilise influence to shape the broader policy, research & innovation landscape To support development and mentoring of other researchers and act as a role model for group and/or community
Post-doctoral outcomes	Early career outcomes	Established career outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has delivered high quality research in an area of strategic importance which has enhanced the track record of the fellow Has achieved research independence Has undertaken appropriate professional development activities in line with their forward career aspirations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has delivered high quality research in an area of strategic importance which has established the fellow as a recognised leader Has experience/understanding of advocacy Has established new connections in the community and demonstrated ability to train and/or mentor others and contributed to the career development of others. Has undertaken appropriate professional development activities in line with their forward career aspirations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has delivered high quality research in an area of strategic importance which is shaping the research agenda Has engaged in broader advocacy roles across the research and innovation landscape Has acted as a role model and provided mentoring of others beyond immediate responsibilities

Areas in which Fellowships are available

EPSRC Fellowships are open across the EPSRC remit at the Early and Established career stages. At the postdoctoral career stage applications are invited only in strategic priority areas where growth is required and where developing leaders can integrate their work into the wider landscape. Current thematic priority areas that are open for fellowship applications can be found at

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

Duration

The duration and the proportion of time that can be supported on the fellowship are flexible.

Applicants can apply for up to 5 years of support for Early Career and Established Career awards, or up to 3 years for Postdoctoral stage award, shorter fellowship are also allowed. Applicants should carefully consider the proposed duration of the fellowship and ensure this is appropriate to complete the intended program of work and to achieve the stated development and career goals.

Applicants may spend between 50 and 100% FTE on their fellowship. Where a fellow is ordinarily employed part-time, their EPSRC fellowship may be held part-time at a minimum level of 50% and be extended prorata accordingly. Where a fellow is employed full-time but does not spend 100% of their time on their fellowship, the fellowship duration will not be pro-rated.

Resources

Details of the resources available to each fellowship type are outlined below. Further information on allowed costs can be found in

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/>

Applicants should carefully consider the resources being requested to ensure these are eligible and sufficient to support the intended program of work.

Resource Package	Postdoctoral	Early career	Established career
Duration	Up to 3 years	Up to 5 years	Up to 5 years
Salary	Up to 100%	Up to 100%	Up to 100%
Travel & Subsistence	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staff	No	Yes	Yes
Visiting Researchers	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equipment	Individual items costing less than £10,000 (incl. VAT)*	Yes – in line with current EPSRC equipment guidelines**	Yes – in line with current EPSRC equipment guidelines**
Consumables	Yes	Yes	Yes
Access to facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes

Public Communication Training	Yes	Yes	Yes
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* <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/fundingguide/resources/directlyincurredcosts/> under 'other costs'

** <https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/equipment/>

Submission Timeline

In general, there are no deadlines for a fellowship submission. Applications can be submitted at any time and will be processed on a rolling basis at a prioritisation panel after postal peer review. However, there are some exceptions; a specific call can have a set closing date, please see our calls page:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/calls/>.

For guidance on when to submit to have the best chance of the application being assessed at a forthcoming prioritisation panel, please see the tables below and the diagram on page 10. Please be aware that these dates illustrate typical timelines only and we cannot guarantee applications going to specific panels.

Challenge Themes	
Healthcare Technologies	Please contact* the Healthcare Technologies team for up to date information.
Digital Economy	Fellowship applications predominantly go to ICT panels
Energy	Fellowship applications go to Physical Sciences and Engineering panels, depending on content.
Manufacturing the Future	Fellowship applications go predominantly to Engineering panels but can also go to ICT and Physical Sciences depending on content.

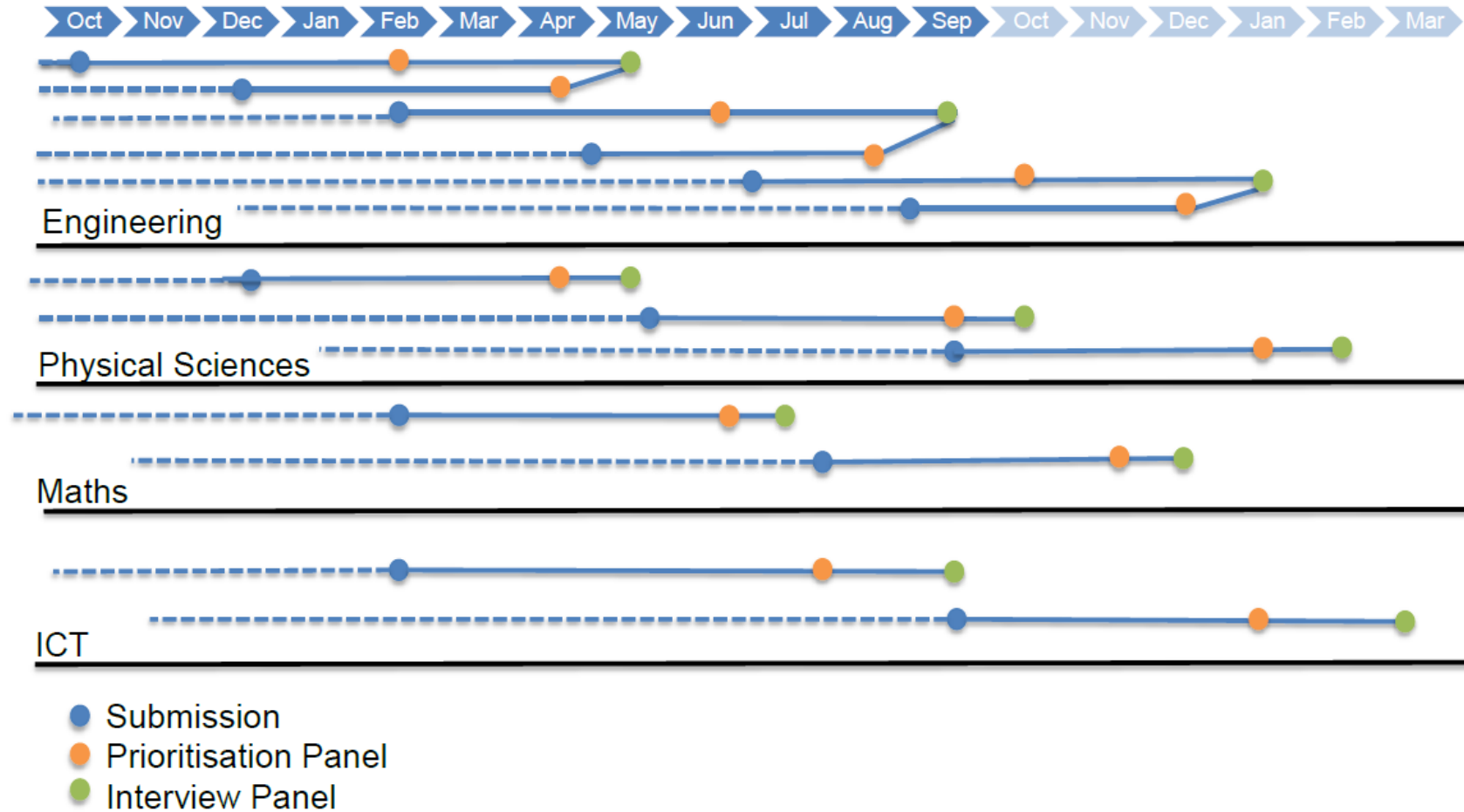
* [\(link fellowship main page\)](#)

Fellowship Start Date

Fellowship start dates are flexible, but must be within one year from the application submission date.

Process timeline

After an application has been received by EPSRC, postal peer review can take a minimum of 4 months. If the reviews are sufficiently supportive the application will go to panel. If subsequently successful at the prioritisation panel, it can take approximately 6 weeks to the interview stage.



Fellowship Policy

Resubmission

Please note that you may only apply for one EPSRC fellowship in any 12-month period, so please consider carefully when you choose to submit your application.

EPSRC does not accept uninvited resubmissions of applications, regardless of any previous EPSRC correspondence. The policy applies to any application that has been previously submitted to EPSRC through any of its funding routes.

Further details on our resubmission and fellowship policies can be found at:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/resubpol/> and
<https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/fellows/peerreviewprocess/policy/>

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The long-term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent. EPSRC expects that equality and diversity is embedded at all levels and in all aspects of research practice and funding policy. We are committed to supporting the research community, offering a range of flexible options which allow applicants to design a package that fits their research goals, career and personal circumstances. This includes career breaks, support for people with caring responsibilities, flexible working and alternative working patterns. With this in mind, we welcome applications from academics who job share, have a part-time contract, or need flexible working arrangements.

Peer review is central to EPSRC funding decisions, we require expert advice and robust decision-making processes for all EPSRC funding initiatives. We are committed to ensuring that fairness is fully reflected in all our funding processes by advancing policy which supports equality, diversity and inclusion. Please see our Equality and Diversity webpages <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/equalitydiversity/> for further information.

Declaration on Research Assessment

As part of our commitment to support the recommendations and principles set out by the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA; <https://sfdora.org/read/>), UKRI reviewers and panel members are advised not to use journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an investigator's contributions, or to make funding decisions.

The content of a paper is more important than publication metrics, or the identity of the journal, in which it was published, especially for early-stage researchers. Peer review and panel members are encouraged to consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets, software, inventions, patents, preprints, other commercial activities, etc.) in addition to research publications. We advise our peer reviewers and panel members to

consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.

Managing your Fellowship

For information on how to manage your Fellowship, see [Managing your fellowship](#).

Expectations

UKRI Statement of Expectations for Research Fellowships and Future Leaders

<https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/skills/fellowshipstatement-pdf/>

2. How to apply

There is no outline stage in the Fellowship process and applicants are required to submit a full application. Full applications must be submitted using the Research Councils' Joint electronic Submission (Je-S) System (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>).

Important information

Only standard 'Arial' or other San Serif font style should be used and font size 11 is the minimum that will be accepted for applications. Arial narrow and Calibri are not allowable font types. Margins should be a minimum of 2 cm in all directions.

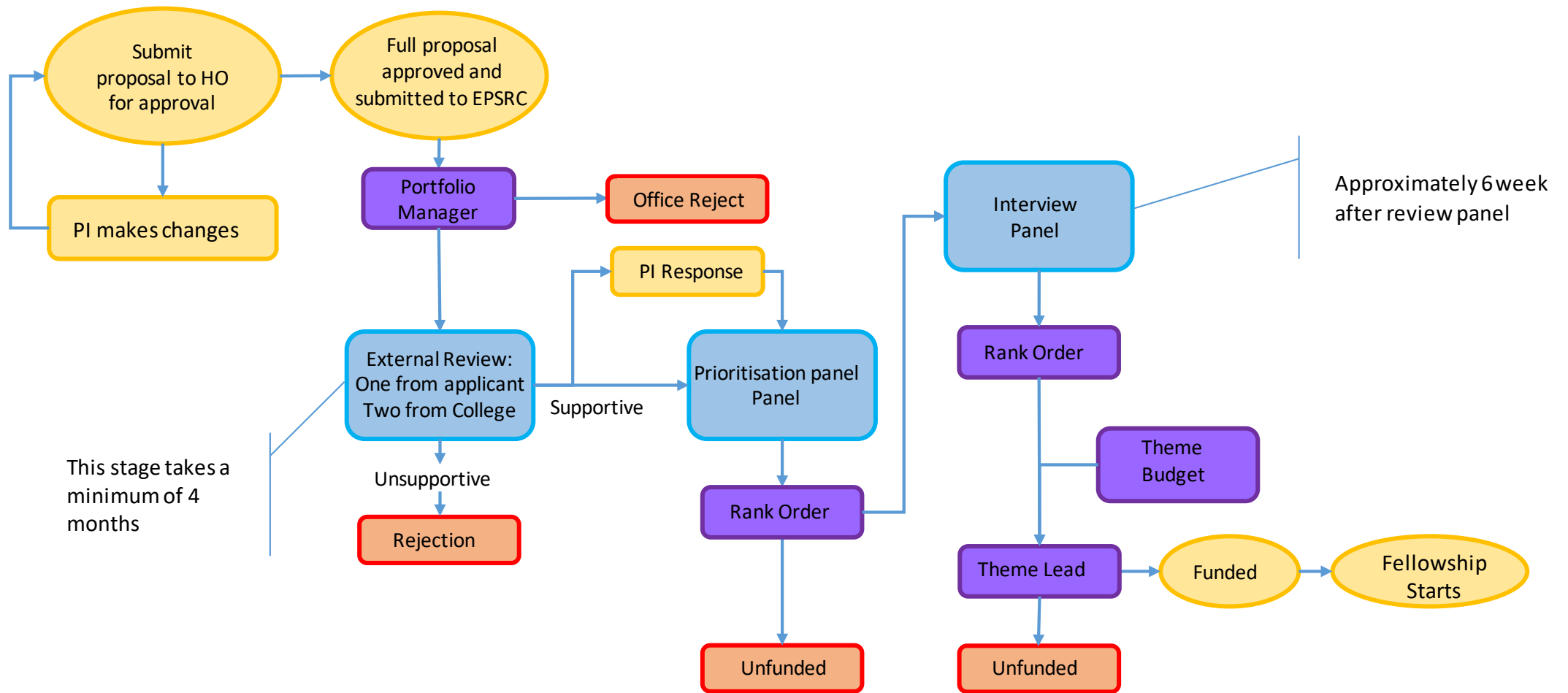
By clicking 'submit document' on your application form in Je-S, the application is initially submitted to your host organisation's administration office, not to EPSRC. Your host organisation will submit the application via Je-S to EPSRC after initial checks.

Je-S guidance is provided through the Je-S help desk, available from the Je-S System front page.

Please read the instructions below before you start completing your application.

3. Assessment

EPSRC's Fellowship submission and assessment process consists of several stages as shown in the flow chart below. Note: HO is host organisation.



Submission

Please submit your full application via the Je-S portal to your Host Organisation.

The Host Organisation will submit the full application to EPSRC via Je-S. Once the application has passed the initial EPSRC office check for policy compliance it will be sent out to be peer reviewed.

For advice on writing proposals see:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/howtoapply/preparing/>

Expert Peer Review

Full applications will be sent out to external postal peer review and will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Research Quality (Primary criteria)
- The Applicant
- National Importance
- Resources and Management
- Fellowship vision
- Research Leadership
- Communication and Ambassadorship
- Personal Development

Please note this stage can take a minimum of four months.

If the reviews are sufficiently supportive, the application will go on to be assessed at the prioritisation panel stage. You will have an opportunity to respond to reviewers' comments. If the reviews are not supportive, the application will be rejected at this point and you will be sent copies of the reviewers' forms as feedback.

Please ensure that your application addresses each of the assessment criteria, with reference to the aims and outcomes for the career stage you are applying against.

Prioritisation Panel

You will be assessed against the following criteria at the prioritisation panel.

It is advised that applicants consider the reviewer guidance:

<https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/assessmentprocess/review/formsandguidancenotes/fellowships/>

Prioritisation Assessment Criteria	
Criteria	Indicators
Research Quality	<p>The research you propose should have a high degree of novelty or timeliness in comparison to the broader research context of the area internationally. Research ideas should be high quality and truly innovative.</p> <p>You should be able to demonstrate some evidence of appropriate recognition within the research community on an international stage.</p>
National Importance	<p>Evidence of how the proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contributes to, or helps maintain the health of other research disciplines, • contributes to addressing key UK societal challenges, • contributes to current or future UK economic success and/or enables future development of key emerging industry(s). <p>Meets national strategic needs by establishing or maintaining a unique world leading research activity (including areas of niche capability).</p> <p>Fits with and complements other UK research already funded in the area or related areas, including the relationship to the EPSRC portfolio and our Research Area strategies https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/ourportfolio/researchareas/ and EPSRC's Delivery Plan https://epsrc.ukri.org/about/plans/deliveryplan/</p>
Applicant (track record)	<p>You should have a track record of outstanding research and in delivering impact; and will need to show that you possess the ability to deliver the proposed research.</p> <p>You should exhibit an ability to work broadly and across different interfaces, identifying and positioning yourself to take advantage of opportunities</p>

Resources and Management	<p>You must be able to justify the planning and project management of the proposed research programme, including the management of any staff requested.</p> <p>You must be able to demonstrate that the resources requested in this application are justified and appropriate for delivering the proposed research.</p> <p>You should identify the main risks and put contingencies in place.</p>
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Interview Panel

Interview panel meetings will take place approximately six weeks following the prioritisation panel. An interview panel will assess the criteria below, making due consideration of the aim and outcomes of the career stage against which you have applied:

- (1) The Panel will be asked to comment on the commitment and support that the host organisation offers to the project and the career of the applicant and will be asked to provide specific feedback to the applicant relating to the career development plan and support provided by the host organisation.

Interview Assessment Criteria	
Criteria	Indicators
<p>Fellowship Vision</p> <p>Demonstrates a clear vision which scales up over career stages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a clear vision for the strategic contribution their fellowship will make to the research landscape
<p>Research Leadership</p> <p>Focuses on the skills to lead a research proposal- including project delivery, leadership management of collaborators and staff and identification and mitigation of risks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates appropriate experience or plans to lead the research across various aspects of the proposal. E.g. If there are staff on the project, does the applicant have suitable plans to lead their team in order to deliver the research? If the proposal has collaborators, how were suitable collaborators identified and how will their input be managed? Project risks have been identified and contingencies put in place.
<p>Communication and Ambassadorship</p> <p>Has good communication skills across a range of stakeholders and clear plans for advocacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates awareness of the advocacy role required of a fellow and has clear plans for undertaking advocacy work for EPSRC within own network and at least one additional role from the list below : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -STEM outreach -Public engagement -Policy development -Industrial engagement -Research culture -An area of ambassadorship required by your community not listed above Evidence of good communication skills (written/oral/presentation) Demonstrates broader plans to enable research to realise impacts
<p>Personal Development</p> <p>Outlines career aspirations and how the fellowship provides an appropriate mechanism to achieve them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to outline career aspirations, justify why the fellowship is an appropriate route to achieving them and explain how their chosen host organisation ⁽¹⁾ is supporting them in this respect. Ability to identify career development support required to enable ambitions for the fellowship to be achieved.

4. Enquiries

General enquiries about fellowships can be directed to: ResearchCareers@epsrc.ukri.org

If you are unsure whether your research falls within the remit, or if you have specific Theme area queries, please contact the most appropriate portfolio manager or a Theme fellowship co-ordinator. The up to date contacts list can be found at: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/fellows/areas/>

FAQs: <https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/fellows/overview/faqs/>

5. Version Log

Name	Date	Update	Version
George Adams	15/11/2019	Reformatting, Added details of technical assessment to documents table, added link to reviewer guidance	18
George Adams	11/12/2019	List of Publications now mandatory	19
George Adams	17/02/2020	Removal of Pathways to Impact	20
George Adams	01/07/2020	Removal of priority areas at Early and Established career stage	21

Appendix 1: Je-S attachments check list

Attachment Type	Maximum Page length	Mandatory /Optional	Extra Guidance
Case for Support	Nine pages	Mandatory	Comprising up to two A4 sides for a track record
Diagrammatic Work plan	One page	Mandatory	
Host Organisation Letter of support	Two pages	Mandatory	https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/fellowships/hostorganisationobligations/
Justification for Resources	Two pages	Mandatory	
CVs	Two pages each	Mandatory	For Applicant, named and visiting researchers, and researcher co-investigators only.
Project Partner Letters of Support	No page limits	As Required by EPSRC	Must be included from all named project partners. Must be on headed paper, and be signed and dated within six months of the proposal submission date.
Letters of Support	No page limits	As Required by EPSRC	In exceptional circumstances a maximum of three letters can be submitted.
Equipment Quotes	No page limits	As required by EPSRC	https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/equipment/process/researchgrants/
Equipment Business Case	Two pages each	As required by EPSRC	https://epsrc.ukri.org/research/facilities/equipment/process/researchgrants/
Proposal Cover Letter	Two pages	Mandatory	The cover letter can be used to highlight any important information to EPSRC, this must include the priority area

Attachment Type	Maximum Page length	Mandatory /Optional	Extra Guidance
			you are applying to for Postdoctoral applicants. This attachment type is not seen by reviewers or panel members. For Early and Established career applicants that do not need to highlight any important information to EPSRC please attached a cover letter stating this.
Technical Assessments	No page limit	As required by EPSRC	If you plan to use a major facility in your research, such as those funded centrally by EPSRC or a European facility, contact the facility before applying to EPSRC to check if your proposed research is feasible, and obtain a Technical Assessment if JeS marks it as required.
Other attachment	No page limit	As required, at EPSRC request only	This can be used for a document that does not fit under any of the headings above. This attachment type is not seen by reviewers or panel members.
List of publications	No page limit	Mandatory	

Please ensure you adhere to the above attachment requirements when submitting your proposal. Any missing, over length or unnecessary attachments may result in your proposal being rejected. Please see <https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/preparing/writing/> for more information on writing your proposal.