**Research Career Re-entry Fellowship**

**Introduction**

Wellcome has evolved its approach to research careers and reviewed the use of time-post qualification as an eligibility criterion. Time based eligibility criteria do not always accurately reflect research maturity and stage of independence, particularly when researchers have moved fields or had career breaks. In order to provide greater flexibility and clarity, we have removed years of post-doctoral experience as an eligibility criterion. We will look at your research plans, vision and competitiveness relative to your career stage when assessing your application.

**What is the aim of a Research Career Re-entry Fellowship?**

The aim of this scheme is to enable you to re-establish your research career if you have taken a career break, for whatever reason, of more than 2 continuous years. This fellowship provides support for consolidating existing skills, re-training and developing new skills. It may be used to support all career stages but it is expected that you had already gained initial post-doctoral experience and were driving your own work before your career break. You will have started to make important contributions to research such as publications, patents, software development, impact on health policy, practice, technology or product discovery and development. It is expected that you would have been a credible candidate for a career-stage specific Wellcome fellowship before your career break. Regardless of your experience, the emphasis is not on building a group but on supporting you to develop a new research vision, build new collaborations and networks and to re-establish yourself as an expert in your field. By the end of the fellowship you should be ready to demonstrate your potential to establish research independence.

**What is an intermediate (early-independent) researcher?**

Intermediate or early-independent researchers will have a PhD and significant post-doctoral research experience. At this career stage a researcher is expected to have already made significant research contributions. This may include publications, patents, software development, impact on health policy, practice, technology or product discovery and development. They will clearly be driving the work (usually evidenced by publications) and will be starting to lead their own research (eg developing collaborations and networks independently of their current Principal Investigator (PI)/Supervisor or publishing as the senior author). They will have the research maturity to independently design, manage and lead a creative and innovative research programme and will be starting to develop an international reputation for excellence in their field (eg invitations to provide expert peer reviews or present their work).

**What is a senior (independent) researcher?**

Independent researchers will have a PhD and significant post-doctoral research experience and already be leading their own independent research programme. At this career stage a researcher is expected to have been previously awarded independent funding and led internationally recognised contributions to research that are important, original and have impact. This may include corresponding author publications, patents, software development, impact on health policy, practice, technology or product discovery and development. They will have an established international reputation as a research leader in their field. This may be evidenced by markers of distinction such as awards, invitations to present their work, membership of professional bodies, advisory or editorial boards. In addition to scientific leadership, they will be committed to developing and mentoring less experienced researchers.

**Do I need to move or spend time abroad?**

The aim of the Research Career Re-entry Fellowship is to re-establish your research career. You should consolidate your existing skills, re-train, expand your knowledge of your field, learn new skills and develop your independence. You should identify the most appropriate environment and research sponsors (senior researchers) that will help you achieve these goals and enable you to develop your research vision. Consider where you will receive the best training and have access to the expertise and the resources you’ll need to answer your research questions and re-establish your career. This could involve staying at the same host institution or spending some time in another laboratory, environment or sector either in the UK/Republic of Ireland or abroad.

**I’ve taken several short career breaks which together make more than 2 years. Can I apply for a Career re-entry fellowship?**

No. The Career Re-entry Fellowship is aimed at those returning to work after a prolonged career break of more than 2 years and therefore require additional support and training to resume their research careers. If you have taken multiple shorter breaks you can still apply for any of our other fellowships and time taken away from research and its impact on your progress and productivity will be taken into account.

**I’ve recently returned to research after a long career break. How long can I work in the lab and still apply for a Career Re-entry Fellowship?**

All applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis as there is no formal time limit but typically, we would expect this to be no more than about one year (full time equivalent). For example, the Career Re-entry Fellowship may be the next logical step for holders of a Daphne Jackson Fellowship (typical duration 2 year, 50% time). If you have already re-established your career you should apply for a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship, Clinical Research Career Development Fellowship, Research Career Development Fellowship (RoI only) or a Senior Research Fellowship (Basic or Clinical). All Wellcome Fellowships may be held on a part-time basis.

**Examples of successful Research Career Re-entry Fellowship applicants**

1. AB’s PhD was very successful. She published an important, highly cited, first author publication and some additional papers where she made a significant contribution. She also had the opportunity to present her work at a scientific meeting and won a prize for “Best Poster”. She learnt some of the key skills required in her field but to gain additional experience she undertook a post-doctoral position in a different lab.

During this time she gained additional technical and analytical skills and supervised undergraduates. Her post doc was highly successful, producing novel and innovative data that resulted in important first author publications and a potential impact on health policy. She also independently initiated an additional project which she published as the corresponding author. She was starting to be recognised as an expert in her field and had been invited to review papers for specialist journals and had written a short review. After a period of maternity leave, she re-located with her family to the USA where she raised her children and worked part time as a teacher. After a career break of 10 years she is now ready to resume her research career in the UK.

1. Before her career break, CD was successfully leading an independent research programme. She led a small group of two post-docs, a technician and a graduate student. She had previously been awarded her own independent funding and was internally recognised as a leader in her field. She led important work, including international collaborations that she published as the corresponding author. She was regularly invited to present her work at international meetings and was a member of the editorial board of a specialist journal. Following a period of ill health she took an extended career break of 3 years for treatment and rehabilitation and had to give up her established post at the University. She is now well enough to resume her research career but wishes to work part-time.
2. EF completed a very successful PhD and published several important papers including a first author paper that received a lot of interest and resulted in an invitation to speak at an international scientific meeting. His first post doc involved a change of direction and some time working with industrial collaborators. This was very productive and resulted in important publications as well as a patent. Having enjoyed this experience he left academic research to work for a pharmaceutical company where he worked in the lab for two years and then transferred to a non-research managerial role where he stayed for 5 years. He missed academic research so would now like to resume his research career.