

## **Transition Support – Guidance and Assessment**

Applications will be assessed in a two-step process. On submission the applications will be reviewed by the expertise of the Clinical and Non-Clinical Training and Career Panels. The applications will then be assessed further by a sub-group of these panels at a meeting to take place on 05 December, where a funding decision will be made. There will be no external peer review. Announcements of the final decisions will be made in January 2020.

### **Scheme Objectives:**

- facilitate the transition of fellows into secure posts beyond their fellowship,
- maximise MRC's investment in current intermediate fellowships,
- increase the number of individuals establishing substantive research programmes in the period following their fellowship by supporting progressive career planning by fellows and institutions.

### **Who are we looking to support?**

One of the key aims of the scheme is to provide short-term support to fellows who have made good progress with their fellowship project but have not yet achieved outputs suitable to secure follow-on funding via other routes. The fellow will be demonstrating they have **great potential for excellence** in their field, however circumstances have led to minimal outputs. For example, animal models may have successfully been established or data analysis be in progress, but **publications and other outputs** may clearly require longer than the timeframe of the award remaining. The impact of delivering these outputs on the Fellow's research potential should be clearly articulated. Fellows who have encountered difficult personal circumstances which have impacted the delivery of the award are encouraged to apply.

The MRC already has a [Post-Award Amendment \(PAA\)](#) mechanism which allows costed or no-cost extensions to existing awards. In addition to covering statutory requirements such as parental leave and sick leave, this mechanism supports requests for non-recruitment of staff and to cover exceptional unforeseen delays which were out with the control of the Fellow.

Transition Support is looking to support candidates whose **research momentum** has been impacted and therefore affected their productivity and subsequent outputs. This could include multiple, or a series of, issues; candidates who have previously had a PAA are still eligible to apply as well as those affected by personal circumstances. Beyond a like-for-like extension, candidates should highlight the added value Transition Support could offer them in regaining their research momentum, including factors such as research continuity (e.g. retention of key staff, job security).

Due to the launch of the pilot, discretion in applying has been granted for Fellows whose awards have recently (c. 6 months) finished. Similarly, candidates that have recently submitted a Senior fellowship application to MRC, before the pilot was announced (on 05 June 2019), are invited to discuss their eligibility to submit a Transition Support application with the office by emailing [fellows@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:fellows@mrc.ukri.org).

### **Who is the scheme NOT aimed at?**

Transition Support is not, in isolation, seed funding for new projects. Candidates who have made good progress and are able to apply for research funding based on the outputs achieved through their fellowship to date are unlikely to be competitive. This will be assessed by the funding Panel. Candidates whose issues could be directly resolved by the [Post-Award Amendment \(PAA\)](#) process are also unlikely to be competitive.

## **Transition Support Assessment Criteria**

### **1. Progress made to date and personal achievement**

- What progress has been made with the delivery of the objectives of the fellowship?
- What key outputs or achievements have arisen?

*Career breaks must be appropriately considered in line with [MRC policy](#). Given the nature of the scheme, in addition to publications this could include proactive mitigation plans and non-scientific achievements such as:*

- *Innovative collaborations and/or networks*
- *an ability to identify and maximise potential in others*
- *invitations to seminar/conferences*
- *have identified opportunities to access career development support, such as mentoring and professional training development, and relevant training courses*
- *presentation at scientific conferences and public science fairs*
- *Influence their research field e.g. participation in peer review, invitations to give lectures/seminars, committee membership*

### **2. Progress insufficient to constitute competitive funding applications**

- Is there clear justification for why the fellow has been unable to produce the necessary outputs sufficient enough to be competitive for further substantial grant income?
- The impact of personal circumstances outside the Fellows control on the Fellow's progress should be appropriately considered.

*As a guide, substantial grant income is typically defined as grants or fellowships that are  $\geq 3$  years in duration, with  $>£50k$  direct science costs (excluding the principal investigator's salary) per annum.*

### **3. How will Transition Support enable the fellow to successfully apply for grant funding in the future?**

- Is there a clear delivery plan for the outstanding key objectives of the research?
- Does the plan for Transition Support provide evidence that outputs will be achieved within the time frame requested and is this feasible?
- Has the impact on other staff associated with the Fellowship been appropriately considered?

### **4. Institutional commitment**

*A letter of support from the RO must be provided and display a demonstrable and genuine commitment to realising the potential of the fellow and establishing them as a research leader.*

- Does the letter satisfy the below requirements?
  - The applicant's suitability for a Transition Support award
  - The commitment the department will make to continue to mentor and support the fellow

- Research time will be protected appropriately; (as a minimum, the percentage FTE supported by the MRC and must be sufficient to achieve the aims of the Transition funded period)
- Confirmation of the commitment to 50% of the fellow's salary and, line with organisational employment policies and practices, a commitment to supporting the career planning of the applicant at the end of the award. *In most cases this means providing an open-ended UK based independent research position to be taken up if the Transition Support is awarded, however where this is not appropriate (for example, if this precludes applications to other funders), then a robust and justified explanation for why an open-ended position is not appropriate should be provided.*

*If these requirements are not explicitly detailed, the application will be considered out of scope. A commitment only to support further applications would not be considered adequate.*

## **5. Justification of resources**

- Has the applicant appropriately costed the request based on the time and resources required to deliver the outputs required?

*Applicants may request up to three years funding, based on needs of the candidate and the project. Anticipated costs would include salary costs (at 50%), continuity of existing research staff, a small consumables budget and overhead costs. The support for new team members would only be considered in exceptional circumstances. There is not a formal limit on the level of resource applied for. The Panel may make recommendations to alter these as appropriate. All scoring will be based on the recommended changes to costings (where appropriate).*