**Senior Research Fellowship in Clinical 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 previously held independent funding, such as project, programme or fellowship support e.g. a Stage 2 Clinical Research Career Development Fellowship, or equivalent.

Investigators operating at this level will have 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.

In addition, applicants for the Senior Research Fellowship in Clinical Science scheme will have completed their clinical training, and medics, dentists and clinical psychologists will need to have obtained an Honorary Clinical Contract at consultant level.

**I’ve got significant post-doctoral experience. Should I apply for a Senior Research Fellowship or a Clinical Research Career Development Fellowship?**

If you have extensive 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 Clinical Research Career Development 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/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 of post-doctoral experience make me more competitive for a Senior Research Fellowship in Clinical 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 for individuals with 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.

**Do I need to have held a Wellcome Intermediate Clinical Fellowship or Stage 2 Clinical Research Career Development Fellowship to be successful?**

No. You will need to have demonstrated that you have obtained your own funding and have delivered an independent research programme, but it is not necessary that this has been funded by Wellcome.

**Examples of successful applicants for Senior Research Fellowships in Clinical Science**

1. AB completed a very successful PhD that was funded by a small charity. She then returned to clinical training, and obtained a Clinical Lecturer position that enabled her to pursue her clinical and research interests on a 50:50 basis. Once she had obtained her CCT, she applied successfully for a clinician scientist award, which enabled her to develop her skills as a group leader. During this time, she developed new collaborations, published widely and gained markers of esteem that facilitated her application for a senior level fellowship.

1. CD gained a MB/PhD and then spent a number of years pursuing his clinical training, and lost some research momentum as a result. He therefore applied for an Academic Clinical Fellowship (ACF), which enabled him to undertake up to nine months of research over a three year period. He used the research time to gather the preliminary data that formed the basis of a successful application for an early postdoctoral fellowship. Having integrated the remainder of his clinical training into the fellowship, he obtained CCT during its tenure, and obtained an Honorary Consultant Contract thereafter. Having developed a track record in clinical research, and gained an international reputation in experimental medicine, he applied successfully for an intermediate-level fellowship. At the end of the five year period of funding, he opted to consolidate his research outputs, and having strengthened his CV, was in a strong position to compete for a Senior Fellowship.
2. EF attended medical school and gained her clinical training in Europe. Alongside her clinical duties she established a name for herself in public health. She quickly gained an international reputation and was frequently asked to be a speaker at key conferences/symposia. Having relocated to the UK, she obtained GMC registration, entry onto the Specialist Register and an Honorary Consultant Contract. She also embedded herself in an excellent research environment that was willing to sponsor a successful application for a Senior Fellowship.