

General feedback and best practice guide for skills development fellowship institutional bids

The following recommendations have been made for the preparation of the next recruitment round to ensure that a **step change in a fellow's career is supported** and that **equality of access** to the scheme is available for all applicants.

Recruitment process and equality of access

The panel noted that, overall, internal applicants were more likely to be appointed than external candidates. Research organisations must ensure **all applicants** have clear signposting for further support so that internal candidates are not unduly advantaged.

- A two-stage recruitment process is **strongly recommended** and should include:
 - an expression of interest stage and/or a similar opportunity for all candidates to discuss and develop project outlines with the relevant academic contacts
 - a formal interview process.
- The recruitment window must be open for a sufficient length of time to allow candidates to discuss and develop project outlines with the relevant academic contacts.
- A senior academic contact point(s) must be included in the recruitment text to allow candidates the opportunity to seek advice/information and to develop projects in advance of interview.
- Bids should consider making the leadership team ineligible to sponsor/host candidates.
- Vacancies needs to be broadly advertised across relevant disciplines. The MRC will host a central page on its website with links to the recruitment dates and web pages for each host institution.
- Criteria for the appointment of fellows should be broadly in line with [those expected](#) by the MRC, and as considered in our [fellowship guidance](#).
- The selection panel should have appropriate gender balance and should constitute at least one external member to encourage consistency and sharing of best practice. This external member could be from another institutional bid or a member of the MRC Skills Development Panel.

Supporting a step-change

Fellowships should support individuals transitioning to the next level in their careers, normally through a change from an existing/current role (see [MRC fellowship vision](#)). To enable the panel to monitor that fellows are being supported in making a step change in their career, more detailed information on a fellow's background, skillsets and training plans are required. For this reason, prospective candidates must use the [MRC Fellowship CV template](#) when providing details on Je-S.

Additionally, training plans for each candidate **must** include the following information:

- the current skillset of the applicant
- which skills are required for the fellowship and why they are relevant to the proposal
- how these skills will be developed to deliver the proposed objectives (for example details of formal training courses, collaborative visits, placements, research environment development opportunities, relevant supervisory expertise)
- what skills the candidate will have at the end of the fellowship and how these will benefit their career
- details of other relevant skills development and/or training needs (such as career development skills, mentorship, professional skills, supervision of staff, networking, transferrable skills).

Successful applicants will be required to input the standard information relevant to the fellowship via the Je-S system. This information is provided to the Skills Development Panel for monitoring purposes. You may therefore find it helpful to standardise capture of this information for your interview processes.