

## **ERNEST RUTHERFORD FELLOWSHIP DEPARTMENTAL APPLICATION LIMITS 2016**

STFC sets a limit on the number of Fellowship applications that each department is permitted to submit. This was introduced in response to a trend of increasing numbers of applications year on year between the 2000/01 and 2004/05 rounds and the associated increased load on the peer review systems and Fellowship Panel.

Departmental application limits are agreed annually by the Education, Training and Careers Committee. The Committee reviewed the Ernest Rutherford Fellowship application quotas at its meeting on 26 November. In particular, it considered the representations made by parts of the astronomy community for a significant increase in the quota levels. After a long and careful discussion it recommended that the current levels should remain to ensure that only genuinely competitive candidates are put forward and that the peer review process can focus on careful assessment of those candidates. The Committee also recommended that no appeals would be allowed. Please see the [email](#) sent to departments in January explaining why the Committee reached its decision to retain application limits at the current level.

Each department's limit is derived from the aggregate staff numbers plus the number of applicants on consolidated and consortium grants within the department as established for input to the most recent STFC research studentship algorithm. To avoid disadvantaging candidates who might otherwise have applied through another department, departments should remain within these limits.

There will be no appeals allowed, except in the case where departments have not been included in the initial allocation of application limits.

Any departments who exceed their limit will be required to withdraw the excess applications. Departments will be notified by STFC if they exceed their limit and will need to select the application(s) to withdraw within one week of this notification. If no selection is made by the department, the excess application(s) will be selected by STFC based on the chronological order in which they were received.

In order to avoid confusion and the possibility of the sanctions outlined above being applied in error, departments should consult STFC in the following cases:

- Where departments in the same institution wish to trade application slots.
- Where they are in any way unclear about their departmental limit.

The guidance for applicants informs candidates that limits exist and that they should seek assurance from their proposed host department that their application can be accommodated within their limit.

Specific points of clarification are:

- Fellowship applications associated with UKATC are counted against the University of Edinburgh School of Physics and Astronomy limit.
- Fellowship applications associated with the Cockcroft Institute are made through the relevant partner institution but are counted against the Cockcroft Institute limit and should be clearly flagged as such under the "Choice of Host Institution" section of the application.

## Returns to Research

STFC encourages returners to research and the limit will not apply to any applications from candidates who are intending to return to research from a career break (normally of at least two years). Ernest Rutherford Fellowship applications from returners may be submitted **in excess** of the departmental limit given above. Returner applications will be judged solely on the applicant's track record prior to their career break. The Fellowship Panel will look to the track record for evidence of the qualities of excellence and potential expected of a fellowship holder. **Please advertise and highlight Returners to Research as part of the Ernest Rutherford Fellowships.**

Please contact [fellowships@stfc.ac.uk](mailto:fellowships@stfc.ac.uk) for further information.