**Senior Research Fellowship in Basic Biomedical Science**

**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 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 anything from senior author publications and patents to 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.

**I’ve got 10 years post-doctoral experience. Should I apply for a Senior Research Fellowship or a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship?**

With 10 years post-doctoral experience we would usually expect you to be ready for a Senior Research Fellowship, however, we recognise that career paths may not always be linear and that not everyone progresses in the same way. Therefore, to determine the most appropriate fellowship you need establish which career stage most accurately describes your experience. Intermediate (early-independent) researchers should apply for a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship while researchers who are already independent should apply for a Senior Research Fellowship.

See the definition of a senior (independent) researcher above to see if it describes your experience. Alternatively, intermediate (early-independent) researchers should have significant postdoctoral experience and be ready to lead their own independent programme of research. They will have already made significant research contributions. This may include anything from publications and patents, to 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 (e.g. 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 (e.g. invitations to provide expert peer reviews or present their work).

For all fellowships your track record will be assessed relative to your experience. We will take career-breaks, changes of discipline or area and part-time working into account when assessing your progress and particular attention will be given to your most recent outputs and achievements to evaluate your career trajectory.

**Will more years post-doctoral experience make me more competitive for a Senior Research Fellowship in Basic Biomedical Science?**

Not necessarily. It is expected that if you have more years of post-doctoral experience you will have achieved more and be more independent, therefore, we will always assess your track record relative to your experience. Senior Research Fellowships are not aimed at senior post-docs but at researchers that, in addition to significant post-doctoral experience, are already leading their own independent research programme. They will also have a track record of internationally recognised research contributions and a reputation as a leader in their field. See above for a more detailed description of senior (independent) researchers.

**Examples of successful applicants for Senior Research Fellowships in Basic Biomedical Science applicants**

1. AB completed a very successful PhD and early post-doctoral career. During this period she worked in the UK and abroad and learnt the key technical skills required in her field. She published important, highly cited, first author publications and was recognised as a rising star in her field when she received a “Young Investigator Award”. She was awarded a 5 year internationally competitive fellowship to develop her own independent research programme. This enabled her to establish and lead a small group of one post-doc and two graduate students. She built up a network of international collaborators and initiated new projects for which she obtained additional small grants. Her fellowship was highly successful, producing novel data resulting in important publications that had impact in her field and on which she was corresponding author. She is recognised as a leader in her field and has been invited to speak at international scientific meetings and write reviews. In addition to regularly reviewing papers for journals she is a member of the editorial board of a specialist journal.
2. CD completed a very successful PhD and published important papers including a first author paper that received a lot of interest and featured on the cover of the journal and in the editor’s commentary. After a short post-doc in his PhD lab he worked in industry for a couple of years before returning to a post-doc position in a new field. He developed new techniques and established new technology in the lab while supervising junior staff and graduate students. During this time he contributed to several important papers including first author papers and was joint corresponding author on his students’ work. He was appointed to a fixed term junior lecturer position with teaching responsibilities but in his remaining time he was able to develop his own research ideas and won project grants as the sole principle investigator which enabled him to build his own small team. This independent work was very successful, resulting in important publications that had impact in his field and on which he was corresponding author. He regularly reviews papers for journals and funding bodies and is invited to speak at international scientific meetings. His teaching post does not allow him to focus on his research; therefore, he will be moving to another host institute to take up the senior research fellowship.