

The 3 Ps - Person, Project, Place

This tip-sheet offers hints and tips about the 3 Ps - Person, Project, Place and how to evidence your strengths under these themes in a fellowship application.

1. The 3 Ps and Fellowships

A fellowship is an **individual personal award**, the 3 Ps enable you to showcase / evidence why:

- you (person)
- your research (project)
- the research environment (place)

work as a winning combination to achieve the objectives of your proposed research.

You can use the 3 Ps to develop an application. Funders are investing in you and your project, they often use the 3 Ps as criteria for reviewing fellowship applications and candidates at interview.

Some funders explicitly state the 3 Ps as their assessment criteria, while others detail their assessment criteria which can be categorised under the three themes i.e.

- BBSRC Fellowships [Assessment criteria](#)
- EPSRC Fellowships [Assessment criteria](#)
- MRC Fellowships [Assessment criteria](#)
- Royal Society: University Research Fellowship [Assessment criteria](#)
- Wellcome Trust: Sir Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellowships [‘What we’re looking for’](#)

2. Person

In a fellowship application you need to make a strong case that you are the best person to successfully deliver your proposed research and the best person for the scheme / fellowship you are applying for.

You will need to evidence that you are on track to build an excellent research career and that you are ready to further develop your research independence. This will reassure funders that a fellowship is the natural next step for you.

Consider:

- Evidence which highlights your **track record** and indicates your **future potential** (appropriate to your research experience and career stage).
- Your **publication record**, identifying articles which you have published, including demonstrating their

impact on your field of research – what have they / you contributed to the field?

- What’s your **research identity**; define what makes you distinct as a researcher? What makes you unique? What are your areas of expertise? What do you want to be known for? What’s your niche?
- Your long-term academic **research vision**. You can develop this by projecting yourself forward ten years: Where will you be? What will you have achieved? How will your field have developed as a result? Be ambitious but realistic and focus on your broader scientific contribution.
- Evidence that you are developing **research independence** (appropriate with your career stage).
- Evidence that you have **research leadership** potential or are developing your leadership skills (appropriate with your career stage).
- Measures of your national and international **reputation** such as invitations to present your research at notable events and institutions, recognition via awards, requests to collaborate, requests from students to join your group / work with you.
- **Collaborations**: which you have independently established, particularly those which have resulted in successes, those with potential and / or those which have an interdisciplinary element.
- What are your **achievements** and **successes** in your academic career?

3. Project

A fellowship application details your individual research proposal. You need to build a strong case to justify financial investment in your research by demonstrating why your proposal is feasible, exciting and important.

Consider:

- What’s your research question? Why is it important? What’s significant about it? What is the research application? What challenge are you addressing? Consider the ‘bigger picture’.

- The **timelessness, novelty, relevance** and **scientific merit** of your research proposal. Why should it be funded now?
- Is your **hypothesis** well-grounded in up-to-date research? How does your research fit in the field?
- Can you demonstrate that you have clear, realistic research objectives and a robust, feasible plan?
- Highlight the **significance** of the project for the field, giving details of likely outcomes and their potential impact.
- Do you have a timeline, defined work packages, tasks, deliverables, milestones, outputs?
- Have you any **preliminary data** (if applicable) to support the proposed research?
- Can you demonstrate that your **methodology** is fit for purpose and that you have the skills, facilities and resources required to complete the research? Do you need any new/further **training or skills development** to complete the project?
- **Collaborators**; detail who you have built in to complement and support the project. What do they bring to the project?
- **Justification of resources**; describe how your project represents good value for money.
- **Impact**: have you considered academic impact, societal impact, and economic impact? Evidence that your previous / current research has had impact. Detail how you will achieve impact i.e. via engagement activities and via dissemination.
- **Risk and risk mitigation**; demonstrate that you know where the areas of risk are within your project and what your plan is to limit or mitigate the risk. Evidence that you have a backup plan.
- Outline the potential for commercial exploitation and / or short and longer term socio-economic benefits (if applicable).

4. Place

In your fellowship application you need to state clearly why the institution is the best – or better still, the only – place to conduct your research and how you will ensure that you develop a research programme that is distinct from the work you have done to date with your current Principal Investigator (PI).

Consider your choice of institution, department, lab and sponsor(s). You might include:

- Access you will have to specialist equipment, specimens, data, patients and facilities.
- Access to students (Masters and PhD) who you will supervise or co-supervise.

- Complementary knowledge that will benefit your research.
- How your sponsor will support you to succeed with your research project and support **your career development**.
- **Mentorship** opportunities from your sponsor or academic colleagues.
- **Leadership development**: are there programmes to support you to develop your management and leadership skills?
- Potential for **collaboration(s)** within your host group, department and institution. What does your network look like, what are the opportunities to develop your network?
- Opportunities for your **professional development** – such as access to the support of the College's Postdoc and Fellows Development Centre.

5. Get started...

Person

- Do a gap analysis of your skills.
- List your achievements and successes.
- Consider how you can develop / become more competitive against the requirements of the fellowship scheme.
- Map out your evidence and set goals to build your evidence.
- Consider what your career ambition is and what the next step to get there is. Plan your career – how does a fellowship fit into your career plan?
- Why do you want that specific fellowship?

Project

- Do you have a logical plan? Is it clear and concise?
- It's YOUR research - check that you're using "I" and "My" research, a fellowship is an individual personal award. Make sure it is clear that you are the expert in your project.
- What makes your project novel, unique, exciting and feasible?

Place

- Consider genuine reasons / rationale behind your decision for the host institute and justify this within your fellowship application.
- Consider support and resources i.e. access to PhD students, equipment, and lab space.
- Consider the support available for professional and personal development.

If you have any further questions please **contact us**:

pfdc-support@imperial.ac.uk

