UKRI FUTURE LEADERS FELLOWSHIP SCHEME
ROUND 7

Research Services
June 2022
fellowships@reading.ac.uk
WHAT IS THE FLF SCHEME?

• Flagship UKRI investment, launched Spring 2018
• Aims to develop the next generation of innovation and research leaders from the UK and across the world
• To date, UKRI have awarded almost 500 fellowships under 6 rounds of the scheme (2018-2021). Details can be found here.
• This current call is the 7th round and an 8th round is anticipated (dates tbc)
• Call guidance and information can be found here and here (and links to documents within these pages)
PURPOSE

• To support **early career** researchers and innovators with **outstanding potential** across the whole of UKRI remit
• Provides long-term support in order to enable fellows to tackle ambitious programmes or multidisciplinary questions and new or emerging research areas and partnerships.
• No barriers to multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research and innovation
WHAT DOES THE FLF OFFER?

• Up to 7 years support in a 4 + 3 model
  • Apply for 4 years with the option to extend for a further 3 years
• Tapering salary support for the Fellow from year 3
• All other costs associated with the project apart from the Fellow’s salary will be supported by UKRI for the term of the award.
• Institutional commitment to an open-ended UK-based independent research position
• No limit on the amount of funding that can be requested but must be appropriate to the project.
TAPERING SALARY SUPPORT

To demonstrate their support, academic Host Organisations are required to commit to funding an increasing percentage of the fellow’s salary as shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total salary request from award</th>
<th>UKRI contribution</th>
<th>Academic Host Organisation’s contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Review point (Below figures not captured within application)**

| Year 5 | 50% | 40% | 60% |
| Year 6 | 50% | 40% | 60% |
| Year 7 | 25% | 20% | 80% |
WHO CAN APPLY?

• Early career academics and innovators who are transitioning to/ establishing independence.
• No eligibility rules based on years since PhD or current role
• As FLF aims to enable the fellow to transition to or establish their research/innovation independence, applicants who have already achieved research/innovation independence e.g. by securing funding aimed at this career stage will not be competitive.
• Can be held part-time but expected that Fellow’s full working time is committed to the FLF for the duration of the award.
  • 6 hours per week on additional commitments or related activities provided they enhance career development
• [Full person specification][43 of guidance] available on the website (p.43 of guidance)
HOW IS A FELLOWSHIP DIFFERENT TO A PROJECT GRANT?

• Person
  • Track record and potential for leadership
    • Trajectory to become world-class
  • Relevant experience to deliver project

• Place
  • Is Reading the best place to do the research?
    • Facilities/ Infrastructure/Supportive Environment
    • Relevance to strategic priorities and institutional strengths
    • Networks/ collaborators in place

• Project
  • Is the project a personal vision?
  • Will it move the field forward and enable the fellow to become a Future Leader?
REFLECTIONS FROM PREVIOUS ROUNDS

• Highly competitive funding scheme with an average 17% success rate across the previous 6 rounds

• Quality/excellence is vital but must be evident across all of the assessment criteria i.e.
  • Research & Innovation Excellence;
  • Applicant & their Development;
  • Impact & Strategic Relevance;
  • Research and Innovation, Environment & Costs.

• Applications that don’t address all aspects will not be competitive
REFLECTIONS FROM PREVIOUS ROUNDS

• Applicants need to be clear on what they will gain from a long-term, flexible, fellowship as opposed to other funding mechanisms such as a series of project grants. For example:
  • Why me? And why now?
  • Why could the programme of work not be supported via standard grants?
  • How will the fellowship enable a demonstrable step change in your career trajectory?
  • What will be the value added to your career by holding this fellowship

• This is a scheme for Early Career Researchers, not established academics
  • No time bound criteria, applicants need to be clear why they should be considered an early career researcher
  • Where they have previously received funding at this stage, for example a New Investigator award, they need to demonstrate why further investment would present a good investment –holding a New Investigator award does not automatically exclude applicants
  • Candidates who are further towards being established and independent have become less competitive as the scheme has progressed
REFLECTIONS FROM PREVIOUS ROUNDS

• Strong applicants consider leadership and career development not only for themselves, but also for the staff they plan to employ on the award

• Professional development should be specific

• Host commitment is crucial
  • The proposed support should not just be generic but must demonstrate that they have considered the specific development needs of the applicant

• Candidates need to be able to articulate their research and the intended impact of such an award on their career to an interview panel from range of different backgrounds
PREPARING AN APPLICATION

- Things to consider when developing your proposal:
  - Why you should be considered an early career researcher?
  - Why is this fellowship the most appropriate funding for you and your programme of research?
  - What would be the demonstrable benefits of you having an FLF award?
    - Why me? Why now?
  - How will you ensure that the award allows you to maximise your potential?
  - How will the award develop you and your research team?
  - Are you working with the right stakeholders to ensure that you maximise the impact of your research?
ASSESSMENT PROCESS
OVERVIEW CAN BE FOUND HERE

Peer review
• Proposals will usually have 3 usable reviews before progressing to a meeting:
• Applicants are encouraged to nominate reviewers on their application form. Speak to your nominated reviewers before submitting your application so they are aware
• Be constructive when responding to your reviewer comments

Panel stages – short-listing and interviews
• Organised by themes rather than disciplines
• Peer reviewers provide the expert view, panels have broader representation
• Consider how to articulate your research to a non-specialist audience – the interview panel will include social scientists and members from other disciplines and user
**TIMELINES**

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<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Internal EoI deadline</td>
<td>30&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Successful candidates notified</td>
<td>w/c 12&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline proposal deadline</td>
<td>18&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; October</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal full proposal deadline</td>
<td>22&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; November</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full proposal deadline</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; December</td>
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- Full application deadline to award announcements – approx. 10 months
NEXT STEPS

• Read the scheme guidance and information in detail
• Get in touch with your Research Development Manager to discuss
• Book to attend one of the UKRI Community Engagement events to find out more about the scheme. Further details can be found here
• Look at examples of successful FLF applications on the Successful Proposal Library
• Discuss your intention to apply with your Head of Support to seek their support for your application
• Talk to your colleagues, networks and RDL about your ideas
  • Are they suitable for a Fellowship application?
  • Give yourself sufficient time to develop your ideas
• Broaden your networks to find the best people to be working with:
  • Academic and non-academic, in the UK and Overseas