Borysiewicz Interdisciplinary Fellowships

Frequently asked questions

Eligibility

I have been a Postdoc for several years. Is there any post-PhD time limit on eligibility to apply for the fellowship? Is there any limit on the time of employment at Cambridge University?

There are no time limits on how long you have been a postdoc or the duration of your employment by the University. The only time-relevant factor we take into account is that your contract needs to cover the whole duration of the first phase of the fellowship scheme, i.e. at least until August 2022.

I am not employed by the University of Cambridge, but a College or other Research Institution pays my salary. Am I eligible to apply?

Postdocs are eligible to apply for the Borysiewicz Fellowship Programme if they are:

- Any College employed postdocs/equivalent
- Employed by a University Partner Institution (UPI)

Please get in touch if you have a query about your particular institution.

My current fellowship will end soon, but I can provide a letter from my supervisor that I will be supported by other funding until August 2022. Will this be sufficient?

Yes.

My current contract ends before August 2022 but there is a possibility that it will be extended. Am I eligible to apply for the Borysiewicz Interdisciplinary Fellowship?

For the first part, the fellowship programme buys out only four hours per week of the Fellows’ research time. Therefore, it is required that applicants are employed by the University or their Partner Institutions for the duration of the first phase, until August 2022. Postdocs may still apply so long as they will have definitive information about their funding situation by 1st December 2021.

I am a clinical lecturer, which is the first post-doc grade for clinicians. Can you please confirm if I am eligible to apply?

Yes, Clinical Lecturers are indeed eligible.

I am a Research Associate and also head a company and/or spin-out. Could you please let me know whether in my situation with a double role I am still eligible to apply?

Yes, you are eligible to apply.
Funding / Employment status

Please note that the following information is a guideline only. There will be many different situations based on an applicant’s current employer, contract, salary spine, duration of employment etc that will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

How is the first phase of the Borysiewicz Interdisciplinary Fellowship funded?
The Borysiewicz Fellowship will buy-out four hours per week of the Fellows’ research time during the first phase of the programme; this means the PI and department will save this amount on their salary.

What size will the salary enhancement provided with Borysiewicz Interdisciplinary Fellowship be?
The salary enhancement will be two spine points on top of your current salary. https://www.hr.admin.cam.ac.uk/pay-benefits/salary-scales

Can you please give further details on the independent project, particularly typical/expected costs. What expenses are covered during the independent project? What is the maximum amount of support one can request for the time?
There are no typically expected costs as each proposed project will be evaluated and approved on its own merit.
Funding for the second phase of the Borysiewicz Interdisciplinary Fellowship, the independent project, will cover the full-time salary of the fellow as well as any additional reasonable expenses that are required for successful completion of the project. The nature – travel, consumables etc - and total amount of the funding will depend on the scale and timeline of the proposed project and will be considered as part of an overall funding package.

During the independent project, postdocs are paid full-time through the fellowship. Thus, do they become University employees and have full access to University services, such as immigration support?
Yes, during the second phase (i.e., the independent projects) normally fellows are employed through the University and thus are entitled to support from all University services. There might be cases though where it is practical or preferable for the fellow to be paid through their home institution’ payroll, in which cases an agreement may be reached with said institutions.

Are salaries pensionable?
Yes.
**First phase**

To apply I am required to get a letter from my line manager. Would this line manager be my PI/group leader? Is there a need to provide approval from the department?

For your initial application to the Borysiewicz Interdisciplinary Fellowship, the support letter needs to come from your group leader, i.e. the Principal Investigator or Supervisor you are working for.

There is no need to involve the Department or anyone else at this stage, as there will be a separate proposal for the second phase halfway through the programme which may or may not be awarded.

**Do I need to identify a mentor prior to submitting my application?**

There is no need for applicants to identify a mentor themselves unless they would like to indicate a preference. Fellows will work alongside Postdoc Academy staff to identify an appropriate mentor or mentors as part of the work of the programme.

**During the first phase, is the hours per week commitment flexible?**

The first phase of the fellowship will be a set programme of events which all Fellows are required to attend. However, the programme will not take place on a weekly basis but rather in short clusters of events set by the Postdoc Academy and working meetings of the pods which will be arranged between the Fellows and their pod colleagues. If required, individual arrangements can be made.

**Group / ‘Pod’ projects**

Would I have to form my own ‘pod’, or will there be existing ‘pods’ for each of the groups that I would then join?

Fellows are expected to form their own pods and develop a project together. The Postdoc Academy will facilitate this process and provide any support required, included structured mentoring with experts and making contacts to organisations working in the relevant field(s) already.

**Questions about independent projects (second phase)**

What level of detail is required, in the initial application, regarding the proposed independent research project?

There is no need to refer to the independent project at this first application stage as there will be a second application process to bid for the independent project. However, you may refer to it if you wish.
Will there be fewer places in the second phase than in the first phase?
Each application will be reviewed on its own merits, thus all fellows may go through to the second phase or only some. This will not affect the level of funding everybody receives.

Can you please give further details on the independent project, particularly types of projects, expected.
There are no typically expected project topics or formats as each proposed project will be evaluated and approved on its own merit.
The project may be academic research or any other interest of the fellow that they may want to drive forward. Former fellows have used this time to work in policy, develop spin-outs, conduct public engagement work, or finish off monographs.

Do I need to demonstrate a close relationship of the proposed independent project with my current project?
There is no requirement for Postdocs to discuss the independent project at this point of application though they can refer to it if they want. There will be a second round of application for the independent projects by the successful applicants several months into the programme. Only at this time will the actual independent project ideas need to be identified. Independent projects should be distinct from the work of the Fellow’s PI or supervisor.

Can fellows apply to continue running an impactful project that they were involved with before the fellowship?
Yes, fellows are allowed and encouraged to continue any impactful academic or non-academic work outside the PI’s project in the second phase.

Should you have any further questions, please contact: fellowships.pda@admin.cam.ac.uk