

# The Pirbright Institute Fellowship Scheme

## The Pirbright Institute Fellowship Scheme

The Pirbright Institute's Fellowship scheme provides an opportunity for outstanding early-stage scientists to develop their own research programme, within the remit of the Institute's scientific strategy. The Fellowship scheme employs early career scientists, who have a strong track record of already driving their own research and are ready to lead an independent research programme. The Fellowship provides funding for up to five years support, including salary (and benefits) for the Fellow and a significant consumables budget.

The scheme supports transition from postdoctoral scientist to principal investigator (PI)/Group Leader, and will prepare Fellows for opportunities at the level of independent PI either at Pirbright or beyond. The Fellowship programme emphasizes a balanced approach of carrying out excellent science while building experience in leading and managing groups in a positive and supportive way. Our role in achieving this aim is to provide unique, state of the art facilities and a supportive, scientifically thriving, and vibrant environment to enable you to carry out research on viral pathogens and their mammalian, avian or insect hosts. We will provide tailored management and career development, in addition to internal and external mentoring in a variety of areas. Your role is to translate your ideas into excellent science that is relevant to the Institute's remit, measured by success in gaining competitive external funding, peer-reviewed publications, other appropriate scientific outputs, and development of your staff and Group. There will be regular reviews of your progress with senior scientific leadership at Pirbright. We have a high success rate of Fellows becoming Group Leaders at the end of the programme; however, this is not guaranteed, nor is a long-term position at Pirbright.

We will accept informal enquiries regarding the Fellowship scheme at any time, and these should be directed towards the Head of Science Administration (Dr Louise Barton: [grant.submissions@pirbright.ac.uk](mailto:grant.submissions@pirbright.ac.uk)). Upon initial contact, it is likely that a CV and a one to two-page outline of your proposed programme of research will be requested. This will then be reviewed by the Institute's Science Committee, which will provide feedback and advice as appropriate. Feedback will center around strategic relevance, and fit with the Institute's remit, and individual suitability for the scheme. The Committee may also advise whether it would be appropriate to peruse other Fellowship options, for example, an application to a Fellowship scheme offered by a funding body, with the Institute acting as the sponsoring organization. Formal applications to the Institute's scheme will only be accepted in response to a specific advert (<https://www.pirbright.ac.uk/jobs>).

During the application process, the Institute will consider time spent outside of the research environment on assessing eligibility. Additionally, where applicants have taken formal periods of family leave e.g. maternity, paternity, or leave to cover caring responsibilities, or extended sick leave, the Institute will allow for the actual leave taken, as well as an additional six months for each 12-month period of leave in the assessment of eligibility (e.g. 18 months will be allocated for someone who has taken 12 months of parental leave).

This guidance document aligns to the organization's position on equal opportunity in all aspects of employment, including recruitment and promotion, which gives guidance and encouragement to employees

at all levels to act fairly and prevent discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, marital status, part-time and fixed term contract status, age, sexual orientation or religion.

### What we can offer

The Fellowship scheme supports scientists from a variety of backgrounds and with a variable level of experience, including both external candidates and those drawn from the Institute's postdoctoral community.

While a substantial degree of autonomy is expected of Fellows entering the scheme, we recognize that adapting to new ways of working is challenging, particularly in a specialized environment, and we will support the Fellow in this process.

The Institute is committed to ensuring that Fellows are recognised and valued as an essential part of our research workforce and are integrated into our Science Strategy, whilst ensuring that they are able to maintain the independence and focus of their personal research programme. We therefore offer the following support and assistance:

#### Funding

- Fully funded Fellows salary, normally for 5 years.
- A significant annual consumables and travel budget.
- Access to PhD studentship funding, through the Institute's internal PhD programme, via a competitive process. Fellows have preferential allocation of a studentship in the early stages of the programme, subject to scientific quality of the research project.
- Access to funding for undergraduate sandwich students (1-year placements) via a competitive internal process.

#### Facilities

- Access to CL2 laboratory space as well as unique high containment facilities including ACDP HG3 and SAPO4 containment level laboratories, animal units and insectaries.
- Access to state-of-the-art equipment run by specialist support teams including:-
  - Bioimaging: Incucyte live cell imaging/screening platforms, confocal and super-resolution/live cell light microscopy and EM/cryo-EM. Further advanced microscopy via collaboration with Diamond Light Source.
  - Flow cytometry and cell sorting.
  - Sequencing: Illumina platforms, robotics set-up, single cell sequencing.
  - Bioinformatics: High Performance Cluster and analysis pipelines.
  - Animal Services: support for *in vivo* work.
  - Immunological Toolbox: antibody engineering and kinetics by bi-layer interferometry (BLI).

#### Support

- Guidance and training on setting up a research group, building partnerships and collaborations, intellectual property rights and commercial exploitation of your research, and public engagement, leading and managing teams, financial acumen and a wide range of e-learning content.
- High quality and constructive review of grant applications by senior management and a specialist grants support team prior to submission.
- Supportive line management, provided by a senior scientific manager, who can provide a range of advice, including for example, on choosing an external mentor, as well as providing clear and consistent guidance on career planning both within and beyond the Institute.

The Institute's Fellowship Programme is highly flexible and part-time working, sabbaticals and secondments can be accommodated where practical and strategically relevant. We recognize that time spent in a range of other environments can be very beneficial in broadening your knowledge, contacts and outlook and help diversify our expertise as an Institute.

There is provision for maternity, paternity, parental, shared parental, adoptive and sick leave during the course of the Fellowship.

We believe that our Fellowships offer a huge opportunity for scientists to develop themselves and their research programmes, within a scientifically focused and supportive environment. Success for the Fellow will depend on their career aspirations and opportunities to transition into the next stage of their career.