Future Leaders Fellowships
Community Engagement Event, Birmingham
September 2019
UK Research and Innovation: Background
UK Research and Innovation launched in April 2018 and is the new funding organisation for research and innovation in the UK.

It brings together the seven UK research councils, Innovate UK and Research England, working closely with its partner organisations in the devolved administrations.
We are an independent organisation with a strong voice for research and innovation, both to government and internationally.

We are principally funded through the Science Budget by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
The vision of UK Research and Innovation is to: benefit everyone through knowledge, talent, and ideas
UK Research and Innovation - Our Executive Chairs

Andrew Thompson
AHRC

David Sweeney
Research England

Lynn Gladden
EPSRC

Jennifer Rubin
ESRC

Duncan Wingham
NERC

Fiona Watt
MRC

Mark Thomson
STFC

Melanie Welham
BBSRC

Ian Campbell
Innovate UK
Future Leaders Fellowships: Overview
Future Leaders Fellowships - Overview

- Will grow the strong supply of talented individuals needed to ensure that UK research and innovation continues to be world class

- Do so by attracting, developing and retaining the most promising future leaders at a known career pinch point

- Provide seamless support across UKRI remit, including business

- 6 calls between 2018 and 2021, supporting ~200 individuals per year for up to 7 years (4+3 year model)

- New funds from the National Productivity Investment Fund (~£857M).
Future Leaders Fellowships – What are they?

- Monetary award to conduct a specific project and significantly enhance an individual’s career
- Dedicated time to focus on research/innovation, receiving mentoring and enhanced training opportunities
- An award for someone who has already gained their doctorate (PhD) or equivalent experience but is still early in their career, with the potential to be an outstanding leader in their field.
Future Leaders Fellowships – What are their purpose?

Supporting early career researchers and innovators with outstanding potential across the whole of UKRI remit.

To facilitate and encourage

- **interdisciplinary** research & innovation
- **international** mobility
- part-time and **flexible** working
- **cross-sector** working
- research and innovation with and in **businesses**
- enhanced **host support**
- **diversity**
Future Leaders Fellowships: Collaboration

• With academic institutes, businesses or 3rd sector

• Interdisciplinarity: essential for today's major research and innovation

• Enhance excellence, knowledge exchange, technology transfer, developing supply chains…

• What’s the value – to the applicant, their host AND collaborators.
How can academic organisations and businesses work in partnership in the FLF scheme?

Both academic organisations and eligible business can host fellows and can work collaboratively through:

- provision of mentoring
- provision of training and development opportunities
- secondments or placements
- sharing of resources or equipment
- sharing of knowledge and expertise

Funding for businesses, or collaboration with businesses, will be in accordance with prevailing state aid guidance.
Will applications that are...... interdisciplinary focused/business based /from incoming international talent ..... be prioritised?
Encouraging these applications and part of the overall vision. Not mandated. One way an applicant may highlight how an FLF will have a demonstrable impact on their career trajectory beyond what they could achieve through other grant or Fellowship schemes.

Is there an allocation ‘per council’ or a specific discipline split envisaged? Will UKRI be adding priorities for future rounds?
No. Currently broad spread of disciplines. May add ‘highlights’ or ‘steers’ in future to ensure a rounded portfolio. These may cover any feature of the scheme.
Future Leaders Fellowships - Frequently Asked Questions

Clarity around career stage for candidates? Some more specific detail on the appropriate career stage of candidates applying. More information on the eligibility or suitability of applicants: choice between new lecturers or Research Fellows? More clarification around what is meant by 'Early career' given then the person specification information sometimes refers to experience that I, and others, would deem to be more advanced / from an already established researcher. It would be helpful if UKRI could outline what the typical track record of someone applying for this scheme from a non STEM disciplinary background might look like - so that Universities can make a judgement about whether or not a potential application has already reached 'research independence'. Changes in eligibility? Will there be a specific point or version numbers to be adhered to for when to consider a candidate. More information about career stage intended for Guidance for Case for Support Clarification on candidate eligibility (i.e., if they have held Marie Curie Fellowships, UKRI research grants as PI etc.). Who is the scheme ideally aimed at, high flying Post Docs/PhD students or newly appointed lecturers, a clearer steer is this for people in perm or non perm roles (like the Leverhulme Trust Early Career Fellowship, would be good. Further clarification on who the scheme is aimed at, and any additional information to help us select the best candidates for the scheme Clarification on candidate eligibility (i.e., if they have held Marie Curie Fellowships, UKRI research grants as PI etc.). Eligibility for the next rounds? What sort of person are UKRI actually looking to support through this scheme? Someone who needs to demonstrate research independence (i.e. pre-lectureship) or someone building a research group (i.e. post-lectureship)?

What do we mean by Early Career Researcher?
Future Leaders Fellowships: Early Career Researchers

No ‘standard’ answer but want to explore further at break out session this afternoon.

Encouraging applications from the broadest spectrum of disciplinary backgrounds, and career pathways e.g. discipline hopping, business and academia, career breaks, time in other roles. There is no tick box set of rules. Must justify in application.

Person Specification provided on FLF webpage: https://www.ukri.org/files/funding/flf-person-specification-pdf/
Future Leaders Fellowships: To date
Round Two

- Success rate ~19%, 78 awards offered
- Excited by quality of successful applicants and range of topics
- Could have offered higher number of awards (up to 100) and aiming for this number of top-quality awards in future
- Only a small number making use of flexibility to be based in or engaged with business
- Less diversity than expected at point of application
- Flexibility we offer on budgets used well and budgets well-justified, though applicants could make more of scope to set out long-term, broad ambitions for up to 7 years.
Updates to Round Four

To provide increased flexibility, acknowledging the diversity of needs across different organisations and sectors:

• Fellowship may be made up of a single programme of work, or through multiple consecutive / concurrent interlinked projects

• Flexibility where the direction of the project changes part way through the grant, or the fellow is no longer able to continue the grant

• For business-hosted fellows only - may spend up to 40% of time on unfunded activities essential to their career

• Recognise that a change in business circumstances may mean an award is relinquished early
## Future rounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Round 3</th>
<th>Round 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outline proposal deadline</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8 Oct 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full proposal deadline</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 Nov 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sift panels</td>
<td>Nov 2019</td>
<td>June 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview panels</td>
<td>Jan 2020</td>
<td>July 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Feb 2020</td>
<td>Aug 2020</td>
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</table>

Expected closing dates for Round 5 and Round 6:

- **Round 5**: June 2020 (TBC)
- **Round 6**: January 2021 (TBC)
Future Leaders Fellowships: Applying
Applying - Is this the best outlet?

Is the applicant one of outstanding potential?

Is the award of this fellowship going to offer a step change in the career of the applicant?

Is the host organisation willing to provide significant support in terms of the opportunities and training?

Is the proposed program addressing a multifaceted, significant and difficult research or innovation problem?
Applying - Scheme criteria

- Research and innovation excellence
- Applicant and their development
- Impact and strategic relevance
- Research and innovation environment and cost
Applying - Where to find information

https://www.ukri.org/funding/funding-opportunities/future-leaders-fellowships/

Key Documents

• Overview of the scheme
• Introduction for businesses
• Guidance for applicants
• FAQs
• Assessment criteria
Applying - The application process

Five stages to the application process:

1. Outline proposal
2. Full proposal
3. Peer review
4. Sift panels
5. Interview panels
Applying - Outline proposals

• Mandatory
• Non-competitive; allows UKRI to assess demand
• Submitted via Je-S if Je-S registered
• Submitted via Smart Survey if not Je-S registered

• Details required –
  • Applicant, host organisation, project partners
  • Summary of proposed research/innovation program and objectives
  • Whether large capital equipment is required and whether the estimated costs of the proposal will be greater than £1.2m
  • Please help us by clearly identifying to which parts of UKRI the proposal has most relevance!
Applying - Process following outline submission

- Letters to Host Organisations to confirm number of outline proposals submitted

- May mention to HEIs or IROs if numbers of submissions are not as expected

- Will contact business hosts to offer additional support in using the systems and guidance on applications.
Outline vision for full period (eg 4+3 years), providing detailed plans and costings for first four years (as applied for) and broader plans for the second period, if applicable.
Applying - Writing a proposal

• What activities can be carried out to ensure that the award allows the fellow to maximise their potential?

• What can fellows do to ensure the fellowship has the greatest impact?

• What should be planned to ensure the programme of research or innovation is performed to the highest standard?

• Who should be involved to realise the questions above?
Applying - Working across multiple organisations

- Hosted by a single organisation, but can include any number of associated partners or co-hosting organisations

- Opportunities to access additional expertise, facilities and networks of related research and development

- Innovation within remit of scheme, allowing novel partnerships between businesses and academia within a single program.
Applying - Final thoughts

• Read guidance carefully!
  ➢ UKRI scheme which may not be identical to individual councils you may have applied to before
  ➢ Guidance revised prior to each round opening

• Important to address all criteria for the scheme and clearly identify why this applicant is the best possible fit

• What is the career boost offered by this fellowship at this stage of the individuals career?
Future Leaders Fellowships:
Decision making process
Decision making process - Overview

• Four stage review:
  1. Written peer review by sector / discipline experts
  2. Applicant response to reviews
  3. Shortlisting panel
  4. Interview Panel

Roles of the panel:
• **Shortlisting**: consider peer-review across all areas (academia, industry, hybrid) and all disciplines / multi-discipline applications
• **Interview**: test candidates leadership potential and the additionality of the fellowship.
Decision making process – written peer review

• Conducted by sector and discipline experts:
  ➢ Experts chosen by UKRI (Research Councils and Innovate UK) to ensure all reviewers are experts within their field

• We expect each grant to receive 3 or more reviews depending on the breadth of research within each grant put forward

• Once all reviews have been received, the proposal will undergo coverage check by Research Councils and Innovate UK to ensure all elements of grants reviewed.
Decision making process - Applicant response

- Be positive and keep your cool
- Appeal to your audience
- Back up your claims
- Be clear and be concise
- Keep to the guidelines
Decision making process - Sift panels

- Sift panels – consider proposal, peer review comments and applicant response, against published assessment criteria.
- Proposals discussed, ranked and banded.
- Roving panel members ensure consistency between panels.
- Tensioning across panels to produce final banded lists.
- Feedback not provided at this stage.
Decision making process - Interview panels

• All candidates interviewed and discussed against published criteria
  ➢ Example interview questions available online
  ➢ Topic areas include:
    • Research / innovation focus – proposed programme of work
    • Leadership focus – how will applicants develop their potential?
    • Career development focus – how will the fellowship benefit the holder?
• Proposals ranked and banded
• Roving panel members ensure consistency between panels
• Tensioning across panels to produce final banded lists
• All provided feedback.
## Decision making process - Interview process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time permitted</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 minutes</td>
<td>Applicant presentation: “The vision for my Future Leaders Fellowship”</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Interview questions: Research and Innovation focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Interview questions: Leadership focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes</td>
<td>Interview questions: Career development focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>Interview questions: Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 mins</td>
<td>Reflection time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 mins</td>
<td>Discussion and consensus Panel score agreed</td>
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Future Leaders Fellowships:
Career development support
Career development - Host support

- Host organisation to support the fellow to establish themselves as a leader and provide a step change in their career

- Assessed as part of criteria: “Research and Innovation Environment & Costs”
Career development - Host support

- Support for the programme of work:
  - Space, access to facilities / equipment / resources, additional research costs, additional support for staff, PhD students etc.

- Training:
  - Research skills, leadership training

- Mentoring:
  - Access to formal mentoring programmes

- Integrate:
  - Include the fellow within the activities of the host department
Career development – Requirements of host organisations

• Commitment to cost of fellowship:
  • Academic tapered salary commitment from year 3
  • Business-host contribution to total cost of fellowship will be defined by EU State Aid rules

• Required commitment from host organisation for an open-ended research / innovation focused position:
  • Recognising that research employers differ in their employment policies and practices
  • Expectation that fellow will be in best position to take up open-ended position prior to completion
Career development - Support from UK Research and Innovation

• Support for training activities
  • Costs can be claimed for training via fellowship
  • UKRI establishing training opportunities

• Mentoring
  • Costs can be claimed to support mentoring visits
  • UKRI establishing formal programme

• Cohort events
  • Inductions, annual symposia

• UKRI wide activities
  • Networking meetings etc run by UKRI councils
Future Leaders Fellowships: Contact us
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• Developing scheme – please feedback/engage with UKRI, we are listening!

• Where to find more information:
  • https://www.ukri.org/funding/funding-opportunities/future-leaders-fellowships/

• Contact us:
  • fellows@ukri.org
  • (01793) 416409