



Ernest Rutherford Fellowships Applications Guidance Notes for Reviewers 2016/17

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.

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 2017 with, normally, a minimum of two years' postdoctoral experience.

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

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 research/personal achievements to date, the volume and significance of research outputs, current standing at national/international level, ability to communicate their science effectively, and evidence of leadership ability. 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 (teaching, service on committees, public engagement etc.) and leadership potential;

- The appropriateness of the group with whom the individual intends to work;
- Alignment with STFC strategic priorities.

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 outstanding candidate. Reviewers are asked to use the scale in full and to bear in mind that with up to twelve awards available and 153 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 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 they are remaining at their current organization 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. 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
- Clearly identify strengths and weaknesses
- Raise concerns in the form of questions for the applicant

Deadline for assessments

The completed review form should be submitted no later than **14 November 2016**. 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

Score:

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

(ii) Proposal Rating

Score:

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