

Frequently Asked Questions: Information for Applicants

To be read in conjunction with the [Further Particulars](#). Please Ctrl click on the links or scroll down.

Contacting Durham Staff:

[What is the relationship between Departments, Faculties, Centres and Institutes?](#)

[How do I find a suitable academic host?](#)

[How do I contact a suitable academic host?](#)

[Where can my host get their support proforma?](#)

Eligibility

[What constitutes 'holding a doctorate'?](#)

[What constitutes 'successfully defended your thesis'?](#)

[What constitutes 'significant post-doctoral experience'?](#)

[I already have an academic post – am I eligible to apply?](#)

[Can I hold a Junior Research Fellowship with another Marie Curie Action?](#)

[Are UK nationals allowed to apply?](#)

Diversity & Equality

[Where can I find Diversity & Equality information?](#)

[Redress?](#)

General

[Are research costs provided for JRFs?](#)

[Who will be making the assessments \(and on the interview panel\)?](#)

[To whom should I address the letter of application?](#)

[Referees vs External Assessors?](#)

[How many references do I need?](#)

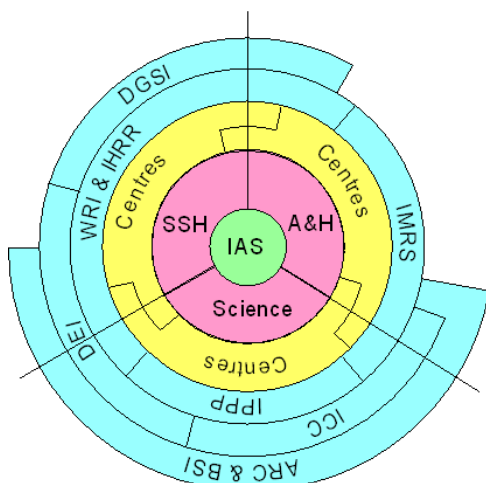
[Can my host act as a referee?](#)

[Can I apply for College Accommodation?](#)



The DIFeREns project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 609412.

What is the relationship between Departments, Faculties, Centres and Institutes?



DIFeREns2 is built upon the notion that research often crosses Departmental and Faculty boundaries. We have ten University Research Institutes that draw together critical mass in ground-breaking thematic research. These are:

- IAS: [Institute of Advanced Study](#)
- ICC: [Institute of Computational Cosmology](#)
- IPPP: [Institute of Particle Physics Phenomenology](#)
- BSI: [Biophysical Sciences Institute](#)
- DEI: [Durham Energy Institute](#)
- iARC: [Institute of Advanced Research Computing](#)
- IHRR: [Institute of Hazard, Risk and Resilience](#)
- DGSi: [Durham Global Security Institute](#)
- WRI: [Wolfson Research Institute of Health & Wellbeing](#)
- IMRS: [Institute of Mediaeval & Renaissance Studies](#)

(now Institute of Mediaeval & Early Modern Studies IMEMS)

Centres are smaller than Institutes and cross Departmental but not necessarily Faculty boundaries. To achieve Centre status, an academic grouping needs to have an interdisciplinary approach to solving a major problem of technological, social or cultural significance, to have a strategy for impact and to build collaborations nationally and internationally. It is the expectation that some of these Centres will grow into Institutes. A full list of Centres may be found here: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/ias/diferens/researchcentres/>

How do I find a suitable academic host?

A guide to identifying a host can be found here: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/ias/diferens/findingahost/>. The research programmes of Durham Research Institutes and Centres are displayed on our website: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/ias/diferens/junior/> this will help you to narrow down your search to an Institute. If your area of research is not represented by an Institute or Centre, then you can explore the research interests of the Departments, whose websites are listed at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/departments/>.

Durham hosts should be employed by Durham University to ensure clear lines of accountability. Honorary post holders or emeriti may act as co-host as long as a colleague, employed by Durham University can also act as co-host and have official responsibility.

How do I contact a suitable academic host?

There are a number of ways to approach suitable members of Durham University Staff. You can

- contact them directly (remember to provide a link to the DIFeREns website and a current CV);
- contact the DIFeREns team (junior.fellowships@dur.ac.uk) who will pass on your request to the appropriate person

Where can my host get their support proforma?

This can be downloaded at: https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/ias/staffonly/JRFProforma_D2_Round2.docx (Durham staff only).

What constitutes 'holding a doctorate'?

Applicants following standard academic career paths must have successfully defended their thesis (ie minor corrections only) by the closing date for applications.

What constitutes 'successfully defended your thesis?'

We recognise that not all countries follow the same system for doctorates as the UK. However, to be fair to all applicants we must set a benchmark. Applicants who have officially passed their doctorate but who have not yet had the doctorate formally conferred are considered eligible: e.g. doctorands in the UK. Doctoral candidates who *'are about to submit', 'have submitted but are awaiting result', 'will have passed by the starting date for employment'* etc will not be considered to have passed by the closing date for applications and will, therefore, not be considered eligible. There are two rare exceptions to this rule who will be considered eligible: researchers with an established or emerging national or international reputation who have followed non-standard academic career paths or junior researchers with a doctoral equivalent in a commercial or industrial environment. A standard academic career path is considered to be a doctorate (to be) followed by a postdoctoral position. Applicants who have followed a non-academic career path prior to starting a doctorate will still be considered to be following a standard academic career. If you are unsure of any of the regulations please contact the COFUND team for guidance. If your case is ambiguous please make explicitly clear in your application or CV how you qualify.

What constitutes 'significant post-doctoral experience'?

Applicants following standard career paths will typically have 2-5 years postdoctoral experience, during which time they will have demonstrated their ability to undertake independent research distinct from their doctoral studies. Paternity / Maternity leave is not counted as post-doctoral experience: please see our Diversity & Equality page <https://www.dur.ac.uk/ias/diferens/junior/diversity/>.

I already have an academic post – am I eligible to apply?

Applicants in tenured, tenure-track or similar non-fixed term posts are considered to be too advanced in their career for a Junior Research Fellowship and should consider applying for a Senior Research Fellowship. Applicants at an appropriate career stage on fixed-term, non-renewable posts are eligible. A JRF at Durham cannot be held simultaneously with an employment contract at another institution.

Can I hold a Junior Research Fellowship with another Marie Curie Action?

The Durham International Junior Research Fellowship programme is co-financed by the European Union through the Marie Curie Action "Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND)". Therefore, JRFs are technically also Marie Curie fellows.

Under EU rules individual researchers cannot benefit, at the same time, from more than one Marie Curie Action; these are:

- Initial Training Networks (ITN)
- Intra-European Fellowships for career development (IEF)
- International Outgoing Fellowships for career development (IOF)
- International Incoming Fellowships (IIF)
- Career Integration Grants (CIS)
- Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways (IAPP)
- International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES)
- Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND)

Should you have (or have had) a Marie Curie fellowship, which ends prior to taking up a co-funded Fellowship at Durham, this would not be a problem.

Are UK nationals allowed to apply?

There is no nationality restriction, only a residency requirement. UK nationals should note that one of the aims of the scheme is to build long-term transnational research links and applicants should address how they will achieve this aim in their application.

Where can I find Diversity & Equality information?

A scheme specific page can be found at: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/ias/diferens/junior/diversity/> . General University policies can be found at: <https://www.dur.ac.uk/diversity.equality/> .

Redress?

Unsuccessful applicants who have evidence that the selection procedures have not been correctly followed, to their disadvantage, should write to the Director of Human Resources within 4 weeks of receiving their rejection letter stating the grounds for their complaint. Applicants can only seek redress on procedural grounds: they cannot challenge the academic judgement of the assessors or Selection Committee.

Are research costs provided for JRFs?

JRFs receive a training allowance of up to €7k p.a. to fund fieldwork and conference attendance, research consumables, publication costs, impact and outreach activities. Access to Durham research facilities required for the project is provided as part of the Fellowship, as agreed by the Institute Director / Head of Department. The provision of additional research expenses for consumables/fieldwork should be discussed with the Durham academic host since these are not provided by the Fellowship Scheme. Applicants should make costings clear and the relevant Institute Director / Head of Department needs to sign these off as part of the application process on the support proforma to be submitted by the host.

Who will be making the assessments (and on the interview panel)?

The selection panels will contain senior Durham academics from the same Faculty as the applicant's academic host. As a result these panels may contain both experts and non-experts in the applicant's field of research.

To whom should I address the letter of application?

Dear Selection Panel will suffice.

Referees vs External Assessors?

Referees should have a connection to the applicant. It is the responsibility of the applicant to arrange for their referees to submit references to cofund.recruitment@durham.ac.uk by the closing date for applications. This is because: 'applicants will be ranked according to their aggregate scores of Criteria 1 and 2, based on the application materials provided by the applicant, the *academic references* [stress added] and the specialist subject knowledge available within the University'.

We do not ask applicants for the names of external assessors. It is the host's responsibility to nominate external assessors on the host's support proforma that they submit. It is intended that external assessors are unconnected to the applicant so that they can provide an impartial assessment of the research proposal if the application is shortlisted for interview.

How many references do I need?

Two. All the documentation that we can control is consistent in asking for two, however, the externally programmed online application platform always asks for three as standard and we have no means of changing this. The online system accepts applications with two references.

Can my host act as a referee?

Referees need to be someone who is not actively sponsoring the application. Intended hosts should, therefore, not act as referees.

Can I apply for College Accommodation?

Accommodation is not provided by the University for all JRFs, but from time to time there are a number of Resident Fellowships in Colleges for JRFs who wish to develop pastoral skills in addition to organisational and leadership skills. These Resident Fellows act as personal tutors to undergraduates, organise activities for the post-graduate student body in their College and act as a point of contact to engage other post-doctoral researchers in the University with the Colleges. In exchange, Resident Fellows enjoy discounted accommodation and free meals in the College. JRFs will be informed if and when Resident Fellowships become available. Applicants are requested not to apply for Resident Fellowships as part of the initial JRF application as this is not a part of the JRF assessment criteria.