

STFC ERNEST RUTHERFORD FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS GUIDANCE NOTES FOR REVIEWERS 2011/12

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. Successful candidates will have the opportunity to bid for Ernest Rutherford research funding in the form of a research grant.

Applicants must have a PhD and a minimum of five years' research experience from the start of the postgraduate programme leading to the award of a PhD and 1 September 2012 with, normally, a minimum of two years' postdoctoral experience.

STFC expects to make twelve Ernest Rutherford Fellowship awards each year.

Assessment Procedures

STFC seeks comments for each Fellowship application from at least two independent reviewers via the Research Councils' [Joint electronic submission](https://ie-s.rcuk.ac.uk/eforms/secure/Login.asp) (Je-S) system (<https://ie-s.rcuk.ac.uk/eforms/secure/Login.asp>). These reviews inform the scoring and ranking of applications carried out by the Fellowship Panel.

Assessment Criteria for Ernest Rutherford Fellowship Applications

Applications should be assessed against the following criteria:

- The excellence of the applicant, including research/personal achievements to date, current standing at national/international level, leadership potential. In the case of applications 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 perform the wider role and responsibilities of an academic career;
- The appropriateness of the group with whom the individual intends to work.

Scoring of Applications

Guidance on grading applicants and their research programme is included in Annex 1. Candidates should be assigned scores against the categories on the form using a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 as the highest score representing a truly outstanding candidate. Reviewers are asked to use the scale in full and to bear in mind that with twelve awards available and 135 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.

Please check whether candidates have had a career break or whether there have been any other extenuating circumstances. Allowance should be made for potential adverse impact on their track record.

Applicant Ranking and Confidential Information

Reviewers should use this box to rank candidates in comparison with other fellowships 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. 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:

- Provide clear comments and recommendations
- Give justification for markings
- Be consistent between box markings and comments
- Provide enough information without being over-long
- Provide constructive criticism

Deadline for assessments

The completed review form should be submitted no later than **28 November 2011**. 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: clare.heseltine@stfc.ac.uk).

Guidance on grading candidates and their science

(i) Candidate

Score:

- 6.0 **Outstanding:** candidates who are of the highest standard
5.0 all round and are already showing the potential or
 qualities of scientific leadership
- 4.0 **Good:** candidates with a sound track record, but who are
3.0 not yet showing the potential for scientific leadership
 and innovation that will place them amongst the
 outstanding scientists of the future.
- 2.0 **Not suitable:** candidates who show limited potential for
1.0 scientific leadership and innovation and seem unlikely to
 be a major contributor to the future development of
 knowledge and understanding.

(ii) Proposed research programme

Score:

- 6.0 **High quality science,** which is novel, timely and likely to
5.0 contribute significantly to the development of
 understanding of the subject; addresses STFC's mission
 to promote and support high quality basic research in
 astronomy, planetary science, particle physics and
 nuclear physics.
- 4.0 **Worthy science,** but is not of a quality or urgency to
3.0 have an impact or influence on the understanding of the
 subject.
- 2.0 **Flawed science,** or science which is repetitious or has
1.0 serious technical deficiencies.