

Sanger Excellence Fellowship – Additional Information

Is the focus of the Sanger Excellence Fellowship for people from a Black background?

Yes – this scheme is designed to attract research excellence and we will provide the Fellows with training, mentorship and support to drive their careers forward. This Fellowship is open to people who self-identify as being from a Black heritage background, including a mixed heritage background. For example, Black African; Black Caribbean; Black Other; Mixed background (to include Black African, Black Caribbean or Black Other Backgrounds).

Why is the Sanger Excellence Fellowship only open to people from Black backgrounds?

People from Black backgrounds are under-represented in Higher Education and in the Biological Sciences, compared to the wider UK population^{1,2}. We recognise that persistent racial inequalities disadvantage people from Black backgrounds in all walks of life, including Academia and this is propagated along the academic pipeline - from degree awarding gaps at undergraduate level, through to fewer numbers at postgraduate and professoriate levels, and lower success rates with funding councils and granting agencies^{3,4}. We have extensively examined our staff data and this pattern is reflected within our own demography. Therefore, we have designed this particular Fellowship programme to bring in excellence that may otherwise be lost to science and to stimulate and catalyse change along the academic pipeline. Our [Race Equity strategy](#) is supported by our holistic [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy](#), which aims to ensure that we draw on as wide a pool of talent as possible. Scientific excellence is strengthened by the diversity of skills, knowledge and experience and we are committed to fostering an inclusive culture where all our staff and students are welcomed, feel that they belong and can thrive. Our activities include focussed interventions on many aspects of equity and inclusion.

What other eligibility criteria is there?

This Fellowship is aimed at early career researchers and the general requirements are an Undergraduate degree and PhD awarded from institutions from within the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands (the common travel area). Our Fellows will be seeking a period of early stage career research training.

Career breaks or gaps due to e.g. maternity, parental leave, other caring responsibilities, volunteering activities, part-time working or illness will be taken into account and be evaluated based on the applicant's merits as a whole. This list is not exhaustive.

What is the purpose of the Fellowship?

We pride ourselves in offering a first-class and well-resourced exceptional learning environment to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills they will need for a successful career in science. Our Post-Doctoral Fellowships provide a comprehensive training programme designed to equip individuals with the skills they need to further their career – whatever they may do.

How long are the Fellowships?

The Sanger Excellence Fellowships are three years and can be worked full-time, part-time or flexibly.

¹ https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-05/2018-06-ECU_HE-stats-report_students_v5-compressed.pdf, page 115

² <https://www.rsc.org/new-perspectives/talent/inclusion-and-diversity/resources/black-representation-in-uk-academic-chemistry/#footnotes>

³ <https://leadingroutes.org/launch-the-broken-pipeline-report>

⁴ <https://wellcome.org/reports/grant-funding-data-2018-2019>

When do the Fellowships start?

There is flexibility with the start date, but Fellows should be able to start by end of December 2024 at the latest.

How much do the Fellows get paid?

The Sanger Excellence Fellows will be embedded within our [Postdoctoral Fellowship Development programme](#) and are paid in line with this pay scale (£38,000 - £44,712), dependent on skills and experience. The Sanger Excellence Fellowship also includes research consumables of up to £18,000 per annum, dependant on the nature of the project and a budget of £1,500 per annum for the Fellow to attend conferences and training.

Can applicants choose which programme area to apply to?

Yes – details of our Sanger science programme areas are [here](#). You can select up to three areas that you are interested in and also up to three Faculty who you would be interested in working with. Information about our Faculty can be found [here](#). We will then send your application to the relevant research lead for shortlisting onto the next stage of the application process (co-creation of a research project). If you are not sure which programme area to apply to, please indicate this in your expression of interest and we can arrange a call to discuss further.

How do you apply for the Fellowship?

We will support applicants through the 4 stage application process, which is detailed below:

- Stage 1: Expression of Interest and call with member of the Excellence fellowship team
- Stage 2: Application form
- Stage 3: Co-development of a research project with a member of Sanger Institute research lead
- Stage 4: The co-created projects are submitted to the Scientific Review Panel
- Stage 5: Interview

Stage 1: Expression of Interest Questions (1000 words max across all questions):

- Please tell us the areas of research that interest you, as well as how these interests intersect with Sanger Institute's areas of research. You can select up to three from the list below and/or your interests that may span these research areas. Or please indicate below if you are not sure which programme area to apply to at this stage.
 - The genomic science we carry out in the science programmes of the Sanger Institute are:
 - Cancer, Ageing and Somatic Mutation
 - Cellular Genetics
 - Generative and Synthetic Genomics
 - Human Genetics
 - Parasites and Microbes
 - Tree of Life
 - Not sure which programme area to apply to

Ask us:

- Please tell us if you would like an informal discussion (a 30 minutes call) on the next steps of the process, including a discussion on the application form questions.

- Let us know what support we can provide to help with the next stages of the application process.
- If you have any other questions you can email us on: sangerexcellence@sanger.ac.uk

Stage 2: Application Form

These questions are aimed at drawing out your contributions to excellent research. There is no right or wrong answer to these questions, we are keen to learn more about you. If you would like to discuss this part of the application process informally, please email sangerexcellence@sanger.ac.uk (noting that this will not affect or feed into any of the subsequent decision-making process).

(Between 1000 – 1500 words across the questions)

- Please provide information about your educational background, key qualifications and relevant positions you have held.
Note: identifiable institutions/people/information will be removed as part of the anonymising process.
- Why are you interested in applying to this programme area(s)?
- How do you think your research experience and broader contributions to the research environment will enrich your Fellowship experience at the Sanger Institute (*see guidance note below*).
- What academic achievements are you most proud of (*see guidance note below*)?
- What personal achievements are you most proud of (*see guidance note below*)?
- Additional – Please tell us about any career breaks, secondments, volunteering, part-time work, other relevant experience (including any time spent in different sectors), that might have affected your progression as a researcher?

*Guidance note: The application form includes elements of the **Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI)**, otherwise known as the **Narrative CV**. This is to give greater flexibility on telling us about your skills and contributions to research. There are further resources on Narrative CVs [here](#).*

Within these questions you should highlight expertise or experience around the following themes:

- Your contribution to the generation of knowledge – this can include how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas and hypotheses and which key skills you have used to develop ideas and test hypotheses. It can be used to highlight how you have communicated on your ideas and research results, both written and verbally, the funding you have won and any awards that you have received. It can include a small selection of outputs, with a description of why they are of particular relevance and why they are considered in the context of knowledge generation. Outputs can include open data sets, software, publications, commercial, entrepreneurial or industrial products, educational Your contribution to the **development of individuals** - this can be used to highlight expertise you provided which was critical to the success of a team or team members including project management, collaborative contributions, and team support such as mentoring. It can include your teaching activities, workshops or summer schools in which you were involved and the supervision of students and colleagues. It can be used to highlight the establishment of collaborations.
- Your contribution to the **wider research community** – this can include various activities you have engaged in to progress the research community. It can be used to mention commitments including editing, reviewing, refereeing, committee work and your

contributions to the evaluation of researchers and research projects. It can be used to mention the organisation of events that have benefited your research community. It can highlight contributions to increasing research integrity, and improving research culture, equality, diversity, and inclusion. It can be used to mention appointments to positions of responsibility such as committee membership and roles within your department, institution or organisation.

- Your contribution to **broader society** – this can include examples of societal engagement and include engagement with industry, the private or public sector and the broader public. It can be used to highlight positive stakeholder feedback, inclusion of patients in processes and clinical trials, and other impacts across research, policy, practice and business. It can be used to highlight efforts to advise policy-makers and provide information through the press and on social media.
- **Overcoming personal challenges**

Stage 3: Co-creation of Project Proposal

Anonymised application forms will be sent to the Sanger Institute research lead for review. One candidate per research lead will be selected to co-create a research project.

Stage 4: Interview Process

After co-developing the project proposal with the Sanger Institute research lead, applicants will be invited to an interview in June 2024. Candidates will be invited to present their previous research and their developed research proposal. This will be followed by a Q&A-style competency-based interview with the panel. You will be supported through all of these steps in the process.

What happens if your application is unsuccessful?

All candidates, including those unsuccessful at this stage, will receive feedback and will have the opportunity to receive mentorship and support from members of the Steering Group. Unsuccessful candidates will also be supported to apply again.

If you have any further questions please email sangerexcellence@sanger.ac.uk