



Ernest Rutherford Fellowships Applications Guidance Notes for Reviewers 2021/22

Ernest Rutherford Fellowship Scheme

Ernest Rutherford Fellowships are intended for early career researchers who do not have a permanent academic position. The aim is to support future scientific leaders to establish a strong, independent research programme.

STFC expects to make ten Ernest Rutherford Fellowship awards this year.

Assessment Procedures

STFC seeks comments for each Fellowship application from at least three independent reviewers via the Research Councils' Je-S system. These reviews inform the scoring and ranking of proposals carried out by the Fellowship Panel.

The proposal you are asked to review includes a case for support. In some instances, the case for support may include a link to a web site containing information on the research proposal. Reviewers are not required to consider this additional information when providing comments on a proposal. If you do choose to look at this information, it is possible that your anonymity to the applicant will be compromised.

DORA

We are committed to support the recommendations and principles set out by the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA: <https://sfdora.org/read>). You should not 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.

Assessing Ernest Rutherford Fellowship Applications

In order to ensure that your review is as useful as possible please:

- Familiarise yourself with the assessment criteria and the scoring guidance before you begin
- Assess the application fairly
- Provide clear comments and recommendations against the criteria
- Give justification for markings
- Be consistent between box markings and comments
- Provide comprehensive information without being over-long
- Provide constructive criticism
- Clearly identify strengths and weaknesses
- Raise concerns in the form of questions for the applicant

- Use the wording early career rather than young when referring to an applicant
- Ignore disruption from COVID as this should not impact your assessment

Scoring of Applications in Je-S

Reviewer Self-Assessment

Conflicts of Interest

Before completing a review please ensure that you do not have a conflict of interest with the application. STFC as a publicly funded organization is accountable to Government and the public for its actions and the way it conducts its business. STFC has a conflicts of interest policy in place to protect both the organization and the individuals involved in providing it with knowledge and advice, and to reduce the risk of impropriety or any perception of impropriety. We request that you make yourself familiar with the policy available at <https://stfc.ukri.org/funding/research-grants/peer-review-and-assessment/> and inform us as soon as possible if you have or suspect any conflicts of interest with the application you have been asked to review.

Level of confidence

After reading through the application, indicate the level of confidence you have in reviewing the application – High, Medium or Low.

Connections with applicant

If you have any connections with the applicant e.g. on collaborations, research talks, knowledge through colleagues etc. please provide details.

Experience of fellowships

If you have experience at your institution of Ernest Rutherford Fellowships or fellowships of a similar level please provide details. Do you know the expected standard of a fellowship and have you been involved working with fellows to have the knowledge of the type of applicant required?

Applicant Rating and Proposal Rating

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

- the excellence of the research achievements of the applicant;
- the potential of the individual to lead their research discipline;
- the capability to maximise the potential of others and the ability to be, or become, a clear communicator and disseminator of knowledge;
- the excellence, timeliness, feasibility, distinctive vision and importance of the proposed research;
- strategic value within the STFC programme.

Reviewers are required to score applications against the first four criteria. It is important reviewers look for evidence in the application when scoring against the criteria. Guidance on scoring applications is included in Annex 1. Applications should be assigned scores against the categories for the applicant and the proposal on the form using a scale of 1 to 6 (**where 6 is high and 1 is low**). A score of 6 is the highest score representing a truly exceptional applicant. Reviewers are asked to use the scale in full and to bear in mind that

with ten awards available and 174 proposals being considered, scores of 5 and 6 should be reserved for applicants of the highest quality whom you consider should be short listed for interview (approximately the top 15% of all applicants to a fellowship scheme).

Please include comments on the potential impact on STFC strategic programme in your Overall Assessment.

Please also read the briefing on [unconscious bias](#). STFC would expect all reviewers to have received unconscious bias training.

Applicant Rating

Excellence of applicant including achievements to date and current standing

Criteria - the excellence of the research achievements of the applicant (evidence found in the CV question 1)

Leadership Potential

Criteria - the potential of the individual to lead their research discipline (evidence found in the CV question 2 and case for support)

Capability to inspire others and communication skills

Criteria - the capability to maximise the potential of others and the ability to be, or become, a clear communicator and disseminator of knowledge (evidence found in the CV question 3 and the case for support)

Proposal Rating

Excellence, timeliness, feasibility, distinctive vision and importance of the proposed research

Criteria – the excellence, timeliness, feasibility, distinctive vision and importance of the proposed research (evidence found in the case for support)

Overall Assessment Comments (Minimum 200 words)

Reviewers should use this box to give their opinion of the candidate in terms of their ability and suitability for a Fellowship using all of the above criteria. Please include full and consistent justification for the scores given and assess against the criteria including any comments on the proposal's impact on STFC's strategic programme. Identify strengths and weaknesses and raise questions for the applicant on their proposal in this box.

It is important to bear in mind that your comments will be fed back anonymously to the applicant, who will then be allowed to respond to factual inaccuracies. Following this, members of the panels will be asked to use your reports as the chief tool for distinguishing between proposals.

Please do not use this section to compare applicants against each other as your comments will be seen by the applicant.

Career Breaks

An applicant will have indicated on their proposal if they are returning to research from a career break.

Please check whether applicants have had a career break, worked part-time or whether there have been any other extenuating circumstances. Allowance should be made for potential adverse impact on their track record. Reviewers should also take account of situations where applicants have been absent from research for a period for any reason – ill-health, disability, maternity, paternity or adoption leave, career breaks – and for whom the number of research outputs is consequently reduced.

In assessing the effects of career breaks or flexible working, reviewers will note the applicant's career trajectory and potential at the beginning of a break, relative to the stage of the applicant's career. In assessing applicants, reviewers will recognise that the effects on productivity of a career break, or a period of flexible working, may continue beyond the return to work.

Examples of areas that may be affected are

- Presentation and publication record
- Patents filed
- Track record of securing funding, including time to obtain preliminary data
- Maintaining networks of research / innovation contacts and collaborations
- Time required for training
- The ability to take up opportunities in different geographical locations
- The ability to take up courses, sabbaticals, 'visits', placements and secondments

Deadline for assessments

The completed review form should be submitted no later than **1 November 2021**. If you cannot comment within the indicated timescale, please let us know immediately so we have time to approach an alternative reviewer or perhaps extend the deadline. In addition, please let us know if you do not feel qualified to comment at all. This will help us to ensure that a fair review process is applied to all applications.

Enquiries

Any enquiries on the assessment of STFC Fellowships should be addressed to: Clare Heseltine in STFC's Education, Training and Careers Section fellowships@stfc.ukri.org

Guidance on scoring applications

6.0	Strongly meets all the competency criteria for career stage with most at an exceptional level
5.0	Strongly meets all the competency criteria for career stage with some at an exceptional level
4.0	Meets most competency criteria for career stage with some at an exceptional level
3.0	Meets most competency criteria for career stage
2.0	Meets some competency criteria for career stage
1.0	Insufficient criteria met for career stage – requires further development

Competency framework

The table provides an indication of the skills, knowledge and experience that a researcher might demonstrate to support their application for a fellowship award. It is not an exhaustive list, nor is there an expectation that all applicants will fulfil all of the criteria; they need to have met the criteria at a sufficient breadth and depth to demonstrate their fit to this stage and provide evidence to support that in their proposal.

The competencies have been highlighted to assist in where the evidence should be added.

CV

Case for Support

CV and Case for Support

Criterion	Competencies	Where in CV
1) The excellence of the research achievements of the applicant	a) Have a track record of ambitious, innovative and novel research in their area which demonstrates an upward trajectory.	1
	b) Substantial contributions to high quality outputs appropriate to their field e.g. publications, software, hardware infrastructure, technical reports or	1

	<p>instrumentation.</p> <p>c) Received external recognition of research excellence with high profile invitations to seminar/conferences to present their research</p> <p>d) Received recognition through prizes and awards</p>	<p>1</p> <p>1</p>
<p>2) The potential of the individual to lead their research discipline</p>	<p>a) Have clear plans to establish their own research profile that will enable them to become an intellectual independent research leader and if applicable establish their own research team</p> <p>b) Demonstrate potential to lead research, for example by initiating collaborations with teams in other departments either nationally or internationally, Research Organisations/or other disciplines</p> <p>c) Evidence of independence and initiative in obtaining funding</p> <p>d) Beginning to demonstrate evidence of recognition and prominent leadership positions in the community on an international scale through mechanisms appropriate to their discipline</p> <p>e) Show an understanding and clear plans of how to influence their research field and awareness of ways to influence the wider research agenda. For example, through experience of participation in peer review, participation in internal committees, acting as an ambassador or advocate for a research field or theme, or influencing policy, or organisation roles in research workshops.</p> <p>f) A credible plan for how research outcomes will be communicated and disseminated to achieve the</p>	<p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p> <p>2</p>

	<p>maximum impact within the research community, building on previous experience and track record</p>	
<p>3) The capability to maximise the potential of others and the ability to be, or become, a clear communicator and disseminator of knowledge</p>	<p>a) Have identified opportunities to access career development support from the host organisation or outside organisations e.g. mentoring and professional training development and relevant training courses that would underpin their future career ambitions.</p> <p>b) Show an ability to identify and maximise potential in others. For example, through the day to day support and development of graduate and undergraduate students or early career researchers, providing career support or by actively networking or coordinating the work of others.</p> <p>c) Evidence of engagement that is integral to their own research community, for example, running a journal club, hackathons. Have effective communication and interpersonal skills across the wider research community, for example presentations at conferences, workshops</p> <p>d) A credible plan to communicate and disseminate the impact of the research outside of the community, across different audiences, building on previous experience and track record e.g. through collaboration with private, public or third sector bodies, publications for a non-academic audience, social media or public engagement activities</p>	<p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p> <p>3</p>
<p>4) The excellence, timeliness, feasibility, distinctive vision and</p>	<p>a) Have a clear and distinctive strategic vision for their own research in the context of the broad research area within</p>	<p>This criterion will be addressed in the case for</p>

<p>importance of the proposed research;</p>	<p>which they work, including internationally;</p> <p>b) Be able to describe how their research plans fit in to an international context</p> <p>c) The planned programme of research shows potential to significantly advance the field with the appropriate balance of risk versus reward</p> <p>d) A project that is feasible within the period of the fellowship demonstrating a rigorous approach to reach achievable goals.</p>	<p>support</p>
<p>5) Strategic value within the STFC programme</p>	<p>a) Show the importance and alignment of the project to the STFC programme</p>	<p>This criterion will be addressed in the case for support</p>