**UKRI FLF Round 9 – UCL Internal Process Guidance**

UKRI have pre-announced the call for [Round 9 of the](https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/future-leaders-fellowships-round-9/) [UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships (FLF)](https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/future-leaders-fellowships-round-9/). UKRI are implementing an organisational cap, and UCL will be allowed to submit 10 applications for Round 9. Below outlines the initial details of the process to allow UCL to select candidates to be nominated across the university. The UCL internal process will be managed by UCL Research, Innovation and Global Engagement (RIGE).

We will be collecting applications centrally from all applicants wishing to be considered for the Round 9 of the UKRI FLF, which we will then share with applicants’ respective Departments/Divisions/Institutes for their consideration. The internal process will have the following stages; (i) Department/Division/Institute stage, (ii) Faculty stage and (iii) UCL central stage. See further details below on the section “Process, key dates and timelines”.

**Note**: This announcement will be updated with final details regarding the internal process. This is expected to happen shortly after the UKRI announcement of the full call, which is expected by mid-February. We outline here key details of the scheme and internal process, including the Expression of Interest (EoI) application form. This is to enable interested applicants to start working on their applications in the meantime and give greater time to develop ideas.

**Scope**UKRI are funding fellowships of up to 7 years to support talented researchers and innovators transitioning to research or innovation leadership. The scheme aims to:

* develop, retain, attract and sustain research and innovation talent in the UK
* foster new research and innovation career paths including those at the academic, business and interdisciplinary boundaries, and facilitate movement of people between sectors
* provide sustained funding and resources for the best early career researchers and innovators
* provide long-term, flexible funding to tackle difficult and novel challenges, and support adventurous, ambitious programmes

Fellowships will be funded for 4 years in the first phase, with the option to apply to renew for a further 3 years later on.

For more details regarding scope and eligibility potential applicants are strongly advised to see the [UKRI webpages](https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/future-leaders-fellowships-round-8/).

**Central submission platform**

UKRI have asked academic institutions to collect diversity monitoring data and produce an anonymous report including data from applicants that are; (i) interested in, (ii) suitable for and (iii) shortlisted for the scheme. Therefore, UCL will ask applicants to use a central submission platform for Round 9 of the UKRI FLF scheme, in order to capture diversity monitoring data from applicants *– further details below on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) section and annex for host Departments/Divisions/Institutes and Faculties.*

**How to apply**

All applicants must use the UCL central submission platform to submit their application. UCL will only consider applications submitted using the central submission platform and with no late submissions allowed.

**Note:** There is a different submission platform and application process for internal and external applicants due to Microsoft Forms settings limitations for external applicants.

* **Internal applicants** can submit their application data and upload their completed EoI form to the [central submission platform for internal applicants](https://forms.office.com/e/5v7DqdP9mB).
* **External applicants** can submit their application data to the [central submission platform for external applicants](https://forms.office.com/e/ujdVRRVJwy). External applicants also have to send their completed EoI form to us at ovpr.beams@ucl.ac.uk before the deadline (please see below).

**Faculties quota and selection**

Each Faculty has been allocated a total number of candidates they may wish to put forward to the central panel. The amount is not a target and we encourage Faculties to only nominate well formed and developed submissions. Faculties will be given the autonomy and flexibility in nominating their candidates. However, a couple of points to flag to encourage a fair and inclusive selection:

* We request Faculties to inform Departments/Divisions/Institutes about what they need for their process (i.e. department limit on the number of candidates to shortlist, department nominations deadline…).
* We request Faculties and Departments/Divisions/Institutes consider how they might encourage applicants from underrepresented groups to apply.
* We encourage Faculties and Departments/Divisions/Institutes to use the internal assessment criteria (available on the key documents section below) to assess and shortlist candidates.

**Note:** Interested applicants should speak to their Director/Head of Research (or equivalent) and/or Department/Division/Institute Manager for queries about their Department/Division/Institute process. If you are unsure who you should contact, please get in touch with your corresponding RCO and we will put you in touch with the best person with whom to contact.

**Process, key dates and timelines**

Departments/Divisions/Institutes and Faculties can decide their timeline for their internal selection process for nominations to the central process, however we will be setting the following overarching deadlines i) Department/Division/Institute stage where ALL applicants submit their applications centrally for their Department/Division/Institute consideration, ii) a Faculty deadline to inform us about the nominated candidates to the UCL central panel and (iii) Central stage where ALL Faculty-nominated candidates submit their EoI for the UCL Central panel consideration. All internal process stages and key dates are outlined below.

1. **Microsoft Forms central submission platform is open (please see links under How to Apply section).** The portal is open and applicants can start developing their application and submit it when ready.
2. **Central UCL deadline for all applications (Department/Division/Institute stage): noon 29 February.** All applicants to submit their application via the central submission portal before the deadline.
3. **Department/Division/Institute and Faculty shortlisting of applicants: 1 March-21 March.** Applications will be shared with host departments/divisions/institutes by 1 March Noon. Department/Division/ Institutes and Faculties will have full autonomy and flexibility and can decide how to coordinate their internal processes - *See Annex document below for further information.*
4. **Faculty deadline for nominations to UCL central panel: noon 22 March.** Faculties to send the names and host department/division/institute of i) all the applicants they have considered and ii) the Faculty nominated candidates’ they wish to put forward to the central stage to BEAMS RCO (ovpr.beams@ucl.ac.uk).
5. **UCL central panel submission deadline: noon 10 April.** Faculty nominated candidates will be invited to submit their final revised EoI application via central submission platform by the deadline. Candidates are permitted to work on their applications in the 22 March-10 April window.
6. **UCL central panel outcome: w/c 29 April.** Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application. Central panel will be chaired by VP Research, Innovation and Global Engagement (RIGE).
7. **UKRI deadline: 18 June**. UCL selected candidates will work on their application and submit to UKRI’s deadline with support from the Research Coordination and Facilitation Offices (RCO).

**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

Applicants from underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply for this scheme. UKRI have stated that they encourage a diversity of applicants applying to the FLF programme and that host organisations play a critical role in ensuring that all potential applicants have a fair chance of being supported through a transparent selection process based on their ability and potential. In round 8 UKRI required institutions to provide an inclusive selection statement advising how their processes differed from round 7. UKRI commissioned the Careers Research & Advisory Centre (CRAC) to conduct research about their own and -institutions selection practices and to produce report identifying and recommend potential improvements. UKRI have published their response, both include [guidance for inclusive selection processes](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/UKRI-081223-UKRIresponsetoCRACreport.pdf).

**Key recommendations are to increase the transparency and inclusivity of the processes through a number of mechanisms**. For Round 9 UKRI are piloting the collection of diversity monitoring data and is requiring institutions to collect data from their applicants regarding their sex and gender, ethnicity, disability and discipline and produce an anonymous report, benchmarking the data with the institute’s population of Early Career Researchers.

**Key documents**

* [UCL internal FLF Expression of Interest (EoI) form](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/sites/research/files/ukri_flf_r9_ucl_eoi_expression_of_interest_final.docx)
* [UKRI FLF key scope and eligibility](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/sites/research/files/ukri_flf_r9_key_scope_eligibility_criteria_final.pdf)
* [Internal assessment criteria – Round 9](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/sites/research/files/ukri_flf_round_9_internal_assessment_criteria_final.pdf)
* UCL central submission platform; (i) [internal applicants](https://forms.office.com/e/5v7DqdP9mB) and (ii) [external applicants](https://forms.office.com/e/ujdVRRVJwy)
* [ANNEX: Additional information for host Departments/Divisions/Institutes](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/sites/research/files/annex.pdf)
* [Privacy notice](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/sites/research/files/final_privacy_notice_ukri_flf_round_9_data_collection.pdf)

**General Feedback from previous internal selection rounds for why applicants were not selected:**

* Proposals not being accessible to a generalist audience (the central UCL panel have membership from all UCL Faculties) in terms of conveying key concepts as well as the importance of the research.
* Projects feeling too small in scope, appearing like fellowships of shorter (e.g. 2-3 years) duration or like a project rather than a fellowship. Future Leaders Fellows should demonstrate a clear programme of research lasting 4 years, with an indication of potential future research directions in the last 3 years.
* It not being clear in applications why the FLF is the right scheme for the candidate and their proposed research, including in terms of having a significant impact on the candidate's career and development as a research leader in their chosen discipline.
* Department/ Division/ Institute statement of support being relatively generic, and not tailored in terms of support to the candidate regarding the research programme and their development.