

Frequently Asked Questions: Information for Mentors and Heads of Departments / Directors of Institutes

To be read in conjunction with the Host Proforma:
(https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/ias/staffonly/JRFProforma_D2_Round2.docx).

Please Ctrl click on the links or scroll down.

A diagram of the recruitment process can be found on the last page of these notes.

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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

Must a Host / Head of Dept./Inst. support an applicant if approached?

No. JRF positions are limited in number and are *highly* competitive. Previous appointments have been of exceptional quality, strongly contributing to REF, securing additional (e.g. EPSRC) funding during the Fellowship and gaining positions at leading institutions post-Fellowship. Heads/Directors are asked only to support strong applications so that applicants and their academic hosts do not waste time preparing applications that have no realistic chance of success. Heads/Directors will be given a guideline of six applications per Department or Institute or three per Centre but this is neither a target (if there are insufficient strong applications) nor a limit (if a Department/Institute/Centre receives strong applications that they wish to support close to the deadline).

What is the purpose of the JRF proforma?

The purpose of the proforma is:

- to record the agreement of the host academic and the Department/Centre/Institute to provide mentoring and facilities for the applicant.
- to indicate whether an applicant has Dept. / Inst. / Centre support and should be carried forward to the ranking / shortlisting stage.
- to record the agreement of the host Dept. / Inst. to provide the space and resources for the Fellow if they are appointed.

Other than the strategic justification, it does not influence the selection process. Applicants without a proforma will be considered unsupported and their application is considered incomplete.

What should I do if I am unable to complete the proforma owing to illness or travel?

Please contact the COFUND Team (simon.litchfield@dur.ac.uk) and your host Department to let them know about the application and that you wish to support it.

What is the role of the external assessors?

The external assessors are academics, unconnected to the applicant, who work in the same field and can provide an unbiased opinion on the merits of the research proposal. They are not the same as referees (who are connected to the applicant and who candidates ask to submit a personal reference to us).

What is a 'free standing fellow'?

A 'free standing fellow' is a Fellow who will not be associated with a University Research Institute, Centre, DGSi (which is treated as a URI for the purposes of COFUND) or the Durham University Business School. They will be based in their host Department and linked to the IAS.

Are COFUND Fellows based in the IAS?

No, though the IAS may provide short term assistance. The Fellowship is administered through the IAS to ensure recruitment has no disciplinary bias and enable COFUNDing to be levered from the European Union. COFUND Fellows are primarily based in their host Institute / Centre or Department. 'Free standing' Fellows linked with the IAS should be based in their Department (rather than the IAS). If an Institute / Centre and Department are unable to provide office space for an applicant, then please contact the Dean and Deputy to PvC Education or IAS Directors who will explore the provision of office space elsewhere in the University. Applications that require resources that cannot be provided by the University will, in the interests of the applicant, be rejected.

Costs

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. Host Departments / Institutes / Centres must provide access to Durham research facilities required for the project as agreed by the Institute Director / Centre/

Head of Department on the support proforma. Additional research expenses for consumables/fieldwork should be discussed with the applicant since these need to be signed off as part of the application process on the support proforma as they are not provided centrally by the Fellowship Scheme itself.

How and when are the applications scored?

The Dean and Deputy to PvC Research has oversight of the JRF Programme and chairs the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee is divided into three Sub-Panels to assess proposals in the remits of the three Faculties at Durham. Each Sub-Panel will have representatives including:

- The Dean and Deputy to PvC Research or an IAS Director (Chair)
- Representative(s) from the Research Institute(s) associated with the relevant Faculty (normally the Director or Deputy Director)
- One representative of a Research Centre
- A senior academic from the relevant Faculty who is not a member of an Institute and who has experience of judging international fellowship proposals (normally the Deputy Head of Faculty (Research))
- An international representative invited by the Programme Directors from a list of three names recommended by the relevant Faculty Board.

Criteria 1 and 2 are initially scored independently by sub-Panel members on the basis of the application material and references alone. These scores are then moderated in light of the rankings and commentary submitted by Institute Directors and Heads of Department. For short-listed candidates, independent expert assessments will be requested and the scores may be adjusted by the sub-Panels with the knowledge gained from these assessments. The interviews only have a secondary influence on the scores for criteria 1 and 2, for example where the interview is used to clarify points of uncertainty in the written information.

Criteria 3 and 4 are scored as part of the interview process, taking into account information provided in the letter of application

First Point of Contact for COFUND enquiries:

Please contact Mr Simon Litchfield: simon.litchfield@dur.ac.uk or ext. 44685

Overview of the recruitment process

See diagram on following page

Durham International Junior Research Fellowship Recruitment Process

