

Advanced Fellowship Award 2024 Chair's Report

Chair

Chair:

Professor Deb Fitzsimmons, Professor of Health Economics and Outcomes Research, Swansea University, and Co-Director, Health and Care Economics Cymru

Deputy Chair:

Dr Kathryn Peall, MRC Clinician-Scientist Fellow, Clinical Senior Lecturer and Honorary Consultant Neurologist, Cardiff University

Panel

Davina Allen, Professor of Service Delivery and Organisation, Cardiff University

Linda Cusworth, Research Fellow, Lancaster University

Gina Dolan, Associate Dean for Research and Innovation, University of South Wales

Jim Fitzgibbon, Public Member

Ben Hannigan, Professor of Mental Health Nursing, Cardiff University

Zoe Hoare, Principal Statistician and Director, Bangor University

Chris Hurt, Associate Professor of Statistics, University of Southampton

Victoria Shepherd, Senior Research Fellow (Nurse), Cardiff University

Richard Stanton, Professor of Virology, Cardiff University

Tom Wilkinson, Professor of Barrier Immunity and Infectious Disease, Swansea University

Reyer Zwiggelaar, Head of Graduate School, Aberystwyth University

Introduction

Health and Care Research Wales' mission is to promote, support and provide collective oversight of health and social care research in Wales to ensure it is of the highest international scientific quality, is relevant to the needs and challenges of health and social care in Wales, and makes a difference to policy and practice in ways that improve the lives of patients, people and communities in Wales.

The **Advanced Fellowship Award** aims to support individuals to become independent researchers through leading and undertaking high-quality research.

The Fellowship offers up to three years full-time funding, or four- or five-years part-time funding, to individuals who have been awarded their PhD (at the latest by the point of interview) and do not hold a professorial level appointment at the point of application.

The number of applications received and awards made for the latest competition are detailed below.

Advanced Fellowship Award 2024

Applied: 15
Eligible: 15
Awarded: 4

Advanced Fellowship Awards

The scheme launched on 19 October 2023 and closed on 17 January 2024.

Observations and advice for prospective applicants

The Chair and Deputy Chair of the panel have made observations of the general strengths and weaknesses of the eligible applications and discussed areas that future applicants should consider in order to strengthen their application. These are summarised below.

Training plans

Supervision

Research questions and methods

Interview preparation

Training plans

Applicants should keep in mind that these are training fellowships, and that in addition to undertaking high quality research there is a need to demonstrate the additional skill acquisition and training that the applicant will gain from the fellowship. This can be demonstrated in multiple ways but needs to be logical and coherent, for example the timing of relevant courses, visits to other centres or research groups with expertise in a specific field.

Supervision

Consideration should be given to establishing the most appropriate supervisory group for both the proposed research as well as the applicant's pathway to independence. Applicants should consider supervisors from other centres (including those outside Wales), where this is appropriate, as well as working with individuals with different research backgrounds. A diverse group of supervisory support will help in demonstrating a commitment to broadening an individual's skillset and set them up for future independent work.

Research question and methods

Attention should be paid in making a strong case for the research question. We would typically expect that there has been a thorough review of the current evidence base undertaken in preparation of the application. Where a case is made to include a literature review (e.g. systematic review) within the fellowship, this should be fully justified. Consideration should be made to ensuring the research objectives are achievable within the timescale and resources requested, alongside demonstrating the scientific rigour expected. We would advise that specific expertise needed (e.g. statistical considerations) is built in through your supervisory support and training plans (see advice above).

Interview preparation

If you have been successful in being invited to interview, interview preparation will ensure that you perform to your best. Ensure that you have addressed the question that has been set for your presentation. Give careful consideration to points of feedback received from your written application. Give focused, complete and clear answers to the panel member's questions.

Useful resources for prospective applicants

Scheme Guidance is available [on the website](#). This provides details of the eligibility and assessment criteria and should be read in full before starting an application.

Note that updated Scheme Guidance will be published with the launch of each call and applicants must ensure that they are referring to the most recent Scheme Guidance.

Current and previous Health and Care Research Wales award holders are listed on the [website](#) and may be a useful resource.

There are also a range of resources available on our website including upcoming and recorded health and social care [webinars](#).