

NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY CARE HEALTH SCIENCES



Applying for an MRC fellowship

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What we'll cover

- Planning your application
- Completing the application form
- Preparing for interview
- Peer review/feedback
- 'Tips' for the top

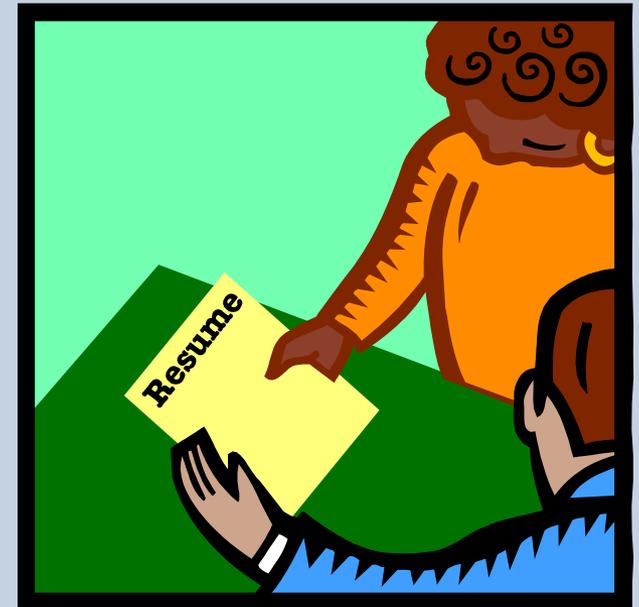
Make a plan

- Starting thinking about it early – at least 18 months before the end of you current contract
- Find more than one fellowship to apply for
 - Research Council, NIHR, charities
- Clinical/non-clinical



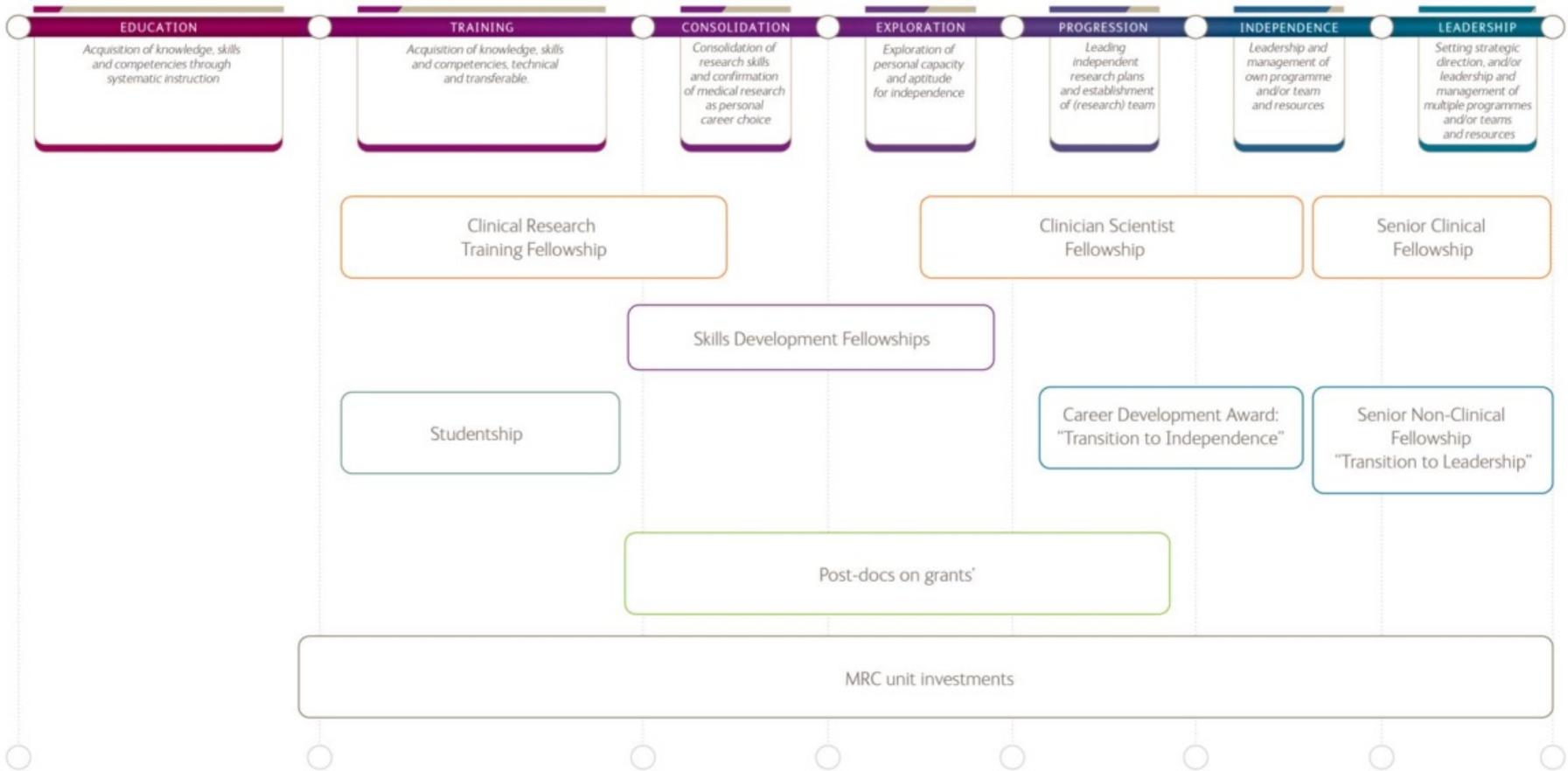
Making the most of your CV

- Publications
 - 3 published papers (2 papers and 1 protocol)
 - 2 articles in press (including 1 letter)
- Small grants/travel awards/prizes
 - Small SPCR project grant (£35,000)
- Presentations
- Peer review
- Teaching



What fellowships do the MRC offer?

Fellowship schemes



What fellowships do the MRC offer?

Skills and experience	Training	Early career	Transition to independence	Transition to leadership
Relevant scheme(s)	Clinical Research Training Fellowships PhD studentships	Skills Development Fellowships	Career Development Award Clinician Scientist Fellowships	Senior Non-Clinical Fellowship Senior Clinical Fellowship
1. Research vision	<p>Individuals should:</p> <p>Have a clear understanding of how their research project will progress knowledge within the field and an understanding of the project's relevance to human health.</p>	<p>Individuals should:</p> <p>Have a clear understanding of the contribution of their research to their field.</p> <p>Be able to demonstrate independent research ideas, show an awareness of research in other fields, and an appreciation of the importance of working across disciplinary boundaries.</p> <p>Be starting to establish a network(s) of research contacts independent of their current group leader/supervisor</p>	<p>Individuals should:</p> <p>Have their own research plans / ideas, independent of their current group leader, and describe how their research plans fit into an international context.</p> <p>Have a network of research contacts, independent of their current group leader, including appropriate collaborations nationally, internationally and across disciplines.</p> <p>Be able to explain plans to establish their own research team that will enable them to</p>	<p>Individuals should:</p> <p>Be able to demonstrate an effective track record of internationally competitive independent research including through international collaborations and between / across disciplines where required.</p> <p>Be looking to develop the breadth of their research career with ambitious and credible ideas for developing themselves as research leaders.</p>

What are the MRC looking for?

“The MRC’s fellowships are personal awards to talented researchers at key points in their careers. Fellowships provide funding for a challenging research project and an ambitious programme of research training and personal development.”

- A project with scientific and clinical interest
- Interesting and novel
- Integrated training plan
- Oversees travel

Planning a project and training plan

- Don't be too ambitious
- Try not to plan workstream 1 leading to workstream 2 leading to workstream 3
- Avoid too much new data collection
 - CPRD, systematic review (+/- IPD), re-analysis of trial data
- Training courses at other centres
 - MSc? PGCert?
- Collaborate
 - Other departments in the national school
 - Oversees (data sharing?)
- Consider moving to a different institution

Completing the application form

- All applications must be submitted via the Joint Electronic Submission system (JeS system)
- Read the guidance carefully
- Online application + attachments
 - Cover letter
 - Application form (including costings)
 - Case for Support (5-6 pages)
 - CV (2 pages)
 - List of Publications (1 page)
 - Justification of Resources (2 pages)
 - Pathways to impact
 - Data management plan (3 pages, MRC template)
 - Letter of support (Head of Department)
 - Letter of support (Collaborators, mentors, etc)

Sorting out your costings

- Ask for help
- Look at other people's applications
- Read the guidance carefully
- Post-doc grants don't include research staff
- Max reasonable ~£300,000
 - ~£10,000 on 7 conferences + research trip
 - ~£15,000 blood pressure monitors
 - ~£20,000 consumables, publication costs, computer + software
 - ~£8,000 training courses



What happens after you submit your app?



Preparing for interview



- Read up on the topic
- Have a mock interview early
- Prepare a response to every criticism of your application
- Find out who's on the panel
- Think about your '10 year career plan'

Panel Scoring

10. Exceptional – Top international programme
9. Excellent – Internationally competitive and leading edge
8. Very High Quality – Internationally competitive
7. High Quality – Leading edge nationally, international quality in parts

6. High Quality – Leading edge nationally, but not yet internationally competitive
5. Good Quality – Nationally competitive
4. Potentially Useful – with significant weaknesses
3. Potentially Useful – With major weaknesses
2. Poor Quality – Bordering on unacceptable
1. Unacceptable quality or has serious ethical concerns
0. Ineligible for funding

What happens next?

- 1 week until decision
- 1 month until confirmation of the final award
- MRC induction day (September/October)
- Fellows' day (May)

Peer review

Is there any pilot work?

“The pilot work is reported with some incorrect and some naive analyses used.”

“The pilot data is clearly a strength of this proposal.”

Peer review

Comment on the applicant's PhD

“The PhD considered only 18 subjects, and did not appear to give a clear comparison with alternative approaches. The statistical presentation was not strong.”

“The applicant is a basic scientist moving into the primary care research field. Both the applicant and the sector are likely to benefit from his rigorous training in the scientific method”

Peer review

How do you rate the candidates ability to complete the proposed research?

“The statistical analyses would be better done by a competent statistician, in perhaps a month, rather than by a weak social scientist.”

“Future output is best predicted by past performance and he is very likely to be able to complete the proposed work.”

Peer review

Is the training plan appropriate?

“Do not attempt stats training.”

“The training plan seems well-thought out and appropriate.”

Peer review

Overall quality of proposed research?

“Uncompetitive”

“Very interesting, important proposal”

Overall assessment?

“Poor candidate and application” (Score: 1 out of 4)

“Very high / Excellent” (Score: 4-5 out of 6)

'Tips' for the top!

- Prepare well in advance
- Take the initiative
- Be persistent
- Speak to other people (+ use the RDS)

Thank you for listening!

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