Helpful info for postdocs applying for Fellowships
School of Biological Sciences, February 2018

(Note that this procedure only applies if you’re intending to stay at Bristol. Other universities will have similar processes, so this guide will still be useful as an indication of the sort of thing to expect)

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• Where to Start
• Contacting the Deputy Head of Department
• Contacting RED
• RED Workshops
• Selected Very Early Career Fellowship Details - including timelines and application process - not an exhaustive list
  o BBSRC Discovery Fellowships (formerly FLF) - suggested internal deadline March 2018; external deadline 9 May 2018
  o NERC IRF - internal deadline July/August 2018; external deadline October 2018 (exact dates still tbc)
  o EPSRC Fellowship - compulsory internal process applies - rolling application, but applicants are strongly suggested to submit their internal application 3 months prior to intended submission date
  o The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 Research Fellowships - February 2019 (next year)
  o Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships - compulsory internal process applies - approx internal deadline Jan 2019; external deadline March 2019 (not all departments will support these due to the 50% matched funding contribution)
  o People to speak to (nicely)
• Research Professional
• People to speak to (nicely)
• fEC tool (no sniggering)
• Head of School Letter of Support or Acceptance
• Letters of collaboration
• References

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Important Points

A word of advice to start, be aware that applying for Fellowships can be quite a lengthy process (as in 6 months), especially if the University has an internal review process in place. This means that if you’re hoping to apply for fellowships this year you might need to start right now!

You have to be somewhat careful that your project falls within the remit of the research councils. Best thing to do is 1) check their websites for strategic priorities 2) speak to others in the department who have research council funding (see list further down email) 3) send an email to the administrator/portfolio manager/person with an outline of the project proposal to query whether it is in the remit or not. RED can advise on the best person at the Research Council / Funder to get in touch with.
RED will only support applications where the Fellowship will be held here at Bristol.

RED would like to know how many people intend to apply for any of the Fellowship schemes so as to provide the applicants with the maximum support.

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Where to start
If you've not really considered a Fellowship, or aren't sure where to start, heading to Research Development, based within RED (Research Enterprise and Development) is a great place to start. They have lists of funding opportunities open to academics in particular disciplines or career stage. Make sure you've approached an appropriate academic supervisor.

http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/development/opportunities/funding-for/fellowship.html

Contacting Deputy Head of Department
Since you'll need the support of the School to apply for a Fellowship, it's a very good idea to arrange a meeting with Nick Roberts (nicholas.roberts@bristol.ac.uk), the Deputy Head of School here in Biology. He'll be able to talk you through the Fellowships available, the application process and how to write a successful proposal.

Contacting RED
If you're intending to stay at Bristol, the next thing to do is to get in touch with RED. Since your proposal is most likely to be in the area of Engineering or Science, you'll need to contact Kerrie Carlin or Reiko Vermeulen at the email address: rda-engsci@bristol.ac.uk. They'll be able to give loads of help and support with the application process, such as sending copies of past successful applications, getting you in touch with the appropriate finance people or internal reviewers and giving general feedback and advice on your application. Unfortunately they will not be able to help you if you're applying for a Fellowship at a different University, but their equivalent of RED should be able to give the same type of help and support.

RED Workshops
RED regularly hold workshops on applying for grants and fellowships, and even have sessions dedicated to applying for specific fellowships. http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/events/

Specific Fellowship Details
We're concentrating on the very early career fellowships - for researchers with less than 3 years of experience. Hopefully we'll get around to compiling a similar list for the senior fellowships in the near future. Note that RED can offer advice and support throughout the drafting/development process.

BBSRC Discovery Fellowship (formerly known as Future Leader Fellowship)
For researchers with no more than 5 years of postdoc experience
https://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/filter/discovery-fellowships/

- no compulsory internal review process **but** RED do like to see all proposals before they are submitted
- useful to have a draft at least 6-8 weeks ahead of the deadline
- near final draft: mid March 2018
- external deadline: 9 May 2018
**NERC Independent Research Fellowships**
For researchers with less than 8 years of postdoc experience
[http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/fellowships/irf/](http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/fellowships/irf/)

- no compulsory internal process but RED do offer a “light-touch” internal process as there are usually so many applications from the UoB (there were around 20 last year). Candidates do not have to go through the internal review but the feedback is extremely useful so it would be sensible if at all possible.
- involves a near-final draft being sent out to two internal reviewers (one a NERC IRF holder / NERC expert and the other someone who is close to the field). Feedback will then be provided to the applicant.
- details will be emailed out in June and will largely stick to the same timescales as last year which was
  - call opens: 05 June 2018
  - near final draft: 07 August 2018
  - comments returned: 29 August 2018
  - external deadline 02 October 2018

**EPSCRC Postdoctoral Fellowships** *(for those wanting to move into Engineering or Physical Sciences)*
[https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/](https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/)

- subject to internal review ([https://www.bris.ac.uk/red/development/opportunities/major-bids/majorbidscurrent.html?ticket=ST-19232627-ogCn4dfae74ej01OSff7-596aeb47a329#epsrcfships](https://www.bris.ac.uk/red/development/opportunities/major-bids/majorbidscurrent.html?ticket=ST-19232627-ogCn4dfae74ej01OSff7-596aeb47a329#epsrcfships))
- Only certain areas are open to the postdoctoral career stage [https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/areas/](https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/skills/fellows/areas/)
- Rolling application process, but RED advise applicants to begin the internal process 3 months prior to planned submission to ensure bid is competitive and developed.

**Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 Research Fellowships**
For researchers with no more than 3 years of postdoc experience
[https://www.royalcommission1851.org/awards/?award=research](https://www.royalcommission1851.org/awards/?award=research)

- Short application process
- You’re expected to be held at a different institution from the one where you did your Phd, but can request an exemption if its the best fit for your project and you can demonstrate sufficient independence from your PhD supervisor/lab.
- No internal review process, but RED can help with the application
- External deadline: 15 February 2018 (pretty sure it’s too late to apply for one this year... but next year it is likely to be mid Feb 2019)

**Leverhulme Early Career Fellowships**
*note that not all schools support these because they ask for a 50% contribution for salary*
For researchers with no more than 4 years of postdoc experience
[https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/funding/grant-schemes/early-career-fellowships](https://www.leverhulme.ac.uk/funding/grant-schemes/early-career-fellowships)
• Very broad remit, fund anything except applied medical research
• Short application
• Engineering have an internal review process: https://www.bris.ac.uk/red/development/opportunities/major-bids/majorbidscurrent.html#ltearlycareer
• internal deadline: usually January
• external deadline: 1 March 2018 (pretty sure it's too late to apply for one this year... but next year it is likely to be March 2019)

This is not an exhaustive list, so don’t restrict yourself to these four. RED has a list https://www.bris.ac.uk/red/development/opportunities/funding-for/science-engineering-fellowships/sciengfellowships/index.html, which is super useful, but again, it's not exhaustive.

**Research Professional**
The University subscribes to a funding opportunities harvesting tool called Research Professional which all staff on UoB campus can access (you can access outside of campus but you will need to create an account). This tool allows colleagues to perform a funding opportunities search based on their individual research area and can be filtered to just produce fellowship opportunities (or anything else that could be looking for; perhaps travel funding or a medal/ prize to strengthen your CV). Please see here for more information – RED can advise you on performing a search/ setting up an account if you get stuck: https://www.researchprofessional.com/0/rr/home

**Departmental Contacts**
RED has a list of all the UoB staff that sit on funding panels. By all means get in touch with these people as they can offer very valuable advice for making successful applications, but please do be considerate that they're busy people so try not to bombard them with questions! There are several fellows in the school who we can put you in touch with if you want a first-hand account of the application process. https://www.bris.ac.uk/red/development/funders/

**Full Economic Costing** (fEC tool)
For all applications being submitted from the UoB, applicants will need to complete a fEC costing, even if it isn’t a part of the application itself. Your Assistant Finance Business Partner (Caroline Kennedy for the School of Biological Sciences) will be able to work with you on the costing and confirm what are /aren’t eligible costs. Finance require 48 hours to submit a proposal so applicants **ideally need to submit 2 days ahead of the deadline** – this discussion should be had in advance of the deadline with your Assistant Finance Business Partner.

**Head of School Letter**
For most, if not all, fellowship applications, you’ll have to get approval from the Head of School (for the School of Life Sciences, this is currently Mike Benton, soon to be Claire Grierson from 1st August). HoS approval is also required for the fEC to be authorised. While Nick Roberts, as deputy head of school, will be your first port of call, you may need a letter of support from the Head of School to go along with your application. Depending on the person, they might ask you to draft a letter and send it to them for approval. RED are likely to be involved in providing feedback on your draft letter, but if you’re stuck on what to write, feel free to email us and we can find you some examples to follow.

**Letters of collaboration**
Some Fellowship schemes require letters of support from collaborators or from the head of the lab where the Fellowship will be held. Don't forget to account for these people's busy schedules into your timescale. You'll be more likely to get a quick turnaround if you provide them with a draft of the letter rather than having them start from scratch. RED can offer help and support with that too.

References
Some Fellowship schemes (e.g. 1851) ask for references in support of you as a researcher to be submitted before the application deadline. So be sure to approach these people way ahead of the deadline - clearly you're not going to get a glowing reference from someone you've just annoyed by dropping the request last-minute.