

## Frequently Asked Questions: Mid-Career Fellowship

**I am a mid-career researcher but notice that applicants should ‘normally be within no more than 15 years from the award of their doctorate’. I received my doctorate more than 15 years ago - would I still be eligible for consideration?**

You are not directly eligible within the terms we have set, but a case could certainly be considered by the assessors. If your doctorate was awarded more than 15 years ago and your career has been interrupted, for example for illness or maternity/paternity leave, we will consider your case sympathetically. If you want to go ahead and apply, please do so, but in the personal statement you would need to set out the case for exemption to be given, referring, for example, not only to the periods of interruption, such as for maternity/paternity leave, but to the subsequent impact of having young children to care for as well.

**For an applicant to the MCF scheme who has no other claims for career breaks, maternity/paternity leave etc. is the 15 years postdoc experience an ‘absolute’ or an ‘approximately’ and does the 15 years period apply at the application date or the start of the Fellowship?**

We don’t propose to count dates very strictly, so someone whose doctorate was awarded up to or around 15 years would be fine. The 15 years limit is counted back from the closing date of the Outline Stage (**16 September 2020**). If applicants are very clearly outside the target range that we have used to define mid-career and have no good reason for exemption, they would not be considered a high priority and therefore would be unlikely to be supported. We would suggest they look at the British Academy/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowship scheme (**opening on 7 October 2020**). This scheme has no limitation on when the doctorate was awarded and is a fixed 12 months replacement teaching Fellowship only, but has no research costs built in.

**I am a mid-career researcher in an established post at a UK institution, but I do not have a doctorate. Am I eligible to apply for a Mid-Career Fellowship?**

If you are able to make a case that your career experience is equivalent to that of PhD level (i.e. publication record etc.), you are in an established position at a UK institution, and you are within fifteen years of your first research-related appointment then you will be eligible to apply. However, we recommend that you make reference to this under the ‘Personal Statement’ part of application form so that the assessors are fully informed.

**I am employed in an established post at an Independent Research Organisation. I do not have teaching commitments, but my time to focus on research is constrained by my other duties. Am I eligible to apply for a Mid-Career Fellowship?**

Yes, we expect that curators based in IROs who are research-active but whose time to focus on their own research is limited by their day-to-day duties will be eligible to apply to have time freed from those normal duties to concentrate on their own research project. They will be eligible to apply and will be considered by the assessors as equally relevant to this scheme as university-based staff.

**I am employed at my university on a part-time contract – am I eligible to apply for a Mid-Career Fellowship or are only full-time researchers eligible?**

Applications are accepted from researchers currently employed on both full and part-time contracts (i.e. anything less than 1.0 FTE). As the scheme is designed to buy out the whole of the Fellowship holder's research time, any award will cover the entirety of the salary costs of any part-time contract. In other words, if you are employed for 20 hours a week then the Fellowship would buy out the 20 hours a week. However, we strongly recommend that applicants on part-time contracts make a case in the personal statement section as to why their need to be freed from their commitments is as great as someone who is on a full-time contract as it would be helpful to the assessors to know how the remainder of their time is spent.

**I am on a full-time contract, but have other commitments outside of my time allocated for research - am I, for example, able to hold a 6 months Mid-Career Fellowship but then pro-rata this part-time over 12 months?**

It would not be a high priority to support someone whose time was not being fully devoted to the Mid-Career Fellowship. The intention is to buy the time of the researchers appointed to one of these Fellowships fully out of their normal teaching and administrative commitments, in order to allow them to be free to concentrate on the research for which the Mid-Career Fellowship is being awarded, but we understand that there will always be some duties – PhD supervision is the most usual example – from which this is not possible. There is space on the application form to describe those commitments from which an applicant cannot be relieved.

**I am on a full-time contract but only wish to dedicate and charge part of my time to the Fellowship. Can the overall cost of the award be shared with funding from another body on a part-time basis?**

As above, we would not consider it a high priority to support a candidate whose time is not wholly devoted to the Fellowship. Only exceptionally could a case be made for an applicant on a full-time contract to choose to work part time and have time shared with funding from another body. In this instance, a very strong argument would need to be made to outline the feasibility of completing the research proposed in the related timescale. In these circumstances, an applicant would also need to be careful in costing the award in order not to count their time twice – funding cannot be provided for this on an FEC basis when it is already covered by another FEC award.

**If a member of staff is on a fixed term contract which covers the proposed period of the Fellowship, would such a person be eligible to apply for the scheme?**

Yes. It is essential, however, that the period of the contract covers the whole proposed period of the Fellowship. The purpose of the scheme is to allow successful applicants to obtain time freed from their normal teaching and administrative commitments. If the member of staff's current contract ends during the proposed Fellowship period, or before it starts, but there is a commitment from the University to renew the contract, then also, yes, the applicant would be eligible.

**Is the salary element of the Mid-Career Fellowship funding intended for the award holder or for teaching replacement?**

The basis of the Mid-Career Fellowship is that the Fellowship is offered on the Full Economic Costing model, under which costs are calculated on the basis of the salary of the Mid-Career Fellows themselves. In agreeing to support the award, the institution is agreeing to enable the Mid-Career Fellow to have the time to concentrate on the programme of research and communication set out in the original application, save for those commitments declared on the form from which it is not possible to be relieved (usually PhD supervision). How the institution uses the money awarded for the Fellowship is up to it – we are not paying specifically for a replacement so cannot insist on a full-time teaching replacement being appointed, but it would be good if an opportunity, albeit a short-term one, was opened up for an early career appointment as a result. All the Academy needs to be assured about at the end of the Fellowship is that the programme of research and communication has been carried out as planned, and that teaching and other commitments did not get in the way.

**The notes for this scheme mention that there is a budget of £8000 for research expenses – can this funding also be used for public engagement activities?**

Yes, if by that you mean organising events, talks, conferences, presentations and so on.

**I understand that the research expenses can cover a wide range of possible types of expenditure, but since this is capped at £8000 it will be difficult to finance all these costs under that heading. Is there perhaps another heading for research expenses? Are there separate categories for travel and accommodation?**

The main purpose of the Mid-Career Fellowship is to buy out the time of the applicant from their normal university commitments – it is not designed to provide more general financial support for a research project – it is, after all, a Fellowship and not a Research Grant. It is correct that some research expenses can be asked for under the Fellowship, but this is capped at a maximum of £8000 (at 80% FEC), and there is no other capacity for increasing this as part of this award. The funds are designed to help support the Fellowship-holder and can include research assistance costs if necessary.

**The funding being applied for is to allow time for the writing up of extensive fieldwork, rather than to carry out further research or undertake a programme of communication activity. Through the writing up, it is the intention that various publications arise and there will be opportunity for ongoing communication with existing stakeholders and potentially develop new links with other interested parties, so a programme of communication/dissemination is planned, but the driver for the Fellowship is to have the opportunity thoroughly to interrogate the raw data for a focused period. Is such a focus appropriate for a Fellowship application?**

This focus is fine - but we would also stress that the scheme places a strong emphasis on a programme of communication activity. In order for a good application to be presented to our assessors this factor should be taken into consideration.

**I have applied for a Mid-Career Fellowship, but I will be taking up a new post at another institution shortly. Are these Fellowships transferrable, and if I was offered a Fellowship could I take it with me?**

Yes, these Fellowships are transferrable and if your application is successful then we will advise you on what you need to do in order to take the Fellowship with you to your new institution.

**I am currently a Principal (or Co-Investigator) on another British Academy grant. Am I eligible to apply?**

The principle applied by the Academy is no duplication of funding for the same purpose. Applicants currently holding a BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant (if not for this purpose) are eligible to apply. However, as the Mid-Career Fellowship buys out the Fellowship-holder's time 100%, any existing award must be completed, and a final report submitted, before the Mid-Career Fellowship can be taken up. The Fellowship demands 100% of the time of the Fellowship-holder therefore it would leave no capacity to undertake separate research.

**Am I eligible to submit applications to more than one Academy scheme at the same time?**

As above, the principle applied by the Academy is no duplication of funding for the same purpose. Intending applicants for the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme are not eligible to apply to the BA/Leverhulme Senior Research Fellowship scheme at the same time.

Individuals may submit an application for support under the BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant (if not for this purpose) but the Academy will take due notice of any duplication of purpose in any offer of award.

Though simultaneous applications can be made to both schemes, it is not possible for an application to be successful in both the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme and the BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant scheme as the Fellowship already includes funding for research expenses.

**Please note** - It is also not possible for a candidate to apply for a Mid-Career Fellowship at the same time as the BA/Leverhulme Small Research Grant scheme if the Small Research Grant application relates to an entirely separate research project. This is because the Mid-Career Fellowship is designed to buy out 100% of an award-holder's time, leaving no capacity to undertake separate research.

**I was unsuccessful in applying to the Academy in a previous round. Are resubmissions accepted?**

Yes, resubmission of the same proposal may be made once in the Mid-Career Fellowship scheme. An applicant is eligible to re-apply with a revised or different proposal so long as they still meet the eligibility criteria.

**I received a Mid-Career Fellowship from the Academy previously – can I apply again as I’m still within 15 years of my doctorate?**

No, previous Mid-Career Fellowship holders are not permitted to submit another application to this scheme.

**The ‘Notes for Applicants’ state that the Fellowship is to begin in the ‘autumn of 2021’. Is there a specific date when the Fellowship must start - or can the start date be delayed?**

The earliest date the Fellowship can be taken up is **1 September 2021** – and the latest start date permitted is **1 January 2022**. If the Fellowship cannot be taken up on a date within this time-frame, then regrettably the offer would have to be declined.

**I see from the ‘Notes for Applicants’ that I would not be eligible to be considered for a Mid-Career Fellowship if I haven’t submitted my report and financial statement on the award I am currently holding. What is the deadline for receiving the report and FES on my current award so that my Mid-Career Fellowship application can proceed?**

The Mid-Career Fellowship scheme is a two-stage application process with the result of the Outline-Stage being announced in **December 2020**.

If you are invited to the Second Stage, for which the closing date which will be **08 January 2021**, then you must submit the final report and FES on your current award to the Academy no later than **20 February 2021**. The awarding Committee will meet at the end of February 2021 and an existing award must be closed before any decision could be made to offer you a Fellowship.

**When I apply for funding through any of the schemes offered by the British Academy, can I include in the application the cost of APCs (Article Processing Charges) to enable any articles that may arise from the research to be published in learned journals that offer a ‘Gold’ open access option?**

No. Currently the Academy’s position is that costs of publication are not eligible costs.

**Does the Academy require the outputs of the research it funds to be made available in any open access format?**

No, this is not currently a stipulation of any Academy award.

**Is Apprenticeship Levy an eligible cost?**

No, this is currently not an eligible cost and should not be included in the Final Expenditure Statement.

**I was awarded my PhD last year and would like to apply for a Mid-Career Fellowship. I note that applicants must be ‘within’ fifteen years of the award of their doctorate to be eligible. Would I be eligible to apply?**

Yes, you would be eligible to apply to this scheme. However, while we don’t state a minimum distance in time from the award of the doctorate, you should bear in mind that you will be

competing in a competition with other applicants across the whole range of experience that is allowed for – so you would need to have a strong case in terms of a track record of research, publication and public engagement already to be sure it was worth applying for one of these Fellowships at this time.

It is also worth bearing in mind, that in the last three years, no applicant who was less than five years from the award of their doctorate, has been successful.