



Science and Technology Facilities Council

STFC KEC Fellowship Guidance Notes

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INTRODUCTION

The Knowledge Exchange and Commercialisation (KEC) Fellowship scheme has been created to appoint a dedicated professional at an institution to help promote and maximise innovation and commercialisation opportunities for STFC funded research. The recruited individual will engage academics, early career researchers, and industry/third-sector professionals in knowledge exchange and deliver commercial opportunities for economic, societal, and environmental impact.

Benefits of a KEC Fellow

KEC Fellows (formerly the IPS Fellows) add value to their institution by engaging directly with academia and industry investigating opportunities for knowledge exchange and commercialisation. Previously, Fellows have leveraged industry funding into universities, provided new opportunities for engagement and collaboration, and helped to promote the research strengths of their department. In addition, they have been involved with developing spin-out companies, patents/licences, investigating funding opportunities and developing grant applications.

This is a prestigious role for someone who wants to make a real difference in their institution as an advocate in their community, as a knowledge exchange leader, an innovator and commercialisation expert. A KEC Fellow's role is to understand researchers, their research and promote the benefits of commercialising suitable STFC based research in their department. They should aim to promote multi-disciplinary research by helping researchers collaborate with other departments and look for opportunities for researchers to work with industry solving challenges by using core STFC generated research.

STFC aims to maintain a cohort feel for our KEC Fellows and to enable this our Fellows meet biannually to share best practise and provide support where needed. The meeting also gives KEC Fellows the opportunity to give an update on progress in different projects and activities. In addition, all KEC Fellows have regular communication with the External Innovations Programme manager(s) who share opportunities for funding and collaborating in STFC and ways of engaging with wider UKRI/government opportunities.

The STFC External Innovation team operate an Innovations Club which aims to share our vision of knowledge exchange, innovation, technology and enterprise as well as funding opportunities. KEC Fellows are invited to become a vital part of this virtual community playing an active role in its activities and further development. KEC Fellows are encouraged to showcase any activities they are working on in the Innovation Club newsletter. This can include event promotion, case studies, or new ideas/techniques for engagement.

Funding

The KEC Fellowship scheme is available to fund an individual for up to 6 years. The application process is split into three 2-year segments, and each segment will be funded at different levels; this has been designed to facilitate the transfer of the individual into the host institutions structure and demonstrate commitment for the role, and development the individual's career.

| Year | STFC contribution | RO contribution |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 and 2 | 80% | 20% |
| 3 and 4 | 40% | 60% |
| 5 and 6 | 20% | 80% |

ELIGIBILITY

KEC Fellowships may be held at any UK university which is in receipt of funding from the STFC core science programme (particle physics, astrophysics, nuclear physics, space science, accelerator science

or computing in support of these). The application should be made by an eligible academic at the institution, who will be the PI on the grant. Although named KEC Fellows are permitted, it is not a requirement for them to be identified by the time of application as recruitment time will be allowed. The Fellow themselves should not make the application, and only applications with an eligible PI will be permitted. If there are any questions regarding eligibility, please contact the STFC office.

Please note, if a Research Organisation has previously held a KEC Fellow (or an IPS Fellow), then they must contact the office in the first instance to discuss why another Fellowship is required, and how the new proposal will differ from the original.

TIMETABLE

Applications for the KEC Fellowship scheme are welcome at any time as the scheme has no formal closing date. Panel meetings will be held quarterly. Announcements will be made shortly after the panel meeting.

APPLICATION PROCESS

All applications should be made *via* the Joint Electronic submission (Je-S) platform. Please select the following in Je-S to make an application:

- Council: STFC
- Document type: Fellowship proposal
- Scheme: KEC Fellowship
- Call/type/mode: KEC Fellowship Open Call

The application should consist of:

- Je-S *pro forma*
- Six-page case for support (Mandatory)
- Letter of Support from Technology Transfer Office(s) (Mandatory)
- Letter of Support from any relevant Heads of department (Mandatory)

The application should be made by an individual at the lead University. This individual will be the main grant holder and is expected to be the line manager of the KEC Fellow upon employment.

All documents should conform to the guidelines described in the [Je-S help text](#).

Case for Support

The case for support should be no longer than six pages and conform to the font and margin guidelines in the [Je-S helptext](#). Applications will be rejected by the office for non-compliance. Applications should address the following headings:

- **Background**

What is the STFC funded research at the host university that will form the basis of the knowledge exchange and commercialisation activities for the Fellow? What Impact has been previously achieved from STFC-funded research? Please ensure all STFC funded areas are included.

- **Objectives of the Fellowship**

What is the overall aim of the Fellowship? What are the objectives, key performance indicators and measures of success? Identify the expected outputs during this Fellowship. There should also be a review of the current portfolio of technologies/skills/intellectual property that the host university will bring to the Fellowship programme.

- **Management and Development**

Detail the arrangements for supervising the Fellow, including mentoring, guidance and ensuring

professional development of the Fellow. This should clearly explain how the Fellow will be embedded in both the academic department and in the teams responsible for knowledge exchange and commercialisation activities at the university.

- **Job Specification**

Include the job specification that will be used for recruitment and selection of the Fellow with a focus on experience relevant to a knowledge exchange position within a community of STFC-funded researchers.

- **Resources**

State the full cost of the project (fEC) and if relevant, those of any collaborating universities, and provide justification for them. STFC can reduce resource requests if they feel there is insufficient justification.

[Letters of Support](#)

Head of department

Letters of support must be included from Department Heads at all named institutions that receive STFC funding.

- This can be either a letter or an e-mail
- These should be dated within 6 months of the application date and signed by Head of Department or as an email with full contact details.
- Detail their support and involvement in the Fellowship in terms of specific objectives and desired outcomes together.
- Detail how the host university will support the development of the Fellow, and how they can add value to the department. For extension requests, please detail how the institution will fund the remaining costs of the Fellowship as detailed in the table above, and the amounts the university will pay.

Technology Transfer Office

A letter of support or email with full contact details from the host university's Technology Transfer Office (or equivalent) must be included with each KEC Fellowship application. It should explain in detail how the technology transfer office will work with the KEC Fellow to support the objectives (where relevant).

[Ethical considerations](#)

If the appointed KEC Fellow becomes involved with any projects/activities that require the use of holding sensitive information on individuals (for example facial recognition etc.) they should ensure they conform to [UKRI's research integrity policy](#) as well as any internal ethical processes at their institution.

START DATE AND REPORTING

Successful applications will be expected to start within three months of the outcome being announced (baring any extenuating circumstances). Applicants are asked to contact the office if there will be delays in this.

The award runs in three, two-year blocks. After each block, if the Fellow will remain in post then a new JeS pro formal will need to be submitted along with a report detailing their achievements and outputs/outcomes for the previous two years. Details of this will be circulated with the PI and Fellows directly when needed. Included in the extension application should be a letter of support from the University, confirming the matched- funding detailed in the Introduction of this document. The report should be submitted through JeS according to the above details (see Application Process).

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The training and development requested for the Fellow should be specific to the role (knowledge

exchange and commercialisation) rather than general management training and development.

TRAVEL

It is recognised that there may be a requirement for a significant amount of travel in the course of the Fellowship. The application should provide details of how the travel budget has been determined. Personal travel is taken to include necessary collaborative visits, and attendance at conferences, workshop or symposium during each year of the Fellowship, and should be based on the normal rates at the host university.

DATA PROTECTION

Grants submitted *via* Je-S are done so under their [terms and conditions](#)

ASSESSMENT

Panel assessment

KEC Fellowship applications are assessed by a panel comprised of STFC office staff and members of the IPS Panel including;

Jason Green/Stephen Loader (STFC, Chair)
Derryck Reid (Herriot-Watt University)
Stephen McGeoch (Thales UK)

Confidentiality and Peer Review

STFC takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the contents of applications submitted to the KEC Fellowship scheme are treated as confidential. All members of the Panel sign a non-disclosure agreement and peer reviewers must comply with the Research Councils Reviewer Protocols – details can be found on Je-S. Reviewers and Panel members are asked to declare conflicts of interest in relation to an application before they are asked to assess.

Response to reviewers

Each applicant has the opportunity to respond to the reviewer comments before the panel meeting. Applicants should be aware that we will request your response to reviewers approximately 4-6 weeks following submission.

The PI Response should be no more than half a page of A4 per reviewer, and be no longer than 2 pages in total, unless otherwise stated by the office. Failure to adhere to these guidelines could result in your PI response not being taken forward to the panel meeting. For more details please see the [Je-S helptext](#).

Criteria for Assessment

Applications will be assessed against the following 5 criteria:

- The extent to which the Fellowship has a clear, well defined mechanism for achieving its objectives in knowledge exchange and commercialisation.
- The extent to which the host university has the potential for exploiting research outputs from STFC funding.
- The extent to which the host university (both the department and technology transfer office) is committed to supporting the Fellowship and its objectives.
- The extent to which the Fellow will be supported in their personal development as a knowledge exchange professional.
- The extent to which the resources requested, relative to the anticipated outputs, represent an appropriate investment of STFC funds.

RESUBMISSION

Resubmissions made to the KEC Fellowship scheme can be made at any time, and do not need to wait at least one year between submissions as with other KE schemes.

A resubmission should be an entirely new submission (and will be treated as such) and must contain a completed Je-S *pro forma*, Case for Support and all other relevant documents. The submission should contain all the information necessary for assessment and assessors should not need to rely on the initial application for clarification. In order to highlight the response to the assessor's comments, the applicant should submit a cover letter in which they summarise the responses made to the assessor's comments. This should not contain extra information additional to the case for support or *pro forma*.

SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

For further details please see the research grants handbook section [7.2](#) and [7.4](#). Grants are awarded under the [terms and conditions](#) of UKRI. Please see [UKRI privacy note](#) for more information.

RESEARCHFISH

All award holders are required to submit any outputs from their FOF project on the [Researchfish platform](#). Award holders are required to provide information about outputs arising from their work annually during the award period, and normally for at least 5 years after the award has terminated.

CONTACTS

We encourage potential applicants to contact the office to discuss their proposal, and the STFC office will be able to help and provide advice on applications where appropriate. Please contact the Programme Manager, Ed Mansfield (edward.mansfield@stfc.ukri.org) or Senior Programme Manager Wendy Carr (wendy.carr@stfc.ac.uk) with any queries.

USEFUL LINKS

Below is a list of links which the applicant may find useful when applying for STFC grants:

[UKRI principles of peer review](#)

[Researchfish](#),

[Equality of opportunity](#)

[Unconscious Bias](#)

[JeS Handbook](#)

[STFC Grants Handbook](#)

[UKRI Terms and Conditions](#)