

UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships Assessment Criteria

Scheme objectives

- 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 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.

Factors assessed

- Across all four factors assessed (below) a key issue will be whether the added value of the fellowship mechanism of support – e.g. the scale, flexibility and duration offered - is well demonstrated, as opposed to more standard project grant support. For business applications, consideration of the added value will include, for example, whether the novelty and levels of risk involved in the project mean that it is beyond the normal activity of the business

Factor	What the assessment will look for:
Research & Innovation Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, openness¹, 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 <small>1</small>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

¹ For business hosted fellowships UKRI still supports the principle of open access for a project which has specifically identified a requirement to publish outcomes as a route to dissemination. This requirement should be included within a project's collaboration agreement. It should also follow the guidelines contained in the [UKRI policy on open access](#).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Impact & Strategic Relevance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importance and potential impact of the research / innovation for society and / or the economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 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, 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
<p>Research and Innovation Environment & Costs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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