# EPSRC Postdoctoral and Open Fellowships

Guidance Notes for Candidates

October 2022

## Contents

# 1. Introduction

This document provides information and guidance on the funding opportunities for fellowships currently available in the EPSRC. You are advised to read it carefully if you are applying for an EPSRC fellowship. In this document, sections marked 'NOTE' contain additional instructions relating to your application. EPSRC fellowships currently comprise of Postdoctoral, Open and Open Plus fellowships.

EPSRC fellowships are a prestigious individual award aimed at exceptional, ambitious and talented researchers and technical professionals who wish to develop, expand or establish a programme of research or technical development alongside personal and professional development. Our fellowships present an accelerated pathway to progression and success on your career journey.

All of our fellowship schemes are designed to be flexible and enable candidates to design a programme around their individual needs, with freedom to design a package that fits their career ambitions, research needs and personal and professional development requirements. Successful fellowships can include elements of community engagement and advocacy, research leadership as well as driving and supporting positive change in the research environment.

Our **Postdoctoral Fellowships are only open in specific remit areas (see below)** but for our Open and Open Plus there are no restrictions on career stage, EPSRC scientific remit, years of experience or field of research providing your field is within EPSRC's remit. Multidisciplinary proposals are encouraged, and the scheme has a high degree of flexibility to support our diverse communities.

A particular feature of the Open Fellowship is that candidates can add the 'Plus' element to their traditional research programme. This builds on the research work but extends the scope to include activities to grow or establish positive change and advocacy in the research community. This could include elements of outreach, building EDI awareness and activities, mentoring and advocacy, policy or regulatory development, research policy and personal and professional development.

Fellowships with a focus on: -

- **discovery science** should lead to fundamental science furthering an existing, new or emerging field. They will advance the frontiers of knowledge and, longer term, contribute to increased economic/environmental impact and/or social prosperity.
- **innovation** should include collaboration/engagement with public, private or third sector organisations or focus on routes to IP capture and/or commercialisation. These proposals will be able to describe likely routes to contribute to current or future UK economic success and/or enable the future development of key emerging industries, but still be within the remit of EPSRC.
- **instrumentation/technique development or software engineering** will look to support and expand technologies and techniques to further both academic and industrial research capability. Applications for instrument/technique development or software engineering must still fit into the EPSRC remit, both from a scientific and technological development perspective.

Our current definition of research quality is very broad and could be equally applied to any of these areas of focus. The assessment criteria have been designed and applied accordingly.

Funding is available for the following:

- **EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowships** *(limited remit areas only)*

  Postdoctoral Fellowships opportunities are currently only available in the following themes

  - Energy
  - Mathematical Sciences
  - Synthetic Biology

  Postdoctoral Fellowships can focus on discovery science, innovation, instrumentation/technique development, software engineering, or a combination of these, but must be within the remit of one of the above themes.

  You can check the remit of your proposed research through our remit enquiry service by filling in the survey link: EPSRC Remit Query (smartsurvey.co.uk).

  Additional funding calls for postdoctoral fellowships in targeted research areas may be released periodically so please check the UKRI Funding Finder for current open calls.

  Up to 3 years of support can be requested for Postdoctoral Fellowships.

- **EPSRC Open and Open Plus Fellowships**

  Open and Open Plus Fellowships are available across the whole of EPSRC's remit.

  Up to 5 years of support can be requested

NOTE: Any of the above Fellowships can be held over shorter periods than those detailed above. You can spend between 50% and 100% of your time on a fellowship. For applicants looking to work part-time, EPSRC fellowships can be held on a part-time basis, at a minimal level of 50%. In these circumstances, the duration of your fellowship can be extended pro rata. Awards are made at 80% Full Economic Costs.

NOTE: Where this document references 'research', this is intended to be interpreted in a broad and inclusive sense, encompassing the broad range of skills prevalent not only in traditional research roles, but including the essential contribution of Research Technical Professionals, Research Software Engineers and similar roles as part of the overall contribution to the research endeavour, either as part of a team, or in their own right as a Fellowship applicant. We do not place merit on the perceived status of the individual. If you have the drive, vision and ambition to succeed in your field, you may be considered a Fellowship applicant.

# 1. Eligibility - General

If you are thinking about applying for an EPSRC Open Fellowship, you should consult with your colleagues and seek advice from your Research Office or equivalent. They will be able to help you formulate your ideas and answer any questions you may have about the process or the scheme.

You should read these guidance notes and the eligibility table below carefully to make sure you understand the scheme you're considering. We also provide a set of Frequently Asked Questions which we recommend you read first if you have an enquiry.

The schemes have no closing dates and you may apply at any time. Your proposal will be assessed through the peer review process and at the next available and appropriate panel (please note dates are subject to change).

| | **Scheme** | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Eligibility Criteria** | **POSTDOCTORAL** | **OPEN** | **OPEN PLUS** |
| Qualifications | You must have either:<br>• a PhD<br>• at least four years' experience in a relevant field by the start of your fellowship | | |
| Career Stage | For those at postdoctoral level, this is an early career fellowship for those that **have not** already been in receipt of significant funding or been leading in an area of technical development.<br><br>Candidates who are or have been registered for a doctorate at any time may apply only if they are expecting to have completed their doctoral thesis examination by the date of the fellowship interview. Candidates must have passed their viva voce examination by the time of commencing the fellowship and therefore considered | Open Fellowships are for those looking to further their academic career and who have already been in receipt of significant funding or have been leading in an area of technical development.<br><br>There are no eligibility rules about how many years of postdoctoral experience you need or whether you are currently in a permanent academic position for any of our fellowships. We encourage applications from candidates who have taken a non-standard career path after their first degree. We also welcome applications from candidates who want | Like the Open Fellowship but for those who want to use this opportunity to design a package of work which meets your wider aspirations by championing a topic to deliver improvements in research culture, such as:<br>• equality, diversity and inclusion<br>• responsible research and innovation<br>• public engagement.<br><br>For further details see section 3.3. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | to hold a PhD. | to move back into research after a career break or any other type of break from active research. | |
| Host Organisation | UKRI research grants are open to UK higher education institutions, Research Council institutes, UKRI- approved independent research organisations and NHS bodies with research capacity. Eligible organisations can be found here. | | |
| Part-time | Anyone can work part-time on their fellowship as long a minimum of 50% of time is spent on the fellowship. | | |
| Nationality | No restrictions – you just need to make sure you're based at an eligible UK host organisation (see above row). See this link (https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/international-funding/get-funding-and-visas-to-do-research-in-the-uk/) for information on UKRI international funding. | | |
| Resubmissions | We will not accept uninvited resubmissions of projects that have been submitted to UKRI. This funding opportunity is also subject to our policy on repeatedly unsuccessful submissions. | | |

Eligibility is not based solely on the number of years post-doctoral experience for any of our fellowships. We acknowledge the diversity of career paths and backgrounds represented in the pool of potential applicants and we encourage applicants who have taken a non-standard career path after their first degree. We also welcome applications from candidates who want to move back into research after a career break or any other type of break from active research. You should consult with colleagues to ascertain if your level of achievement would be appropriate for the type of fellowship you're considering.

You must have the support of an eligible UK host organisation (see table above for details) who will submit your application and host the fellowship. You do not need to be employed by the host institution at the time of application.

Open and Open Plus Fellowships are designed to be as inclusive as possible and present a flexible opportunity for our best people to establish and grow their careers on an accelerated pathway. This flexibility encourages applications from technical professionals (including instrumentation specialists, software engineers, data specialists etc). These fellowships will look to support and expand technologies and techniques to further both academic and industrial research capability. Applications for instrument/technique development or software engineering must still fit into the EPSRC remit, both from a scientific and technology development perspective.

# 2. The Schemes in Detail

## 2.1 Postdoctoral Fellowships

Applicants who have not already secured significant independent funding or led the development of technical skills may wish to consider applying for a postdoctoral level fellowship. Note that postdoctoral Fellowships are only available in limited areas. Check the UKRI Funding Finder (https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/) for the latest opportunities.

You could consider applying for a postdoctoral fellowship if you:

- Have recently started formulating your own research ideas for programmes of work up to three years in duration that will deliver high quality research with a focus on discovery science, innovation, instrumentation/technique development or software engineering
- Can demonstrate that you have acquired the skills and expertise to successfully deliver your research proposal.
- Have not previously held a significant grant (usually defined as those which included PDRA time, capital equipment or were in excess of £100,000 (FEC))
- Have identified training and development needs to enable you to prepare for an enhanced career in research and innovation.

Funding may be requested for the following:

- staff costs (fellow only)
- equipment and other items needed to carry out the project (up to a maximum of £10,000 (including VAT) for each individual item)
- costs related to impact
- travel and subsistence

Postdoctoral applicants to the Energy theme may also be considered for the David Clarke Fellowship award.

## 2.2 Open Fellowships

Open Fellowships are for all career stages beyond postdoctoral level and include researchers who are close to their first academic appointment or leading in an area of technical development or are a highly experienced researcher.

EPSRC now accepts applications in Open and Open Plus Fellowships across our entire remit. We encourage multidisciplinary, technical development and software engineering-based proposals. You are encouraged to talk to the relevant EPSRC Theme while formulating your ideas.

Applicants will need to justify how the fellowship adds value to their career beyond other funding routes available.

You could consider applying for an Open Fellowship if:

- Your programme of work will last up to five years in duration, and will deliver high quality research with a focus on discovery science, innovation, instrumentation/technique development or software engineering
- You have identified areas for your continued research and professional development which will enable you to expand or enhance your role and career. Professional development is not limited to formal training courses and can include acquiring additional skills and experience via formal and/or informal routes, which will need to be fully justified and subject to peer review.

In addition to demonstrating you have the skills and expertise to successfully deliver your research proposal, you will also be committed to implementing good practice in creating a research environment which provides a supportive, positive and inclusive environment, enabling researchers, technical professionals and all involved in the research endeavor to flourish. Through internal and external community engagement, you will become a force for positive change in research culture and evolution of the field over the course of your career. This may include considerations of Research Integrity, Responsible Research and Innovation and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and alignment to the Researcher Concordat. You may wish to consider as part of your fellowship to be an advocate for EPSRC and your field of research, able to influence policy makers or other stakeholders on the importance and impact of your research area and willing to participate in peer review activities, disseminate EPSRC information and sit on advisory groups. We'd also expect planned involvement in at least one additional role from the following list: STEM outreach, public engagement, policy development, industrial engagement, research culture, an area of ambassadorship required by your community not listed above.

For Open/Open Plus Fellowship applications, you may request funding for:

- staff costs
- equipment and other items needed to carry out the project (note varying FEC contributions)
- Justified costs related to impact and personal/professional development as outlined above.
- UK/international travel and subsistence, including conferences.

Researcher Co-Investigators (researchers not eligible for funding as a PI or Co-I, usually at postdoctoral level) are not permitted on the Open and Open Plus Fellowship.

## 2.3 Open Fellowships with the optional Plus component

This option has been included as EPSRC recognise there is a need to support research leaders within the community who are also equipped with the time and skills to develop their understanding of significant research culture challenges, as well as raise awareness of the related issues and opportunities within the community. This will provide capacity to support the implementation of new ideas and initiatives to increase the pace of change. Applicants are encouraged to develop collaborations with other groups or bodies working in similar areas, such as learned societies, think tanks etc. and demonstrate strong community drive and leadership over and above an Open Fellowship.

The Plus component will enable applicants to allocate 20 - 50% of the time spent on the fellowship to create positive culture change in the research community beyond their proposed scientific project and research group. This will involve championing a topic aligned to EPSRC aspirations to deliver

improvements in research culture, such as equality, diversity and inclusion, responsible research and innovation or public engagement.

We intend to bring Plus Component Fellows who are championing similar areas together as a cohort to learn and cross-fertilise ideas and approaches that have worked well, as well as inform EPSRC of key challenges and opportunities in their discipline areas.

## 3. Resume for Research and Innovation

The traditional CV does not capture the much wider range of contributions, skills and experiences necessary for world-class research and innovation endeavor. The traditional format makes it difficult for applicants to showcase their successes across the diversity of activities needed. It is also hard for those who have followed non-traditional career paths to evidence the skills and experience they bring. The introduction of this new format will enable applicants to demonstrate the breadth of their experience. Assessors will be able to take into account a much wider range of research and innovation outputs and outcomes, as well as leadership skills and other essential activities in the community.

The Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) is a narrative CV based on the **Royal Society's Résumé for Researchers**. R4RI is replacing the traditional CV & the track record sections of the case for support. The template for this is a content-rich alternative to the traditional CV. It provides the opportunity to demonstrate where you have made a difference to a research or innovation project, team, community or wider society. The EPSRC Fellowship scheme is one of a number of schemes currently piloting this format across UKRI.

UKRI are introducing this new format to support the creation of a more diverse, inclusive and healthy research and innovation system. More information including guidance and a template is available at: Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) guidance – UKRI.

As well as standard milestones and markers, such as a listing of appointments, it allows you to:

- present both the direct outputs of your research, such as publications or software code, as well as the outcomes of that work
- evidence where you have developed and supported individuals and teams
- evidence any contributions you have made to supporting the wider research and innovation community
- show how you have engaged with the users of your research and wider society.

The format also includes:

- a personal statement, where you can share your goals and motivations
- a specific section where you can provide details of career breaks, secondments, volunteering, part-time work or other relevant experience.

# 4. How we will assess your application

Applications will be assessed by peer review and interview. The criteria for each of our Fellowships are detailed in the table below for each stage of the assessment process. Section 4.1 contains detailed descriptions of each individual assessment criteria.

| | PRIORITISATION | | | INTERVIEW | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Assessment Criteria** | **POST-DOCTORAL** | **OPEN** | **OPEN PLUS** | **POST-DOCTORAL** | **OPEN** | **OPEN PLUS** |
| Research Quality (Primary) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Applicant and Partnerships (Secondary Major) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| National Importance (Secondary) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Resources and Management (Secondary) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| Fellowship Vision (Primary) | | | | ✓ | | |
| CPD (Secondary Major) | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Project Delivery (Secondary) | | | | ✓ | | |
| Fellowship Vision & Delivery (Primary) | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Community Leadership (Secondary) | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Team Leadership (Secondary) | | | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Community Champion (Secondary) | | | | | | ✓ |

We will approach a minimum of three reviewers, including at least one nominated by you. If you are applying with the Plus component, please use at least one of the three as a reviewer nomination for the Plus component.

NOTE: In your cover letter, you should indicate which of your nominated referees is able to assess the Plus component of your application.

Applicants who receive sufficiently supportive reviews will be invited to respond to the reviewer comments provided. Please bear in mind it's not guaranteed that of the three reviews one will be applicant nominated. The proposal, reviewers' comments and your response will then go to a prioritisation panel that will score it against the assessment criteria (see table above) and rank it with other proposals. Panels are organised by theme and meet at different times of the year.

Following the prioritisation panel, we will invite successful candidates to interview. Interviews will take place around six weeks after the prioritisation panel meeting. An interview panel will assess your application against the interview assessment criteria (see table above).

## 4.1 Prioritisation Panel (For Open/Open Plus and Post-Doctoral)

The assessment criteria at the prioritisation stage are the same for Postdoctoral and Open/Open Plus fellowship applications. Assessment is made relative to an applicant's career stage.

The panel will use the reviewer's comments and PI response to assess proposals at this stage. Successful candidates at panel will be invited forward for interview.

At the prioritisation panel the panel will be asked to confirm the eligibility of postdoctoral applicants for the postdoctoral career stage as outlined in this guidance document based on the evidence of the Resume for Research and Innovation.

| **Prioritisation Panel Assessment Criteria**<br><br>**Open / Open Plus / Postdoctoral** | |
|---|---|
| **Criteria** | **Indicators** |
| **Research Quality (Primary Criterion)** | Please comment on the degree of research excellence of the proposal, making reference to:<br><br>The novelty, relationship to the context, timeliness and relevance to identified stakeholders;<br><br>The ambition, adventure, transformative aspects or potential outcomes;<br><br>The suitability of the proposed methodology and the appropriateness of the approach to achieving impact. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Applicant and Partnerships**<br><br>**(Secondary Major)** | Please comment on the applicant's ability to deliver the proposed project, making reference to:<br><br>Appropriateness of the track record (see * below) of the applicant(s);<br><br>Balance of skills of the project team, including collaborators. |
| **National Importance (Secondary)** | Comment on the national importance of the research. How the research:<br><br>Contributes to, or helps maintain the health of other other disciplines, contributes to addressing key UK societal challenges and/or contributes to future UK economic success and development of emerging industry(s);<br><br>Meets national needs by establishing/maintaining a unique world leading activity;<br><br>Complements other UK research funded in the area, including any relationship to the EPSRC portfolio. |
| **Resources and Management**<br><br>**(Secondary)** | Please comment on the effectiveness of the proposed planning and management and on whether the requested resources are appropriate and have been fully justified, making reference to:<br><br>Any equipment requested, or the viability of the arrangements described to access equipment needed for this project, and particularly on any university or third-party contribution;<br><br>Any resources requested for activities to either increase impact, for public engagement or to support responsible innovation. |

Please note that the assessment criteria in the table above use the same criteria as those which are used to assess standard research grant applications, but they are weighted differently.

(*) Assessment of track record will consider the applicants' varied contributions to research as detailed by their completed Resume for Research and Innovation.

## 4.2 Interview Panel (Post-Doctoral Fellowships)

Post-doctoral fellowship applicants will be assessed against the following criteria at the interview panel.

The interview panel will make use of the reviewer's comments, the PI response and the interview to make assessments against each of the assessment criteria.

| Interview Assessment Criteria (Post-doctoral Fellowships) | |
|---|---|
| **Criteria** | **Indicators** |
| **Fellowship Vision**<br><br>**(Primary)**<br><br>Outlines how the fellowship will enable the applicant to transition to research independence and what success at the end of the fellowship would look like. | Please comment on how the award of the fellowship will enable the applicant to achieve research independence and how a successful fellowship would contribute strategically to the research landscape. |
| **Continued Professional Development**<br><br>**(Secondary Major)**<br><br>Outlines professional development goals and identifies a route to achieving them. | The applicant will be expected to have:<br><br>Identified areas they need to improve on and how they intend to gain experience to meet these needs<br><br>Considered their knowledge of ethical, responsible and inclusive research culture and thought about how they could further this knowledge<br><br>Considered if they need a mentor, and what aspects of their development their mentor will help with<br><br>Please comment on:<br><br>The appropriateness of the professional development goals outlined in the application and the plans in place to enable the fellow to reach these goals.<br><br>The level and suitability of the support offered by the Host Organisation |
| **Project Delivery**<br><br>**(Secondary)**<br><br>To ensure the applicant has the skills for successful project delivery | Please comment on:<br><br>How the applicant can demonstrate they have acquired the skills required for successful project delivery including:<br><br>How will the applicant utilise networks to ensure successful project delivery. i.e. mentor, management of any collaborators and/or additional staff resource provided by the host organisation whilst ensuring that the delivered project will demonstrate their research independence?<br><br>Has the applicant demonstrated they are able to re-plan work if the initial strategy is not delivering results?<br><br>Has the applicant identified project risks and have they put suitable contingencies in place? |

## 4.3 Interview Panel (Open/Open Plus Fellowships)

Applicants to the Open Fellowships scheme will be assessed against the following criteria at interview panel. The interview panel will make use of the reviewer's comments, the PI response and the interview to make assessments against each of the assessment criteria.

| **Interview Assessment Criteria**<br><br>**(Open / Open Plus Fellowships)** | |
|---|---|
| **Criteria** | **Indictors** |
| **Fellowship Vision and Delivery**<br><br>**(Primary)**<br><br>Outlines what success at the end of the fellowship would look like, why a fellowship is an appropriate mechanism to achieve this and how the applicant will ensure successful project delivery. | Please comment on how the award of the fellowship will progress the career of the applicant over and above their current trajectory, and why the applicant needs this award in order to achieve this career progression.<br><br>The applicant should be able to describe how they will ensure that the potential success of the fellowship will be maximised and identify how project risks have been mitigated. |
| **Community Leadership**<br><br>**(Secondary)**<br><br>Leads by example in matters relating to the modern research environment, has good communication skills across a range of stakeholders and clear plans for advocacy. | Please comment on:<br><br>The extent to which the applicant can demonstrate that matters relating to the modern research environment (including Research Integrity, Responsible Research and Innovation and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion have been integrated within their proposal and how the ongoing management of these elements will be addressed.<br><br>Ability to communicate clearly through either written or oral medium<br><br>If chosen, how the applicant demonstrates awareness of the advocacy role of a fellow (ability to influence policy makers or other stakeholders on the importance of your research area; willingness to participate in peer review activities, disseminate EPSRC information within own department and/or network and sit on advisory groups) ; and planned involvement in at least one additional role from the following list: STEM outreach, public engagement, policy development, industrial engagement, research culture, an area of ambassadorship required by your community not listed above |
| **Team Leadership** | Please comment on: |

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|---|---|
| **(Secondary)**<br><br>To emphasise the importance of staff being managed by the applicant having a positive research experience, with opportunities/support to progress their own research careers. | The strategy in place for ensuring continued research and professional development of staff, or other colleagues they will be managing on the project<br><br>The applicant's plan for creating a positive working culture<br><br>The track record (*) of the applicant (relative to their career stage) in these matters to give the panel confidence that points (1) and (2) will be successfully delivered. |
| **Continued Professional Development**<br><br>**(Secondary Major)**<br><br>Outlines professional development goals and identifies a route to achieving them. | The applicant will be expected to outline how their development goals will enable them to expand/enhance their current role. Please comment on:<br><br>The appropriateness of the professional development goals outlined in the application (relative to the career stage of the applicant) and the plans in place (noting that this may not constitute formal training) to enable the fellow to reach these goals.<br><br>The level and suitability of the support offered by the Host Organisation. |
| **Open Plus - the additional component (if selected by applicant) **** | |
| **Community Champion**<br><br>**(Secondary)**<br><br>To create positive change in the research community by championing an identified area. | Please comment on:<br><br>The timeliness and relevance to the community of the identified championed area<br><br>The appropriateness of the plans to champion and promote this area. This assessment should be made commensurate with the applicant's career stage and the level at which they intend to engage. |

(*) Assessment of track record will consider the applicants' varied contributions to research as detailed by their completed Resume for Research and Innovation.

(**) Open Plus fellowships will be assessed at the same theme panel as Open fellowships but additional assessment criteria will be applied, so they will be included on a separate list for funding decisions.

# 5. How to Apply

## 5.1 Submission Dates

All EPSRC Fellowships are open calls, meaning there is no deadline for submissions. Applications can be submitted at any time and will be processed on a rolling basis at a prioritisation panel following the postal peer review stage. For guidance on when a submitted application may be included at one of the future prioritisation panels, please see the table below.

| Theme | Theme submission dates | Prioritisation panel dates | Interview panel dates |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Engineering** | Mid-June | Early October | Early February |
| | Mid-August | Early December | |
| | Mid-October | End February | Early June |
| | Mid-December | Mid-April | |
| | Mid-Feb | Early June | Mid-October |
| | Mid-April | Early August | |
| **Physical Sciences** | Early May | Early September | Mid-October |
| | End September | End January | End February |
| | Early January | End April | Mid-June |
| **Maths** | Early February | Early June | End July |
| | End July | End November | End January |
| **ICT** | Mid November | End March | Early September |
| | Early April | Mid July | |
| | Mid July | End November | Late February |
| | Early September | Mid-January | |
| **Digital Economy** | Fellowships predominantly go to ICT panels | | |
| **Energy** | Fellowships go to Physical Sciences and Engineering Panels (dependent upon content) | | |
| **Healthcare Tech** | Fellowships go to most appropriate EPSRC panel | | |
| **Manufacturing the future** | Fellowships predominantly go to Engineering Panels but may also go to ICT or Physical Sciences panels (dependent upon content) | | |
| **Quantum Technologies** | Fellowships go to most appropriate EPSRC panel | | |

***TO NOTE: Please be aware that these dates illustrate typical timelines only and are subject change. The full grant application and assessment process usually takes approximately 26 weeks so we cannot guarantee applications out.***

## 5.2 Making Your Application

You must ensure your application fits into the EPSRC remit. If you are not sure, contact the relevant portfolio manager or submit a remit query

You must apply using the Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S). Applications for Fellowships are always open.

When applying, select 'New document' then:

- Council: EPSRC
- Document type: fellowship proposal
- Scheme: EPSRC fellowship
- Call/type/mode: select **one** of the following options as appropriate:
    - EPSRC Open Postdoc Fellowship
    - EPSRC Open Fellowship
    - EPSRC Open Plus Fellowship

Consider which areas of focus apply to your application from the list below and copy and paste into the keywords box:

- Discovery science
- Innovation
- Technical skills

**Your application should include the attachments listed in the document checklist in Annex 3.**

NOTE: We will not assess lists of publications as the Resume for Research and Innovation is used as a broader and more comprehensive framework for assessment. Please upload a blank document for the list of publications – we will not be assessing this, if you upload a list of publications it will be returned for amendment.

All attachments must be completed in single-spaced typescript in Arial 11 or other sans serif typeface of equivalent size, with margins of at least 2cm. Text in embedded diagrams or pictures, numerical formulae or references can be smaller, as long as it is legible. Text in tables and figure labels not within embedded diagrams or pictures should be at least 11 point.

We recommend that all attachments are uploaded into Je-S as Adobe Acrobat files (PDF) as uploading word documents can result in layout changes to the document. Also, as EPSRC do not support all Microsoft Office Word font types, unsupported fonts will be replaced possibly resulting in layout changes to the document.

EPSRC reserve the right to reject applications that do not meet these requirements.

We recommend you start your application in good time. You can save completed details in Je-S at any time and return to continue your application later. When you submit the application, it will first go to your host organisation for review.

See the JeS handbook for full advice on completing applications.

# 6. Fellowships vs Research Grants vs NIA

The table below outlines the differences between types of grant. You should consider carefully which is right for you.

| Fellowships | Research Grants | NIA |
|---|---|---|
| Prestigious personal award | For a Principal Investigator with option for one or more Co-Investigators | Generally first application to EPSRC as PI. |
| Can be applied for without holding an academic position | Investigators must be academic employees (lecturer or equivalent) of an eligible organisation | As for research grant |
| Institutions are required to offer a high level of support to fellows (e.g. provision of additional staff for research group, enhanced training and support, reduction in other academic duties etc.) | Institutions may or may not offer additional support (e.g. additional staff or funding etc) | Support should be commensurate with the career stage of the candidate who is establishing research independence. |
| Allows for personal development to expand current role and responsibilities and enhance leadership<br><br>Flexibility to undertake training.<br><br>Fellows are expected to act as ambassadors and advocates of their research area. | Normally focussed on research deliverables. | Focussed on research endeavour and pathway to research independence.<br><br>Any additional activities should be modest in scope and directly relevant to the research programme. |
| Flexibility to allocate time to drive research culture change in a research community or more widely. | Focus remains on research deliverables with some flexibility where directly relevant to the research programme. | Limited opportunity, but focus is on establishing research vision, independence and pathway to academic career. |
| Significant time commitment (50%+) | Grant contributes to the investigators' salaries but it's<br><br>not usually 100% | Low time commitment (20 – 30%) |
| Can reduce other responsibilities for fellow within their host institution (e.g. teaching and administration) | Investigators named on research grants usually have other administrative loads within their institutions | High personal commitment to the grant. |

# ANNEX 1 – OPEN FELLOWSHIP EXAMPLES

One purpose of the EPSRC Open Fellowship scheme is to accelerate career development and support our talented and ambitious researchers.

The fellowship vision assessment criterion asks reviewers to comment on how the award of the fellowship will progress the career of the applicant over and above their current trajectory, and why the applicant needs this award in order to achieve this career progression.

The career progression afforded by the Open Fellowship is likely to vary considerably across career stages and therefore some examples of how a fellowship could progress your career are provided within the illustrative examples below. EPSRC understands these are examples, but we expect real world situations may well incorporate an overlap of commonality with more than one of these, or even be quite distinct.

**Example A (includes additional Plus component)**

The candidate has already demonstrated research independence but has limited experience of managing people. The candidate would use the fellowship to start their own research group and broaden their networks and influence. The candidate has a clear vision of how the work undertaken within their research group would lead to further development or commercialisation and how this will aid their ambition as a leading expert in their field.

The candidate has been active in Responsible Research and Innovation activities and has plans to ensure that this issue is more actively considered, both within their institution and more widely within their specific field.

The candidate recognises that they have not held formal line management responsibilities before and has set up a network of support to guide them through this process as well as taking advantage of mentoring offered. The candidate has taken steps to identifying suitable courses offered by their host institution and external providers to ensure that they look after their staff and support their career development.

**Example B**

The candidate demonstrated research independence a number of years ago, and successfully completed a prestigious post-doctoral level fellowship. After completing their post-doctoral fellowships, the candidate has had a prolonged period of reduced output due to family responsibilities and part time working patterns. The candidate wants to use their fellowship to pick up their career and increase their research output to become competitive with their peers when applying for university promotion and other funding opportunities.

The candidate is aware that progress has been made in applying new techniques to problems in their field and think they could successfully apply the technique to problems they are trying to solve. They don’t currently have the technical expertise to be able to do this but have identified visits to other research groups where they will be able to learn these new techniques, enabling them to be applied to their own research.

**Example C (includes additional Plus component)**

The candidate has exceptional technical expertise in their field and a broad knowledge of the research environment. The candidate would use the fellowship to deepen their expertise of a specific technique and apply their technical expertise to different scientific fields through close collaboration with identified subject matter experts from industry and academia.

The candidate has well defined plans for raising the profile and applicability of technique development to a wider audience including scientific experts and members of the general public.

The candidate recognises that they don't have much experience of managing people, although they have managed projects before. They have identified a range of development opportunities to enable them to successfully manage the wide network of collaborations envisaged within the proposal.

**Example D (includes additional Plus component)**

The candidate has had a successful career to date and currently manages a research group of 10 people in addition to undertaking a number of administrative duties within their university. The candidate wants to use the fellowship to take the knowledge they have gained from their discipline to start a new line of research in a related discipline, alongside the existing research activities being undertaken by their research group.

The candidate also wants to be able to use the fellowship to mentor more early career researchers outside of their own immediate line management responsibilities and act as a senior mentor to other mentors to improve the level of mentorship provided in academia.

In order to be able to transfer their knowledge from their discipline to the targeted discipline, the candidate aims to hire researchers to provide some of the knowledge but also needs to undertake some upskilling work themselves. Without the fellowship to enable this upskilling, it is likely that the knowledge transfer would not happen.

**Example E (includes additional Plus component)**

The candidate has had a successful career to date, and worked in both industry and academia, undertaking significant line management responsibilities. The candidate currently works in industry and would use the fellowship to move back into academia with their current employer acting as a project partner. The fellowship would enable the candidate to conduct study in an area of fundamental research which has been identified as a key area of knowledge acquisition to help with a number of upcoming challenges in the next 10+ years.

The candidate would use their industrial expertise, connections, networks and company links to promote industry – academia collaborations within their university with the ambition of achieving a significant increase in the number of research proposals submitted with academic-industrial placements.

The candidate is aware of a number of EDI challenges within their field but does not have much expertise in dealing with this topic beyond their immediate responsibilities. They will use the fellowship to acquire the skills to enable them to influence in this area more broadly.

**Example F**

The candidate has previously demonstrated research independence and wants to use the fellowship to move their fundamental research into an area which combines elements of different or multidisciplinary fields to develop new methodologies and avenues of research. The candidate feels that the proposal would be unlikely to be funded via other funding mechanisms due to the minimal research already undertaken in this area. The candidate intends to act as the community leader for the new research field and will work with the academic community to maximise collaborations. The candidate would like to become more involved with policy making to help make the case for increasing spending in fundamental science but has limited experience and so has identified a number of development opportunities to gain experience in the area.

**Examples of applicants who are Research Technical Professionals (RTPS):**

**Example G– (included additional Plus component)**

The candidate has high technical competence in one or more analytical techniques and thorough in-depth expertise of equipment and method development. The candidate does not hold a PhD but has a number of years of experience in their field. The candidate would use the fellowship to deepen their knowledge through dedicated time to further develop the specialism technology, develop their standing as an expert in analytical techniques, and use their leading status to promote the role of the RTP to the community. The candidate has well defined plans and a genuine interest in the role of the RTP in the community and the wider academic funding government system. They would use this platform to raise the profile of the RTP community, driving forward change and inspiring junior RTPs on the pathways that can be taken.

Whilst the candidate has managed projects before, they recognise they have not held any formal line management responsibilities or acted as PI on grants. The candidate has taken steps to identify networks and courses to develop this knowledge so they can appropriately support and develop the team around them.

**Example H**

The candidate has a strong understanding of cutting-edge technology, method development, equipment maintenance and undertakes in-depth training of users on the theory, operations and data interpretation aspects. The candidate does not hold a PhD but has 10 years of expertise in their field. They have previously been a Co-Investigator on an equipment grant and contributed directly to a number of research projects, lending their expertise and analytical techniques at crucial steps of the project development e.g., through (in)formally co-supervising PhD students or developing new methodology to progress the project. The candidate would use this fellowship to become a world leading expert in a particular field, method, or analytical and measurement technique(s), which helps place both them and their host institution at the forefront of technical developments in this field.

The candidate recognises that they have had limited formal line management responsibilities thus far and has set up a network of support to guide them through this process as well as taking advantage of mentoring offered. The candidate has taken steps to identifying suitable courses

offered by their host institution and external providers to ensure that they look after the team around them and support their career development.

**Example I**

The candidate has a strong background of method development and understanding of the capabilities of analytical techniques or methods, and how these can be applied. The candidate has 8 years of experience working within a HEI and is currently working towards a PhD. They have contributed significantly to research projects e.g. through (in)formally co-supervising PhD students or developing new methodology to progress the project, but has not held any significant grant funding, either in their own right or as a Co-I. This fellowship would enable the candidate to pursue their research interests, aiming to become a leader in their field with the stability of grant funding and protected time. Whilst pursuing their research interests the candidate would also use this fellowship to become a figurehead for the RTP community.

The candidate recognises they have not had much experience of leading a team before so has made sure to create a support network of mentors and networks to help with this. The candidate has also taken advantage of any training courses offered by their host institution and via collaborators.

# ANNEX 2 – DAVID CLARKE FELLOWSHIPS

**David Clarke Fellowship**

The David Clarke Fellowship was launched in 2017 by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and the Energy Technologies Institute (ETI). The Fellowship was created in honour of the late ETI CEO and Royal Academy of Engineering fellow, Dr David Clarke.

Each year, up to five of the most talented researchers to be awarded Post-Doctoral Fellowships which develop low carbon technologies are selected for the additional distinction of becoming a David Clarke Fellow. The allocation of these awards is decided by the David Clarke Fellowship Advisory Board.

David was a strong advocate for the role of research in informing policy and the fellowship programme continues to honour his dedication to advancing low carbon technology. He was also a committed supporter of partnerships between academia and industry, seeing the benefits that flowed in both directions from such relationships. Particularly close to his heart was helping younger engineers and scientists to progress in their careers with support from more experienced colleagues and it was this passion that lead to the development of the David Clarke Post-Doctoral Research Fellowships in his memory.

The David Clarke Fellowship is currently run through EPSRC with the support of an advisory board of David's former friends and colleagues.

All mentors participating in the scheme are carefully chosen to ensure the maximum benefit for the individual fellow.

**Benefits of the scheme**

- These prestigious fellowships are designed to encourage awardees to create active stakeholder engagement in their research, reflecting the passions of Dr David Clarke for encouraging others to work together towards the delivery of a low carbon energy system for the future.

- Fellows will be identified as a 'David Clarke Fellow'. These fellows will benefit from monitoring by an advisory group.

- Fellows will receive a high-profile mentor, whom they will meet throughout the duration of their fellowship; especially in their first and final year. Mentors will provide advice and introductions that will help fellows maximise the impact of their research.

- Where possible, yearly face-to-face meetings will enable networking with other DCF fellows, mentors, advisory board members and EPSRC staff.

**How the David Clarke Fellowships works**

Applicants applying to a post-doctoral stage Energy fellowship will be eligible to receive the David Clarke fellowship if the person specification, assessment criteria and the criteria below are met.

Applicants will undergo the same peer review process as standard postdoctoral fellowships. However, applicants will be notified if they are being considered for the David Clarke Fellowship before reaching the interview panel.

Further information about fellowship assessment criteria, peer review and resources can be found in the Fellowship Application Guide or on the following webpage: https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/developing-people-and-skills/epsrc/fellowships

**Criteria:**

- The research focus of the fellowships must be interdisciplinary across the Energy theme.
- The National Importance of the research within the fellowship must be clear.
- The Impact the fellowship will have within the Energy Sector must be evidenced and must focus on a low carbon initiative.
- Research should evidence how a low carbon energy system can be delivered in the UK and should be set within a whole systems context.
- Applicants should engage with industry, end users and/or Government to align research with the needs of these and other stakeholders, who would ideally become active participants in the research.
- The research questions to be addressed should be interdisciplinary, ensuring that the work doesn't just focus on technical solutions but sets these in a broader system, market and societal context.
- Universities need to offer tangible support to applicants of this scheme.

# ANNEX 3

## Document Checklist

- **Case for Support** (up to **nine pages**, seven on the scientific case and two on the non-technical aspects (i.e. to cover the non-scientific elements of the assessment criteria) of your application. For Open Fellowships where the applicant is choosing the Plus Component option, an additional two pages (eleven pages in total) are allowed

  ***Please note this differs from the case for support that is requested in research grant applications. Track record is to be included in the Resume for Research and Innovation.***

- **A work plan** (one page)

- **A host organisation statement** (two pages)

- **Justification of resources (two pages)**

- **Resume for Research and Innovation** –a narrative CV and track record- (up to four pages) for the fellowship candidate only

- **Project Partner letters of support** from all project partners included in the Je-S form (no page limit). Note that additional letters of support are not permitted on fellowship applications. Where applicants are collaborating with other departments at the host organisation this should be included in the host organisation statement.

- **An equipment business case** for any items of equipment or combined assets with a value above £138,000 including VAT (up to two pages) (allowed for Open and Open Plus Fellowship applications only)

- **Technical assessments** for facilities listed as needing one in the Je-S guidance (no page limit)

- **A cover letter (no page limit**) - this is a mandatory attachment and will not be seen by peer reviewers

- **Equipment quotes as appropriate**

Version Log:

| Name | Date | Update | Version |
|---|---|---|---|
| Melanie Buckley | 28.09.2020 | First issue for upload to website | 1.0 |
| Melanie Buckley | 29.09.2020 | Minor amendments | 1.1 |
| George Adams | 09.10.2020 | Fixed hyperlinks | 1.2 |
| George Adams | 24.11.2020 | Opportunity opens for applications | 1.3 |
| George Adams | 12.12.2020 | Correct postdoctoral name, added instructions for list of publications | 1.4 |
| Natasha Richardson | 12.01.2021 | Clarification on Open Fellowships and who may consider applying | 1.5 |
| Fellowships Team | August 2022 | Substantially revised and updated | 1.6 |
| E. Clarke | 25.08.2022 | Approved final draft | 1.7 |
| Rachel Rothwell | 05.10.2022 | Added new R4RI guidance hyperlink | 1.8 |