



Ernest Rutherford Fellowships Applications Guidance Notes for Reviewers 2018/19

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 no longer defines eligibility for Ernest Rutherford fellowships in terms of minimum number of years experience. Instead applicants should have read the competency profile highlighted in the [ERF guidance](#) to determine if they have the skills knowledge and experience to apply for an Ernest Rutherford Fellowship.

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

Conflicts of Interest

Before completing a review please ensure that you do not have a conflict of interest with the proposal. 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 proposal you have been asked to review.

Assessment Procedures

STFC seeks comments for each Fellowship application from at least three independent reviewers via the Research Councils' [Joint electronic submission](#) (Je-S) system. These reviews inform the scoring and ranking of applications 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.

Assessment Criteria for Ernest Rutherford Fellowship Applications

Applications should be assessed against the following criteria:

- the excellence of the applicant, including the volume and significance of research outputs, their standing in their field and ability to communicate their science effectively. In the case of applicants returning directly from a career break, reviewers should base the assessment on the applicant's record before the break;
- the timeliness and quality of the research proposal;
- the potential of the individual, including the capability to fulfil the wider responsibilities of an academic career (teaching, service on committees, public engagement etc.) and evidence of leadership ability;
- the appropriateness of the group with whom the individual intends to work;
- alignment with STFC strategic priorities:
- a clearly thought through and project-specific Pathways to Impact Statement.

Scoring of Applications in Je-S

Applicant Rating and Proposal Rating

Guidance on grading applicants and their research programme is included in Annex 1. Candidates 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 candidate. Reviewers are asked to use the scale in full and to bear in mind that with eleven awards available and 161 applications, scores of 5 and 6 should be reserved for candidates of the highest quality whom you consider should be short listed for interview (approximately the top 15% of all applicants to a fellowship scheme). It is helpful if reviewers make direct comparisons between the candidates they have been asked to assess. (See section on Applicant Ranking below)

Please check whether candidates 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. Applicants who completed the section on Career Breaks on their c.v. are permitted to extend the limit of two pages to accommodate the additional information. Applicants have indicated on their c.v. if the choice of organization is for personal reasons. Applying to hold a Fellowship at a particular institution because of family constraints should not disadvantage a candidate. Please also read the briefing on [unconscious bias](#).

Applicant Ranking

Reviewers should use this box to list and rank candidates in comparison with other fellowship applications that they are reviewing. **Please name the applicants with which you are making a comparison.** The information in this box is not disclosed to the applicant. Please include here any information for the Panel that is confidential and should not be provided in the feedback given to the applicant.

Overall Assessment Comments

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 justification for

the scores given.

It is important to bear in mind how these comments will be used. The 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. 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
- Provide clear comments and recommendations
- 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

Deadline for assessments

The completed review form should be submitted no later than **12 November 2018**. 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 (telephone: 01793 442043 or e-mail: fellowships@stfc.ac.uk).

Guidance on grading candidates and their science

(i) Applicant Rating

Excellence of Applicant	6.0 Exceptional	The applicant is recognised within the wider research community to be of the highest standard and on a clear trajectory to become a world-class independent research leader. The level of achievements is at the expected exceptional level for the applicant's research experience e.g. they have received prizes, awards, supervised students, held leadership roles in collaborations and have an exceptional number and quality of publications (if applicable).
	5.0 Excellent	The applicant has excellent recognition within their own research community and exhibit excellent potential to become a world-class research leader. The level of achievements is at the expected excellent level for the applicant's research experience e.g. they have received prizes, awards, supervised students, held leadership roles in collaborations, have an excellent number and quality of publications (if applicable).
	4.0 Very Good	The applicant has a very good level of recognition within their research community. The level of achievements is at a very good level for the applicant's research experience e.g. they have received some prizes or awards, and been involved in supervising students, holding positions of responsibility in collaborations, have a very good number and quality of publications (if applicable).
	3.0 Good	The applicant has a good level of recognition within their research community as a solid researcher but not the wider community. The level of achievements is at a good level for the applicant's research experience e.g. they have received some prizes or awards, and have had some involvement in supervising students, held minor positions of responsibility in collaborations, have a good number and quality of publications (if applicable).
	2.0 Not Competitive	The applicant has some level of recognition of their potential to become a solid researcher within their own group but not the wider research community. The level of achievements is at an insufficient level for the applicant's research experience e.g. they have not received either significant prizes or awards, and have had no involvement in supervising students or holding positions of responsibility in collaborations, have a low number and low quality of publications (if applicable).
	1.0 Unfundable	The applicant does not have recognition within their own group or the wider research community. The applicant does not reach the required standard for a fellowship and has demonstrated substantial

		weaknesses. The applicant has not demonstrated any of the expected achievements for an applicant of their research experience e.g. they have not received either prizes or awards, and have had no involvement in supervising students or holding any positions of responsibility in collaborations, have a poor number and poor quality of publications (if applicable).
Leadership Potential	6.0 Exceptional	The applicant already holds prominent leadership positions, working independently of senior colleagues and is on an upward trajectory.
	5.0 Excellent	The applicant shows strong leadership potential with some leadership positions and is likely to become a world class research leader.
	4.0 Very Good	The applicant already shows very good potential leadership qualities both in a research team and within the wider community.
	3.0 Good	The applicant shows some leadership potential but insufficient leadership potential within the wider community.
	2.0 Not Competitive	The applicant shows no evidence of leadership potential within the wider community.
	1.0 Unfundable	The applicant shows no evidence of leadership potential within their group or the wider community.
Overall Score	6.0 Exceptional	The applicant is of an exceptional standard and has demonstrated exceptional potential as an independent researcher or group leader. You think this fellowship should be supported as a priority.
	5.0 Excellent	The applicant is of an excellent standard and has demonstrated excellent potential as an independent researcher or group leader. You think this fellowship should be supported.
	4.0 Very Good	The applicant is of a very good standard and has demonstrated very good potential as an independent researcher or group leader. You think this fellowship should be supported if funds are available.
	3.0 Good	The applicant is of a good standard but has not demonstrated sufficient potential as an independent researcher or group leader. You think this fellowship could be supported if funds are available.
	2.0 Not Competitive	The applicant is not competitive for a fellowship and has shown little or no potential as an independent researcher or group leader. The applicant is performing at the level of a typical postdoc. You do not think this fellowship should be supported.
	1.0 Unfundable	The applicant is not competitive for a fellowship in relation to either past contributions or future potential. The applicant is performing below the level of an average postdoc. You do not think this fellowship should be supported.

(ii) Proposal Rating

Quality and timeliness of proposal	6.0 Exceptional	The proposed work meets exceptional scientific standards in terms of novelty, quality, objectives, and timeliness and addresses extremely important scientific questions.
	5.0 Excellent	The proposal is high quality science, which is of excellent scientific merit in terms of novelty, quality, objectives, and timeliness and addresses highly important scientific questions.
	4.0 Very Good	The proposal is good quality science, which is of very good scientific merit in terms of novelty, quality, objectives, and timeliness and addresses important scientific questions.
	3.0 Good	The proposal is worthy science, which is of some scientific merit and meets satisfactory standards for novelty, quality, objectives, and timeliness and addresses reasonably important scientific questions.
	2.0 Not Competitive	The science lacks novelty, is of low quality, not well thought through objectives and is not timely but could result in some useful knowledge.
	1.0 Unfundable	Science that is not novel, is of unsatisfactory quality, unrealistic objectives, is not timely and is unlikely to advance the field.
Overall Score	6.0 Exceptional	The research is highly likely to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the subject and would not be completed without the fellowship. Exceptional match of research to the host group's scientific infrastructure and environment with exceptional benefit to both the fellow and group and the opportunity to develop new skills (if choice of host group is not constrained by personal reasons). You think this research programme should definitely be supported and it would be a loss not to do so.
	5.0 Excellent	The research is likely to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the subject. Excellent match of research to the host group's scientific infrastructure and environment with excellent benefit to both the fellow and the group and the opportunity to develop new skills (if choice of host group is not constrained by personal reasons). You think this research should be supported.
	4.0 Very Good	The research is likely to make a good contribution to the understanding of the subject. Very good match of research to the host group's scientific infrastructure and environment with very good benefit to both the fellow and the group and the opportunity to develop some new skills (if choice of host group is not constrained by personal reasons). You think this research should be supported if funds are available.
	3.0 Good	The research is not likely to make a significant contribution to the understanding of the subject. Good match of research to the host group's scientific infrastructure and environment with some benefit to

		both the fellow and the group and the opportunity to develop some new skills (if choice of host group is not constrained by personal reasons). You think this research could be supported if funds are available.
	2.0 Not Competitive	The research will make a marginal contribution to the understanding of the subject. Not a strong match of research to the host group's scientific infrastructure and environment with little benefit to either the fellow or the group and little opportunity to develop new skills (if choice of host group is not constrained by personal reasons) .You think this research should not be supported.
	1.0 Unfundable	The research is unlikely to contribute to the understanding of the subject. Not a good match of research to the host group's scientific infrastructure and environment with no benefit to either the fellow or the group and no opportunity to develop new skills (if choice of host group is not constrained by personal reasons). You think this research should not be supported.