**International Intermediate Fellowship**

**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 the aim of an International Intermediate Fellowship?**

The aim of this scheme is to enable you to establish yourself as an independent researcher leading a unique and innovative programme of research within the Science remit. It allows you to start to build your research team and establish the collaborations and networks necessary to answer your own research questions. By the end of the fellowship, the expectation is that you will have delivered work that is important, original and has impact and that you will have developed an international reputation as an independent research leader in your field.

**What is an intermediate (early-independent) researcher?**

Intermediate/early-independent researchers typically have a PhD and significant post-doctoral research experience. At this career stage a researcher is expected to have already made significant research contributions. These 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. invitations to provide expert peer review or present their work)

**Do I need to move away from my current lab?**

The aim of the International Intermediate Fellowship is to establish your own independent research programme in a low- or middle-income country. Our expectation is that you will move away from your existing PI or previous PhD supervisor — not necessarily geographically but intellectually, in order to develop and deliver your own independent research vision and programme. You should select the most appropriate environment and host institute based on your research needs, including access to relevant expertise, resources and equipment. During your Fellowship you are encouraged to spend time in a different research environment if it is scientifically justified.

**I’ve got 5 years post-doctoral experience. Should I apply for a Training Fellowship or an Intermediate Fellowship?**

With 5 years post-doctoral experience we would usually expect you to be ready for an Intermediate Fellowship, however, we recognise that career paths may not always be linear and that not everyone progresses in the same way. To determine the most appropriate fellowship you need to establish which career stage most accurately describes your experience. Early-career researchers who would benefit from further guided training should apply for a Training Fellowship while intermediate (early-independent) researchers should apply for an Intermediate Fellowship.

The Training Fellowship is aimed at consolidating your own skills and exploring new research through further training and is not about building your own research group whereas the Intermediate Fellowship is considered to be your first independent award and is aimed at experienced researchers who are ready to start building an independent research programme.

Check the definition of an intermediate (early-independent) researcher above to see if it describes your experience. Alternatively, early-career researchers are typically expected to have a PhD and some initial but limited postdoctoral experience and are not yet ready for independence or to lead their own group. Typically, at this career stage, researchers are expected to have started to make important contributions to research. This may include publications, patents, software development, impact on health policy or practice, technology development or product discovery and development. They will be starting to drive their own research (e.g. usually evidenced by publications) but they still require more time to consolidate their existing skills and explore new scientific areas through further training, under the guidance of an experienced research sponsor. They will be able to articulate and drive their own research ideas and form new collaborations but are not yet ready to lead their own independent research group.

**I’ve got 10 years post-doctoral experience. Should I apply for an International Intermediate Fellowship or a Senior Research 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. 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.

Check the definition of an intermediate (early-independent) researcher above to see if it describes your experience. Alternatively, independent researchers are those that are already 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 and membership of professional bodies, advisory or editorial boards. In addition to scientific leadership, they will be committed to developing and mentoring less experienced researchers.

**Will more years post-doctoral experience make me more competitive for the International Intermediate Fellowship?**

Not necessarily. You should apply for the fellowship that most closely matches your experience. It is expected that if you have more years of post-doctoral experience you will have achieved more, be more independent and have a more developed research vision. Therefore, we will always assess your track record relative to your experience. However, we will take career-breaks, changes of discipline or area and part-time working into account when assessing your progress. Particular attention will be given to your most recent outputs and achievements to evaluate your career momentum and trajectory.

**Examples of successful Intermediate Fellowship applicants**

1. AB completed her PhD four years ago. Her PhD was successful, during which she published an influential first-author publication and some additional papers where she made a significant contribution. During her PhD she had the opportunity to present her work at an international meeting and won a prize for “Best Poster”. She learnt some of the key skills required in her field but to gain additional experience she undertook a one year post-doctoral position in a different research group.

AB was subsequently awarded a three year competitive fellowship to explore her own research questions. During this time she gained additional technical and analytical skills and had the opportunity to supervise a team of field workers and a Master’s student. Her fellowship was highly successful, producing novel and innovative data that resulted in important senior author publications and a potential impact on health policy. AB developed her own network of collaborators and was driving her own research. She is starting to be recognised as an expert in her field and has been invited to review papers for specialist journals and to present her work at conferences.

1. CD completed his PhD in epidemiology and modelling 8 years ago. Initially he undertook a post-doctoral position where he worked closely with biologists and clinicians on a large collaborative team project. He published several important papers to which he made a significant contribution but due to the nature of the work was not driving the research. To develop his own research vision and expand his skills he obtained a fellowship that allowed him to design his own study, and gain experience in directly managing a small team of field workers and research assistants. The study was successful and resulted in some important senior author publications. He has started to gain an international reputation in his field and has received several invitations to present his data at international conferences.
2. EF completed a successful PhD 10 years ago, during which she published important papers including a first-author paper that received a lot of interest and featured in the editor’s commentary. She moved to work in a lab in the UK and undertook a successful post doc during which she jointly supervised a technician and a Master’s student. She contributed to several important papers including first author papers and was joint senior author on the student’s work. She presented her work at international meetings and was beginning to establish a reputation for excellence in her field. She returned to a postdoctoral position in a low- or middle-income country and started a very challenging project. After two periods of maternity leave and a year of part-time working she returned to research full time and made steady progress. Her main project resulted in several papers including a highly cited paper and a patent that re-established her in her field and suggested new areas of research. She will now develop these ideas to form her own independent research programme within another department at the same host institute.