

Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant applications 2024

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 which are likely to have closing dates in autumn 2024.

Reading usually receives significant 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 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>STFC Ernest Rutherford Fellowship</p> <p>https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/stfc-ernest-rutherford-fellowship/</p> <p>Five-year fellowships for early career researchers undertaking research within STFC core science areas</p> <p>Funder deadline is 1st October 2024</p>
<p>NERC Independent Research Fellowship</p> <p>https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/nerc-independent-research-fellowship-2023/</p> <p>Five-year fellowships for early career researchers undertaking research within NERC science remit</p> <p>Funder deadline hasn't been announced yet but is likely to be in early October 2024</p>
<p>Royal Society University Research Fellowship</p> <p>https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/university-research/</p> <p>Eight-year fellowships for early career researchers undertaking research in any area of the life and physical sciences, including engineering, but excluding clinical medicine</p> <p>Funder deadline is 10th September 2024</p>
<p>Royal Academy of Engineering Research Fellowships</p> <p>https://www.raeng.org.uk/grants-prizes/grants/support-for-research/raeng-research-fellowship</p> <p>Five-year fellowships for early career researchers undertaking research in engineering, in its broadest sense</p> <p>Funder deadline is 18th September 2024</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. 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

Interested applicants are asked to email fellowships@reading.ac.uk as soon as possible so that we can register your interest and direct you to the Research Development Manager (RDM) who will be supporting you through the fellowships application process, and who will provide you access to resources which can support your application.

You will need to **email the following two documents to your allocated RDM contact no later than 3rd June 2024. Please do send these documents when they are ready rather than treating this as a hard deadline.** Expressions of interest will be dealt with on a rolling basis **except** for any applications for the STFC Rutherford Fellowships for which we are limited to one candidate only. The successful candidate will be selected after the 3rd June.

- **CV.** No set format at this stage: if you already have a narrative CV (e.g. in the R4RI format) then please submit this; if not, please submit a traditional CV. This could also include a short personal statement and/or career aspiration/development plans. The CV 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 within a fortnight of receipt of your EOI, but please note that timescales may be subject to delay.

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.
- Please nominate one or more mentor(s); at least one should be based at the University of Reading. [NB Mentors should not be co-investigators. They could be from outside of the applicant's immediate field of expertise to assess the clarity of the application, or from within the field to help develop the science. There is an expectation that you will have engaged with your mentor(s) prior to submitting the EoI and that they will have read the EoI before it is submitted. Please note that we may contact mentors to ask them to provide written feedback on EoIs, after submission.]

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 multi-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.

Career development

- Why is the proposed work and the environment it will be in, the right way to develop your career?
 - Why are you the right individual to successfully deliver the proposed work?
 - How will you contribute to the international research area and interact with the international groups in your field?
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