**Senior Fellowship in Public Health and Tropical Medicine**

**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 senior author publications, patents, software development, impact on health policy or practice, technology development 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, or 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-doc experience. Should I apply for a Senior Research Fellowship or an Intermediate Fellowship in Public Health & Tropical Medicine?**

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 an Intermediate 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 publications, patents, software development, impact on health policy or practice, technology development 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/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. receive 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 Fellowship in Public Health and Tropical Medicine?**

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 Senior Research Fellowship in Public Health & Tropical Medicine applicants**

1. AB completed a successful PhD and early post-doctoral career. During this period she learnt the key technical skills required in her field. She published several strong first author publications and was recognised as a rising star 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, and a fieldwork team. 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 senior author. She is recognised as a leader in her field and has been invited to speak at international scientific meetings. In addition to regularly reviewing papers for journals she is a member of the editorial board of a specialist journal.
2. CD completed a PhD in epidemiology and modelling. This was followed by a postdoctoral position on a large collaborative team project where he worked closely with biologists and clinicians. The project was successful and he contributed to several important papers. To develop his own research vision and expand his skills he obtained a fellowship that allowed him to return to a host organisation in a low or middle income country and design his own study. The study was successful, resulting in some important publications. CD gained experience in directly managing a small team of field workers and research assistants. He was subsequently awarded a 5 year internationally competitive fellowship to develop his own independent research programme. During this period he presented his data at international conferences, and was senior author on several influential papers. He was a co-applicant on three additional grants, and supervised 3 PhD students. He is recognised as a leader in the field and had participated in two national health policy working groups.