

# Supergen



Offshore  
Renewable  
Energy

## Early Career Researchers

## Next steps - Fellowship Applications & Early Career Appointments

# What's different about a Fellowship application?

- All grants require **excellence of science** and engineering.
- Research must be aligned with specified priority areas, strategic priorities etc  
... but ...
- **Fellowships** are designed to support the **development of you** as an individual and **future research leader**.
- EPSRC: “*fellowships support talented and ambitious researchers to deliver **research excellence** and **lead our research base** in the evolution of a modern working culture.*”
- EPSRC: “*assessment ... asks reviewers to comment on how the award of the fellowship will **progress the career of the applicant over and above their current trajectory**, and why the applicant needs this award in order to achieve this career progression.*”

# What Fellowships are not ...

- **They aren't just another responsive mode grant**
  - If it looks like a grant that you could have submitted to responsive mode funding then it isn't a fellowship application.
  - The emphasis will be wrong, and primarily on science and not the development of you.
  - Don't just window dress a grant application; rewrite it with emphasis on you.
- They aren't another way for your supervisor to submit a grant application to keep you working in the group as a senior post-doctoral researcher.
  - Your fellowship application must **build on your track record of excellent science,**
  - but define a **distinctive research path for you.**

# What Fellowships are ...

- They provide **autonomy**,
- This may be your first completely self-directed research programme,
- They are an opportunity for you to **design your own research programme**,
- Showing the world **your vision** for research in your field,
- That **commits your time directly to executing the research** and possibly supervising others as part of your programme,

# What Fellowships are ...

- They can provide a **stepping stone** from directed doctoral / post-doctoral research **to a tenured academic position** leading a research group.
- To be successful you must have a **clear vision for your research and of you at the end of the fellowship** – not just great journal papers but a vision of yourself as an
  - **established, recognised expert in your field,**
  - making **substantial contributions and leading the agenda at a national level or beyond.**

# Where should I apply to be hosted?

- This decision should be led by **where will support you in becoming the leader that you want to be.**
- Where will allow you to develop the most? Consider some of;
  - Access to facilities,
  - Aligned research, and research clusters with critical mass,
  - International expertise and centres of excellence,
  - Host University support – in-kind, mentoring, support,
  - Where will allow you to develop the most?
- There is nothing wrong with staying where you are if it fulfils the above but make sure that you justify it.

# EPSRC Fellowship Schemes

## Post-doctoral fellowship if you:

- Have recently **started formulating your own research ideas** for programmes of work up to three years in duration that will deliver high quality research with a focus on discovery science, innovation, instrumentation/technique development or software engineering
- Can demonstrate that you **have acquired the skills and expertise** to successfully deliver your research proposal
- Have **not previously held a significant grant** (usually defined as those which included PDRA time, capital equipment or were in excess of £100k (FEC)).
- Have **identified training and development needs** to enable you to prepare for an enhanced career in research and innovation.

# EPSRC Fellowship Schemes

## Open fellowship if:

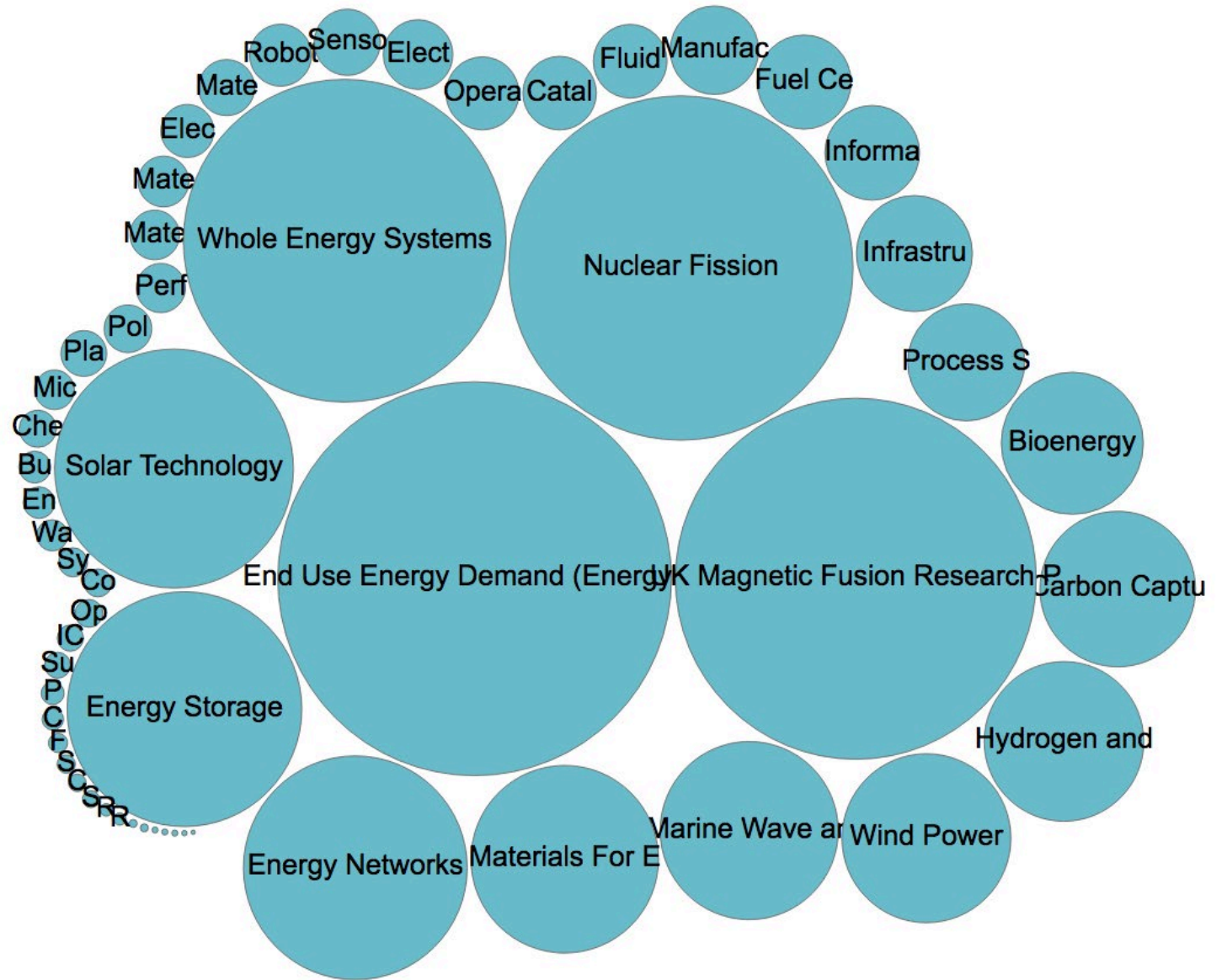
- Programme of work up to 5 years in duration, and will deliver **high quality research** with a focus on discovery science, innovation, instrumentation/technique development or software engineering
- ...committed to **implementing good practice** in creating a modern and inclusive research environment, including considerations of Research Integrity, Responsible Research and Innovation and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- You will also be an **advocate** for EPSRC, able to influence policy makers or other stakeholders on the importance of your research area and willing to participate in peer review activities, disseminate EPSRC information and sit on advisory groups.
- You have identified areas for your continued research and **professional development** which will enable you to expand or enhance your role and career. ... can include acquiring additional skills and experience via formal and/or informal routes.
- Additionally “**Plus**” **component** which will enable you to allocate 20 - 50% of your time spent on the fellowship to create positive change in the research community by championing a topic aligned to EPSRC aspirations to deliver improvements in research culture in topics such as equality, diversity and inclusion, responsible research and innovation or public engagement.



# EPSRC Post-Doctoral Fellowship Areas

Currently only available in  
**Energy** and **Mathematical  
Sciences**

Open Fellowships are  
unrestricted by area



# The application process

- **Internal submission procedures**
  - Be aware of lead times for Research Services approval
  - Internal competition (demand management) processes
- **The proposal and peer review**
  - Assessment criteria
  - What to include in a proposal
  - Achieving impact and Letters of support
  - Responding to reviewers comments
- **The interview**
  - Preparing for it and the importance of mock interviews

# Assessment Criteria

## Post-doctoral fellowships

- research quality
- national importance
- applicant and partnerships
- resources and management
- fellowship vision
- continued professional development
- project delivery

## Open fellowships

- research quality
- national importance
- applicant and partnerships
- resources and management
- fellowship vision and delivery
- community leadership
- team leadership
- continued professional development
- community champion (only assessed if the applicant has applied for the Plus component)

# Eligibility and when to apply

## Am I ready?

- **Update your CV** – load it with everything you can think of.
- **Test yourself and your outline proposal** against each assessment criteria
  - Write a series of bullet points against each criteria that exemplify how you and your proposal fulfil or even exceed that criteria,
  - Include everything that is about you; best paper/poster prizes/medals, highly cited articles, citation metrics, invited talks, student (MEng / MSc / PhD) supervision / co-supervision, paper / proposal reviewing, scientific committee membership, consultancy, industrial collaboration, funding secured, workshop / meeting organization, national & international collaboration, policy influence etc ...
- **Honestly review** your criteria responses **with a Senior Academic**

# Eligibility and when to apply

## Reflection

- OK so some things are really good and others are a little weaker.
- What can I do about my weaknesses?
- Plot a path to filling in the weaknesses.

## Review

- am I applying for the **right level / type** of fellowship?
- **when to submit** your fellowship application.

**Allow time to develop your profile** - don't be afraid to wait. Start thinking about a fellowship application well in advance – years not months!

# The proposal – key documents

Application Cover Letter

**Case for Support** (max 9 pages – 7 pages on science case, 2 on non-science elements of assessment criteria)

**Workplan** (1 page)

**Host Organisation statement** (max 2 pages)

**Justification of Resources** (max 2 pages)

**Narrative CV and track record** (max 4 pages)

**Project partner letters** (no limit) from any project partners

Facilities / equipment quotes as appropriate.

# Case for Support

- Should have a clearly **defined vision**, with supporting aims and objectives. This is distinct from a standard grant application, as a **fellowship emphasises you imposing your vision on the community**.
- A **clear programme of work and supporting methodology** to be undertaken by you and your emerging group.
- Proposed research should be **ambitious and deliver leading research excellence**.
- Ensure that **each of the assessment criteria are addressed**.

# Letters of Support – Byron will discuss next

- **Industrial collaboration is an excellent route to achieving more direct impact** and can significantly enhance the quality of your research by providing industrial context, data and in-kind support. Letters of support from project partners should focus on:
  - **Track-record of relationship with you** (and potentially the host institution / group),
  - **Their support of and interest in your vision,**
  - **What they are willing to provide to support your research programme;** data, engineer time, steering / industry board participation, financial or student support. Where possible project partners should estimate the financial value of their contributions.
- Be sure to **engage with industrial collaborators at an early stage** (for this purpose it is useful to develop a 1 page project summary) as committing to and signing letters of support can take time.
- **Get in touch with the Supergen ORE hub** who can support your application.



# Host Organisation statement

- Host organisation support is very important in developing you as a fellow. Funders want to know that you will be supported and nurtured.
- You have already selected a host institution. **The Host statement should provide the evidence of why this is the right place for you to develop as a research leader.** It should include mention of
  - Why this is the right place to host you as a fellow - centre of excellence, aligned research, fit to University strategy,
  - Supporting facilities – and the access and support you will have to these,
  - What the host University sees in you and what they see that you will bring to their research programme in this area.
  - Any in-kind, mentoring or other support that your host University can provide.
  - Avenues / commitments to career progression at your host University.

# The review process and responding to reviewer comments

- Your proposal will be peer reviewed by at least 3 reviewers. This process can take several months.
- Once complete you will be provided with the reviews and given the **opportunity to respond to comments made** (max 2 pages).
- The prioritisation panel will then assess your proposal. **They will not re-review your proposal but will consider the reviews and your response.**
- Your response to reviews is very important and is **your opportunity to rebut criticisms**, citing referee support where available.
- Be careful not to try and change your proposal too much in response to criticisms & **make sure to support and substantiate positive reviews.**

# The interview ...

- **Well done** – your proposal has been peer reviewed and ranked highly enough in the process to win you a place at interview.
- This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage in the process. Your proposed research has been deemed to have high scientific merit and has met the requirements for excellence.
- So what's this stage about ... **you!**

# The interview ...

If you are asked to give a presentation;

- **Do keep to time** and not exceed the rubric / slide number,
- **Do concentrate on your vision** and **your development as a future research leader**,
- Of course set your vision in context, but **do not spend most of the time on technical details** (they know that you are the expert in the room – you don't need to prove it!)
- **Promote yourself as the leader of your group**, and never align yourself as a junior member of a senior academic's group.

# The mock interview ...

- This is very hard and more difficult than the real interview but is **absolutely essential in preparing for the real interview**.
- Set up a **mock interview with Senior Academics**, preferably those who have experience as interviewers or interviewees for fellowships.
- Senior colleagues will be able to provide a **robust critique of your vision and find holes that you need to prepare for**.
- This can be difficult, particularly to be criticised by colleagues who you respect, but the feedback from and experience of the mock interview will be invaluable in preparing for the real interview.
- Identify **the things that you really want to stress in your interview that support you as a future fellow**, and knit these into responses to potential questions.