

## **Addison Wheeler Fellowships: departmental assessment guidelines**

If a department/school receives multiple expressions of interest from prospective applicants, it may be necessary to convene an internal panel to review the applications and decide whom to nominate. We ask that whatever way the department chooses to make its internal selection takes into account the advertised criteria for the fellowships.

As the Addison Wheeler scheme is highly competitive, there is little point in nominating applicants who will not score highly against the assessment criteria. Nominees are expected to have an outstanding track record of prior achievement and demonstrate an exceptional level of preparedness to undertake an ambitious postdoctoral project.

To be eligible for nomination, prospective candidates should:

- hold a doctoral degree at the point of application, and have gained it no earlier than 1 September 2020;
- not currently hold a non-fixed term or tenure-track academic post;
- propose a research project that is substantially different to the project undertaken for their doctorate.

It is vital that applicants demonstrate the ability to work independently. The research proposal should be the applicant's own work, and not written jointly with a Durham staff member who has agreed to mentor the project. Prospective mentors can offer feedback on proposals, but should not take an active role in formulating them.

Staff within a school or department who are responsible for assessing and approving applications should ensure that:

- any ethical concerns raised by the project have been identified and addressed;
- appropriate specialist facilities and/or equipment required to undertake the project are available and that access to them can be provided as necessary;
- if the project depends on the co-operation of external bodies (e.g. an industry partner) or of individuals (e.g. the executor of a writer's estate who controls access to their archive), that their willingness to co-operate has been obtained;
- the provision of office space for an Addison Wheeler fellow has been discussed with the appropriate member of the faculty or school/department professional support staff.
- They identify which panel (Panel 1: Science, or Panel 2: Arts & Social Science) they wish the candidate to be considered by. Panels do not map on to departments or faculties, so departments should select the panel best suited to the applicant's project.

In selecting candidates for nomination, preference should normally be given to those with at least two years' postdoctoral experience, as they will have had more time to demonstrate evidence of potential. Candidates with a shorter period of postdoctoral experience can also be considered, but the departmental statement must offer a persuasive rationale for nominating them, and in all cases evidence should be provided of why the candidate is exceptional relative to their career stage. Departmental selection should remain aware of EDI considerations as appropriate (for example, if applicants come from geographical regions where opportunities for early career researchers' professional development are more restricted than in the UK).

The scheme aims to provide talented early career scholars with an opportunity to complete a major project and to support fellows' career development by enhancing their competitiveness to apply for lecturing posts or externally funded fellowships on completion of the fellowship.

The overarching aim of the selection process should be to identify applicants of exceptional promise who demonstrate clear potential to undertake important work in their research domain, and in doing so will add to the strategic direction of their home department and/or faculty.

Departments are not expected to rank their nominees in order of preference.

### ***Criterion 1***

**Evidence exceptional preparedness to undertake an ambitious postdoctoral research project: the quality of the applicant and of their contribution to scholarship to date, relative to career stage.**

Considerations that are relevant here include:

- the applicant's academic track record;
- scholarships, prizes, and other forms of professional recognition;
- the quality and significance of the research that the applicant has conducted to date;
- their track record of publications or of producing other forms of scholarly outputs;
- presentations at conferences and participation in other research events;
- evidence of significant impact and public engagement activities;
- the applicant's readiness to undertake a major project independently.

### ***Criterion 2***

**Outstanding quality, significance, and originality of the proposed programme of research, its alignment with the objectives of the Addison Wheeler bequest, and the feasibility of completing the project successfully within the period of the fellowship.**

Relevant considerations:

- the originality of the proposed programme of research;
- its intellectual ambition;
- its potential to make a highly significant contribution to knowledge;
- the clarity of the research questions and research aims;
- the rigour and appropriateness of the methodology;
- the feasibility of completing the project successfully within the period of the fellowship.

### ***Criterion 3***

**The persuasiveness of the rationale for undertaking the project at Durham University: the suitability of the Durham research environment to support the project (e.g. facilities, staff expertise, pertinent research groups) and its alignment with the department or school's research strategy**

Relevant considerations:

- the presence of staff with research expertise relevant to the project;
- the alignment of the project with departmental research priorities;
- the possibility of integrating the applicant into departmental research groups and university research institutes and centres;

- the availability of suitable facilities and resources that are necessary to undertake the project;
- the persuasiveness of the rationale for hosting the fellow and their project at Durham, and not elsewhere.