

Fellowship Workshop

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Fellowships

What is a Research Fellowship?

- An **independent** research position held in a university, but (usually) funded by an external body.
- May be a fixed-term post in its own right, or held (on a fixed-term basis) by somebody with a substantive position.
- Some universities offer permanent posts to winners of very prestigious fellowships.
- Details (eligibility, length, permitted hosts etc) **vary wildly** between schemes.
- Applications: usually **find a host** then **work with them to apply to funder**.

Is a Research Fellowship for Me?

- **Yes**, if you have (and can articulate!) a **clear and convincing vision for your own research** programme and have a **good track record** relative to career stage.
- **Probably not**, if you still need to ask your supervisor what is or isn't a good research problem to work on or if you haven't yet got much to show in terms of prior work.

UK Research Councils

Mainly EPSRC for Maths, but others like BBSRC or NERC might be relevant.

EPSRC Postdoctoral Fellowships

- Up to (and usually) three years duration
- Suitability descriptors rather than exact eligibility criteria
- Typically a second (but sometimes a first or later) postdoctoral position.

UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships

- Typically multi-disciplinary/impact-driven.
- Typical applicant maybe 5-10 years post-PhD.
- Four years duration (with possible extension).
- Institutional quotas for application mean can be hard to find a host.

EPSRC Open Fellowships **(ENDED ON 30th April 2026)**

- Up to five years duration, typically later in career but can be first academic position.

EPSRC Early-Independence Fellowships in Mathematical Sciences **(TBA late spring 2026)**

European Union

Tends to be very attractive but with complex/bureaucratic application procedures.

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowships

- **Mobility-driven** (to/from/around Europe, which does now include UK again!)
- Eligible up to 8 years post-PhD
- 1-3 years duration depending on scheme

European Research Council Starting Grants

- **Very** competitive
- For real superstars of the future.

The Heilbronn Institute

Heilbronn Fellowships

- Split time 50/50 between academic research and government research
- Pure mathematics and data science
- Security clearance and nationality requirements
- Available in Manchester, Bristol and some London universities
- 3 years duration, sometimes extended by another 3 years

The Royal Society

Royal Society University Research Fellowships (URFs)

- Eligible 3-8 years from PhD
- Up to 8 years (!) duration
- Very much open to fundamental research: **quality** is what matters.
- **Seriously** competitive.

Royal Society Dorothy Hodgkin Fellowships

- Similar to the above but with a (slightly) greater focus on career flexibility to accommodate personal circumstances such as caring responsibilities.

Newton International Fellowships

- For people coming **to** the UK from overseas (2 years in duration).

The Leverhulme Trust

Likes **unusual/offbeat** projects, **not** “hot topics”.

Open to fundamental research and to unusual collaborations.

Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship

- Only funded at 50%: host department needs to cover the rest.
- Certain research areas cannot be funded (e.g. medical)
- 3 years duration depending on scheme.
- Institutional sifting required

Miscellaneous

LMS Early Career Fellowship

- Very short (3-6 months) bridging funding for new PhDs.

Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 Fellowships

- Up to 3 years post-PhD, up to 3 years duration.
- Few awarded and very competitive.

University-funded Fellowships

- “Tenure-track” fellowships (e.g. DKO Fellowships in Manchester) are at least as desirable and competitive as permanent lectureships.
- A few departments have random (e.g. endowed) short-term fellowships.
- Oxford/Cambridge college fellowships (e.g. JRF) vary greatly in terms/desirability.
- Other universities: e.g. Imperial Chapman, Borland and Research Fellowships

Successful Applications?

Most schemes are very competitive and there is no recipe for success.

Schemes vary greatly and you need to pay attention to the one you are applying for.

But if I had to give some tips:

- It is **more about the person than the project.**
- There is (metaphorically) **no second prize, so go for broke!**
- Don't put all your hope into only one (but don't just copy-paste your application!)
- If applying to go somewhere else, talk to ppl at this institution first

Holding Fellowships in Manchester

Our Department can host most kinds of fellowships.

There is now a central webpage for fellowships:

[Research fellowships in science and engineering | Faculty of Science and Engineering](#)

We can provide extensive support with applying e.g. (internal feedback from experienced applicants, mock interviews).

To start with, **talk to your Group Research Lead (GRL)**:

- Stefan Güttel (Applied)
- Lasse Rempe (Pure)
- Lorenzo Pellis (Probability & Statistics)

Thank you, and good luck!