

# Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant applications 2021

## NERC – Royal Society – STFC – Royal Academy of Engineering

### Background

This document describes the internal review process to select the candidates that the University of Reading will support in applying to the postdoctoral fellowship schemes of NERC, STFC, the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering, in autumn 2021.

Reading usually receives much interest in these calls and it is sensible, both from the perspective of the candidate and from the University, to only support those applications that stand a realistic chance of success. For the STFC Ernest Rutherford Fellowship scheme the University is likely to be able to submit only one application, and this process will select that candidate. All candidates will receive feedback on their proposal outline, regardless of the outcome. It is therefore intended that this will be a supportive and constructive process. Further details of each fellowship scheme are available via the links below.

<p><b>STFC Ernest Rutherford Fellowship</b> <a href="https://stfc.ukri.org/funding/fellowships/ernest-rutherford-fellowship/">https://stfc.ukri.org/funding/fellowships/ernest-rutherford-fellowship/</a> Five-year fellowships for early career researchers undertaking research within <a href="#">STFC core science areas</a> Funder deadline: Expected mid-September 2021</p>
<p><b>NERC Independent Research Fellowship</b> <a href="https://nerc.ukri.org/funding/available/fellowships/irf/">https://nerc.ukri.org/funding/available/fellowships/irf/</a> Five-year fellowships for early career researchers undertaking research within <a href="#">NERC science remit</a> Funder deadline: Expected early October 2021</p>
<p><b>Royal Society University Research Fellowship</b> <a href="https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/university-research/">https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/university-research/</a> Five-year fellowships for early career researchers undertaking research in any area of the life and physical sciences, including engineering, but excluding clinical medicine Funder deadline: 7<sup>th</sup> September 2021</p>
<p><b>Royal Academy of Engineering Research Fellowships</b> <a href="https://www.raeng.org.uk/grants-prizes/grants/support-for-research/raeng-research-fellowship">https://www.raeng.org.uk/grants-prizes/grants/support-for-research/raeng-research-fellowship</a> Five-year fellowships for early career researchers undertaking research in engineering, in its broadest sense Funder deadline: Expected late-September 2021</p>

### Internal Assessment

The success of a fellowship proposal will depend strongly on the academic record of the applicant, which should be appropriate to their career stage, and therefore the CV will be a critical part of the review process. Fellowship proposal outlines will be considered on the strength of ideas and feasibility, while recognising that applicants will still have some time to improve presentation, prior to submission ahead of funder deadlines in the autumn.

## Process

Applicants are asked to please let Daniel Williamson in Research Services know as soon as possible that they plan to apply. They will then need to **email the following two documents, by midday, Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June to: [d.williamson@reading.ac.uk](mailto:d.williamson@reading.ac.uk)**

- **CV.** This should include publications out and close to submission (i.e. likely submitted within 3 months). It should also demonstrate evidence of collaborations and other responsible or independent scholarly activities (conference organising, academic exchanges etc.) Although applicants going forward will be constrained by funder page/word limits, there is no limit set on applicant CVs at this initial stage of the process.
- **Proposal outline, no more than 3 sides of A4.** Please respond to each of the bullet points below, in a total of no more than 3 pages. These questions are informed by the assessment criteria used by the funders for these schemes.

These documents will be reviewed by relevant academic colleagues. Applicants who wish to apply to more than one Fellowship scheme, e.g. both NERC and Royal Society, should only submit one outline, but should indicate that they wish to be considered for more than one scheme. Please note that decisions for each scheme may be made by the internal review process at different times, and so you may receive feedback relating to one fellowship scheme earlier than others. The intention will be to provide all feedback to candidates by mid-July. All candidates who are subsequently invited forward for submission of a full fellowship application will be assigned a mentor and will receive support from Research Services to ensure that their proposal is as strong as possible.

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### Proposal outline template:

#### General information

- Project title
- State the Fellowship scheme(s) you wish to be considered for.
- Have you submitted an expression of interest to University of Reading's internal assessment before? Have you submitted a fellowship application to a funder? If so, which, and when was this?
- Please confirm your PhD award date, and state how many years of postdoctoral experience you will have by the time of the funder's submission deadline/s. Please detail any periods of part-time working or absence due to parental leave or for other reasons, which may lead to an extension in your eligibility to apply.

#### Research proposal (approx. maximum of 2 sides of A4)

- What is your research vision and philosophy (what are the key strategic questions that motivate you as an independent scientist)? How will your research be developed over a five-year fellowship?
- Why is this research important, and why is it timely to fund research in this area now?
- What are the key innovations introduced in this proposal? How will this lead to a step change in understanding? Try to build in references to your own past work in motivating this new approach wherever possible – this will demonstrate why you are the best person to do this.
- Please provide a bullet point list of objectives and briefly set out the research methods/approach that will be followed.

- What are the main risks of your proposed project? How could you address these?
- What are the potential impacts from this research and how will they be realised? Will this involve partners outside the University? Note that 'impact' here refers to outcomes outside of academia.

**Applicant**

- Why do you want to come to/stay at University of Reading for your fellowship?
  - How do you intend to build your research group over the five-year fellowship?
  - How will you contribute to the international research area and interact with the international groups in your field?
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