

## **Sir Henry Dale Fellowship**

### **What is the aim of a Sir Henry Dale 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. It allows you 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 or early-independent researchers will have a PhD and significant post-doctoral research experience. In order to account for the diversity of research careers, we do not have time post-PhD as an eligibility criterion. At this career stage a researcher is expected to have already made significant research contributions. This may include anything from publications and patents, to software development, impact on health policy, practice, technology 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 (PI)/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 reviews or present their work).

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

The aim of the Sir Henry Dale Fellowship is to establish your own independent research programme in the UK. Our expectation is that you will move away intellectually from your existing PI or previous PhD supervisor and develop your own research niche. This is not necessarily about moving geographically but about developing your own independent research vision and programme as well as establishing your own collaborative networks. This may of course be easier to achieve in a new environment. You should select the most appropriate environment and host institute based on your research needs. This can include access to expertise, resources and equipment. During your Fellowship you can spend time abroad or in industry as long as this is scientifically justified.

### **I've got 4 years post-doctoral experience. Should I apply for a Sir Henry Wellcome or a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship?**

With 4 years post-doctoral experience we would usually expect you to be ready for a Sir Henry Dale 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. Early-career researchers should apply for a Sir Henry

Wellcome Fellowship while intermediate (early-independent) researchers should apply for a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship. The Sir Henry Wellcome Fellowship is aimed at consolidating your own skills and exploring new research and is not about building your own research group whereas the Sir Henry Dale 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. See the definition of an intermediate (early-independent) researcher above to see if it describes your experience.

Alternatively, early-career researchers are expected to have some initial but limited postdoctoral experience and are not yet ready for independence or to lead their own group. At this career stage researchers are expected to have started to make important contributions to research. This may include anything from publications and patents, to software development, impact on health policy, practice, technology or product discovery and development. They will be starting to drive their own research (usually evidenced by publications) but they still require more time to consolidate their existing skills and explore new scientific areas, under the guidance of an experienced research sponsor. They will be able to articulate and drive their own research ideas and form collaborations but are not yet ready to lead their own independent research group.

**I've got 10 years post-doc experience. Should I apply for a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship or a Senior Research Fellowship in Basic biomedical science?**

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 a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship while researchers who are already independent should apply for a Senior Research Fellowship. See 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 corresponding author publications, patents, software development, impact on health policy, practice, technology 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, 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 Sir Henry Dale 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 and be more independent, 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.

### **If I'm already an independent researcher, can I apply for a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship?**

The aim of this scheme is to support post-doctoral researchers who wish to become independent group leaders. You can, however, apply for a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship if you are a recently appointed independent researcher (e.g. Principal Investigator or Group Leader). Your appointment should be fixed term with the intent of providing only start up salary and limited research support and the expectation that any further support will be sought from external funding.

You should not apply if:

- you have secured significant funding beyond seed or start-up funds (e.g. Research Council/charity project, programme, new investigator or collaborative grants)
- have published work from your own team independently of your previous supervisors/Pis
- have or will soon be considered for a tenured, long-term or rolling contract
- your position does not allow for your salary support to be paid in full by the Sir Henry Dale Fellowship

Instead, you may wish to apply for either a Senior Research Fellowship or an Investigator Award as appropriate.

### **If I'm awarded a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship can I still teach and apply for other grants?**

The Sir Henry Dale Fellowship will provide 100% of your salary and your main focus should be the work outlined in your proposal; however, the aim of the fellowship is also to develop your research career so that by the end of the fellowship you are competitive for a Senior Research Fellowship or an equivalent institutional post. To progress to this senior level we recognise that you will wish to contribute to the activities of your host institution (e.g. teaching, management, collegial) and expand

your research and team by attracting additional funding. In the early stages, we recommend that you focus on your fellowship and establishing your research and limit other activities to approximately 20% of your time. As your research matures, it may be appropriate to expand your research activities and apply for other grants.

You should contact Wellcome before submitting additional grant applications.

### **Examples of successful Sir Henry Dale Fellowship applicants**

1. AB completed her PhD five years ago. Her PhD was very successful, during which she published an important, highly cited, publication where she was driving the work and some additional papers where she made a significant contribution. During her PhD she presented her work at a scientific 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 lab. She also had the opportunity to supervise an undergraduate project and publish another important paper.

AB was awarded a four year, internationally competitive fellowship to explore her own research questions. During this time she gained additional technical and analytical skills and developed the research vision and ideas on which to base her own research programme. Although she continued to collaborate with her previous PI and PhD supervisor she developed her own network of collaborators and was driving her own research. Her fellowship was highly successful, producing novel and innovative data that resulted in important first author publications and a potential impact on health policy. She also independently initiated an additional project which she published as the corresponding author. She is starting to be recognised as an expert in her field and has been invited to peer review a paper for a specialist journal and has co-authored a review article. On the basis of a talk at an international scientific meeting she received a “Young Investigator Award”.

2. CD completed his PhD in mathematics 8 years ago. Initially he undertook post-doctoral positions where he worked closely with biologists on large international collaborative team projects. He published several important papers where 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 changed direction to use his mathematical skills while also generating his own raw data in a “wet” lab. After a slow start, this proved an exciting combination and resulted in important, highly cited publications where he was the first author. Other researchers are now using his models and he has started to gain a reputation in his field and is being invited to collaborate on several projects.
3. EF completed a very successful PhD 10 years ago where she published important papers including a first author paper that received a lot of interest in the field. She

moved to work in a lab in the USA and undertook a very successful post doc where she jointly supervised a technician and graduate students. During this time she contributed to several important papers including first author papers and was joint corresponding author on her students' work. She presented her work at international meetings and was beginning to establish a reputation for excellence in her field. She returned to a post-doctoral position in the UK and started a very challenging project. After two periods of maternity leave and a year of part-time working she returned to the lab full time and made good but slow progress. Her main project resulted in several papers including a highly cited important paper and a patent that re-established her in her field and suggested new areas of research. Her current PI doesn't wish to follow this new direction; therefore, she will now develop these ideas to form her own independent research programme in another department at the same host institute.

4. GH completed his PhD three years ago. During his very successful PhD he developed novel methodology that resulted in the publication of an important paper that was well received in the field. He also made contributions to other papers published from his supervisor's lab. He attended an international conference where his abstract was selected for a platform presentation. To consolidate his research skills he undertook a three year post-doctoral position in a different lab where he applied his existing skills in a new research area. He also learned new techniques and explored new research avenues. He supervised undergraduates and a research technician and provided training for new members of the lab. His work was very successful and resulted in important publications some of which have been highly cited. To present his work at international meetings he successfully applied for travel grants. For his Sir Henry Dale Fellowship he will collaborate with his current PI but plans to develop his own research in a different direction. He will move institutions to work with new collaborators whose expertise is better aligned with the new direction he wishes to pursue.
  
5. IJ completed her PhD six years ago. Post PhD she completed a two year post-doc and an early career fellowship (including maternity leave). Building on the strength of this excellent training and the important publications she produced during her postdoctoral research, she developed her own novel and exciting research proposal and successfully applied for a University Vice-Chancellor's Fellowship. The fellowship provided her with a 5 year appointment followed by transition to a tenured post subject to satisfactory progress. This New Investigator/Junior Principal Investigator post provided her with dedicated lab space as well as a PhD student and £10K research costs. Within the first year of starting this post she successfully applied for a Sir Henry Dale Fellowship. On taking up her Sir Henry Dale Fellowship she gave up her university salary but retained the status and career development opportunities provided by the University Vice-Chancellor's Fellowship programme.