

ECR Assessment Framework



This Assessment Framework outlines the competencies Early Career Fellowship applicants are expected to demonstrate in their application and interview.

Career breaks, part-time working and changes in discipline will be taken into consideration by our panels and committees to make appropriate adjustments when assessing your record of outputs, research achievements and career progression.

The Framework assesses six competencies:

- Research vision
- Research experience and potential
- Personal development
- Leadership
- Communication and engagement skills
- Profile and influence

Research vision

You should:

- Demonstrate a high commitment to MS research with a clear understanding of how your research contributes to our Research Strategy.
- Demonstrate independent research ideas that are likely to result in significant benefits for people affected by MS. These could include, but aren't limited to:
 - addressing fundamental gaps in our knowledge of MS pathophysiology
 - development and implementation of new treatments
 - risk factors and prevention
 - improved care and services for people affected by MS.
- Be able to describe the long term plans for your research. This includes a route to implement your findings for the benefit for people affected by MS.
- Have an awareness of research in other fields and embrace opportunities for collaborative and interdisciplinary working.

Research experience and potential

You should:

- Have prior experience in MS research or personal motivation to work in MS. Or you should have evidence of work in a related and relevant research field.
- Hold a PhD if you're a non-clinical researcher, or be able to demonstrate equivalent research experience.
- Have delivered previous research project(s) and show evidence of impactful outputs.

- These could include first author publications or critical contributions to multi-author publications, conference presentations or policy outputs.
- They could also include but aren't limited to: preprints, contribution to consortia, patents, key datasets, software, novel assays and reagents and publications.
- When considering research publications, our reviewers will recognise that the content of a scientific paper and its influence in the field holds more significance than publication metrics or where it was published.
- Actively be adding to your “tool-box” of skills. These'll serve as a strong basis for future independent research activity. And allow you to be recognised for your specialist expertise.
- Be establishing and able to demonstrate your own network(s) of research contacts independent of your group leader/supervisor (e.g. through multicentre collaborations)

Personal development

You should:

- Describe how you've designed your proposal to include research and credible plans for a training and educational programme. This should support your further career development and networking with peers and superiors.
- Demonstrate appropriate selection of supervisor(s) and project team that will enable you to gain the specific skills needed to deliver your current and future research plans.
- Have identified and be pursuing opportunities to access career development support, such as:
 - Mentoring
 - Learning new skills
 - Spending time in or collaborating closely with other research groups or settings, either within the UK or overseas.
- These opportunities can either be within the research institution the Fellow has worked in, or through multicentre collaborations.

Leadership

You should:

- Show evidence of leading and inspiring. For example:
 - Through organisation of peer activities, workshops, journal clubs.
 - Supporting individuals at earlier career stages such as Masters and PhD level students or clinical trainees.

Communication and engagement skills

You should:

- Have excellent communication and interpersonal skills across different audiences, including academic and public. These could be demonstrated, for example, through presentations at scientific conferences and involvement at public meetings (for example, those organised by us or one of our local groups).
- Demonstrate enthusiasm for active involvement (PPI) of people with MS in the development of your specific project and wider research plans.

- Show how your research outcomes will be communicated and disseminated within and outside the research community
- Be prepared to demonstrate how your research aligns with our mission and our promise to people with MS.

Profile and influence

You should:

- Have a strong, practical sense of how you'll develop your career to become a leading independent researcher.
- Be supportive of the wider research agenda through, for example, peer review activity, providing lectures/seminars, teaching/clinical duties and participation in internal committees.

If you have any questions about the ECR Assessment Framework, you can email research@mssociety.org.uk.