

STFC FELLOWSHIP APPLICATIONS

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR ASSESSORS

General

STFC operates two fellowship schemes, Postdoctoral and Advanced. These are described in more detail below.

Assessment Procedures

Applicants will have sought a letter of reference in support of their application from an individual of their choice. In addition, STFC aims to obtain comments from further, independent assessors via the form on Je-S.

Postdoctoral and Advanced Fellowships

Postdoctoral and Advanced Fellowships are intended for researchers who do not have a permanent academic position but wish to pursue a long-term research career. They offer the opportunity to pursue new and diverse areas of research at a chosen UK Institution.

Postdoctoral Fellowships enable less experienced researchers (i.e. those with no more than seven years research experience between the start of the postgraduate programme leading to the award of a PhD and 1 September 2010) to devote themselves to independent and original research for a period of up to three years. At the time of appointment applicants must either have a PhD or have submitted their thesis.

STFC expects to make twelve Postdoctoral Fellowship awards each year.

Advanced Fellowships enable outstanding researchers to pursue full-time research for a period of up to five years. The intention is to further the careers of individuals of outstanding potential. Advanced Fellowship applicants should have a minimum of five years research experience between the start of the postgraduate programme leading to the award of a PhD and 1 September 2010, with a minimum of two years postdoctoral experience.

STFC expects to make twelve Advanced Fellowship awards each year.

Assessment criteria for Postdoctoral and Advanced Fellowships

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;
- 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;

- in the case of “returners”, the applicant’s track record in research before the break.
- the appropriateness of the group with whom the individual intends to work.

Scoring of applications

Based on the guidance given above, and against the definitions at Annex 1, candidates should be assigned scores against the categories on the grid using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 as the highest score representing a truly outstanding candidate. Referees are asked to use the scale in full and to bear in mind that with a limited number of awards available, scores of 4 and 5 should be reserved for candidates of the highest quality. In the case of applicants for Postdoctoral and Advanced Fellowships scores of 4 and 5 should only be used for those candidates whom you consider should be short listed for interview (approximately the top 15% of all applicants to a fellowship scheme). It would be helpful if referees were able to make direct comparisons between the candidates they have been asked to assess.

Deadline for assessments

The completed assessment form should be submitted no later than **4 December 2009**.

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).

STFC POSTDOCTORAL AND ADVANCED FELLOWSHIPSGuidance on grading candidates and their science

(i) Candidate

Score:

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

(ii) Proposed research programme

Score:

- 5.0 **High quality science,** which is novel, timely and likely
4.5 to contribute significantly to the development of
4.0 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.
- 3.5 **Worthy science,** but is not of a quality or urgency to
3.0 have an impact or influence on the understanding of the
2.5 subject.
- 2.0 **Flawed science,** or science which is repetitious or has
1.5 serious technical deficiencies.
1.0