# Crick Africa Network
## African Career Acceleration Fellowship

Application notes and frequently asked questions

Table of Contents

# General notes

## Finding mentors at the Crick

To apply for the Fellowship, you will need to have identified a group leader at the Francis Crick Institute that you would like to work with and have contacted them with your proposal. Once your application has been received, we will check with the group leader that they are happy with your proposal and that the research is feasible. If you have not discussed your proposal with them prior to submission, this could delay your application and may prevent you from being considered for the Fellowship.

A full list of all the labs and group leaders at the Crick can be found on our A-Z lab listing. Please note that there are several pages of group leader contacts. Please find the most appropriate group leader for your research and contact them with your proposal before submitting your application.

If you have contacted a group leader and have not had a response from them, or if you are unsure which group leader would be the most appropriate to support your research, please contact the CAN programme manager, Jennifer Brown at can-fellowships@crick.ac.uk.

You can also include a mentor from one of the Crick's science technology platforms (STPs). The STPs provide researchers with access to state-of-the-art equipment, technical advice, and instruction in the effective use of the different technologies at the Crick. In-house expertise and services help the Crick's scientists streamline their research so that they can achieve their goals quicker. You can find details of the STP leads by going to the platforms and facilities page on the Crick's website, finding the STP that you would like to work with, and then clicking on 'members' on the individual pages. The lead of each STP will have 'lead' or 'head' in their job title.

## Finding mentors at the African partner institutions

To apply for the Fellowship, you will need to have identified a mentor that you would like to work with at your chosen African partner institution and have contacted them with your proposal.

Once your application has been received, we will check with the mentor that they are happy with your proposal and that the research is feasible. If you have not discussed your application with them prior to submission, this could delay your application and may prevent you from being considered for the Fellowship.

To find a mentor at your chosen African partner institution, please contact the following people:

- **University of Cape Town**: Dr Christle de Beer, Research Enterprise Manager, Institute of Infectious Disease and Molecular Medicine (IDM), christle.debeer@uct.ac.za

- **Stellenbosch University**: Prof. Gerhard Walzl, Executive Head of Department Biomedical Sciences, gwalzl@sun.ac.za

- **WACCBIP, University of Ghana**: Sika Menka, WACCBIP Manager
  waccbipmanager@ug.edu.gh

- **MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda Research Unit**: Assoc. Prof. Stephen Cose, Head
  Immunology Platform & Group leader, stephen.cose@mrcuganda.org,
  stephen.cose@lshtm.ac.uk

- **MRC Unit The Gambia at LSHTM**: Dr Alfred Ngwa, Associate Professor Genetic
  Epidemiology, alfred.ngwa@lshtm.ac.uk

## Budget

Each Fellowship has an allocated budget to complete four years of research, hosted at one of the African partner institutes and at the Francis Crick Institute in London, UK.

The total budget for each Fellow is £680,364 and includes:

- costs for the Fellows' salaries (benchmarked at local rates),
- research support staff salaries including a research assistant,
- travel and subsistence costs including assistance towards living costs in London,
- lab consumables, and
- costs to use the science technology platforms at the Crick.

# Application form notes

This section will assist you in completing the Fellowship application form.

## 1: Eligibility

Please ensure that you meet all the eligibility criteria and confirm this in question one. The Fellowship is designed to provide early-career African scientists with the opportunity to conduct world-class science with the intention of continuing their careers on the African continent.

You should also make sure that you have discussed your proposal with your mentor at the Crick, as well as your mentor at the African partner institution, and confirmed that they are both happy with your proposal and that the research is feasible. Details of how to contact the mentors are above in the General Notes section. Eligibility will be assessed as applications are submitted. We will reject the application if an applicant does not meet the eligibility criteria.

## 2: Personal details

Please ensure that you complete all sections including your full telephone number and international dialling code. We will use these details to contact you in relation to your application.

## 3: Correspondence address

Please ensure that you complete all sections as we will use these details to contact you in relation to your application.

## 4: Nationality and academic background

Answer all sections including adding your nationality and the name of the person that is currently supervising or managing you.

## 5: Institution and fellowship preference

Please select the African partner institution that you want to work with. This is the institution that you will be obliged to carry out your work with. You must have already approached the institution and identified a mentor. Contact details for the institutions are in the General Notes section.

## 6: Your mentor preference

As above you must have already approached the African partner institution as well as the Francis Crick Institute and identified a mentor at both. Contact details for the institutions are in the General Notes section.

Information about the labs and the group leaders at the Francis Crick Institute in the A-Z lab listing on the Crick's website.

You can also include a mentor from one of the Crick's science technology platforms (STPs). The Crick's STPs provide researchers with access to state-of-the-art equipment, technical advice, and instruction in the effective use of the different technologies. In-house expertise and services help the Crick's scientists streamline their research so that they can achieve their research goals quicker.

You can find details of the STP leads to approach by going to the [platforms and facilities page](#) on the Crick's website, finding the STP that you would like to work with and then clicking on 'members' on the individual pages. The lead of each STP will have 'lead' or 'head' in their job title.

# 7: Teaching and clinical commitments

Please specify whether you have any clinical or teaching commitments that may affect your undertaking of the Fellowship.

# 8: Your past research

Please briefly detail your past research and achievements. This should be no longer than 300 words. Please upload in PDF format only with a maximum 4MB size.

# 9: Proposed scientific programme

Please detail your proposed scientific programme. This should include the title of the scientific programme, a description of the whole project that could be completed in no more than four years, and a section detailing how the programme will be translational.

Our definition of translational science is that it serves clinical, commercial, or environmental benefit. It should address a clear unmet medical need and bridge the gap between basic discovery science and product development and can include:

- human genetics,
- disease pathogenesis and immunogenetics,
- pathogen genomics/bioinformatics,
- host-pathogen interactions,
- diagnostics and biomarkers,
- pandemic preparedness,
- antimicrobial resistance (AMR), and
- drug and vaccine discovery for development.

Priority areas include:

- diseases caused by viruses such as HIV, HPV and SARS-CoV-2,
- bacteria such as *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* and *Mycobacterium ulcerans*,
- other bacterial pathogens including AMR priority pathogens,
- fungal pathogens,
- protozoal pathogens that cause diseases such as trypanosomiasis,
- malaria & cryptosporidiosis,
- helminths, and
- other neglected tropical diseases.

If you have any questions about translational science or how you can make your proposal translational, please contact Andy Merritt, LifeArc project lead and head of academic engagement at [andy.merritt@lifearc.org](mailto:andy.merritt@lifearc.org).

It is essential to include a Gantt chart clearly showing the planned programme to be undertaken and its location (Crick and African partner institution) so we can assess how you plan to split your time across the institutions. Scientific schematics are welcome.

It is also essential that you include a budget for your Fellowship of up to £680,364.

Maximum of 1500 words.

Please upload in PDF format only with a maximum of 4MB size.

# 10: Your long-term career goals

Please detail in no more than 300 words.

# 11: Your CV including publications

Please follow the notes in the application form and upload in PDF format only with a maximum of 4MB size.

# 12: Supporting documents

Please upload any additional documents such as a cover letter or a paper in press.

# 13: References

Please supply the names of two referees, one of whom is your current supervisor. If you are applying to work in the lab of someone who is your referee, it is recommended that you nominate an additional referee. Referees will be approached as soon as applications are received.

# 14: Other details

Please tell us where you heard about the African Career Acceleration Fellowship.

# 15: Equal opportunities monitoring

Please provide details for the Crick's equal opportunities monitoring data.

# 16: Declaration

The deadline for submission of applications is 17:00 (GMT) on 12 November 2023.

Please carefully read the declaration and click 'Confirm and submit'.

# Frequently asked questions

## Applications and eligibility

### How will applications be assessed across the different African partner institutions?

All proposals will be assessed in the same way. The chosen mentor at the Crick and at the African Partner institution, as well as an external peer reviewer, will review the quality of the proposal. All shortlisted applicants will then be interviewed by the African Partner institution. Lastly, a panel meeting will be convened made up of the African Partner institutions and representatives from the Crick to decide on the final selection of Fellows based on the results of the interviews.

### Can I maintain my teaching commitments alongside this Fellowship?

This Fellowship aims to provide Fellows the opportunity to solely focus on their research for a period of up to four years. Ideally, Fellows will not have teaching responsibilities (or significantly reduced) or will be released from them for the duration of the Fellowship.

It is recognised that some institutions may not be able to afford to release individuals from teaching commitments or some individuals may feel that they can gain the skills they desire through teaching. In either of these situations, it should be discussed at the earliest opportunity with potential mentors to see how it could be successfully integrated into the Fellowship.

## Mentors and institutions

### I have asked a group leader at the Crick to be my mentor, but they have not responded. What should I do?

Please make sure that you have contacted the correct person. The contact details for the Group leaders can be found here. If you have contacted the correct person and they have not responded after one week, please contact the CAN Programme Manager, Jennifer Brown on can-fellowships@crick.ac.uk for advice.

### I have contacted the African partner institution with my proposal, but they have not responded. What should I do?

Please make sure that you have contacted the correct person. The contact details of the African Partner institutions can be found here. If you have contacted the correct person and they have not responded after one week, please contact the CAN Programme Manager, Jennifer Brown on can-fellowships@crick.ac.uk for advice.

**I'm currently at an institution in Africa, is there a way to include it as part of the Fellowship?**

It is possible to include another research institute in Africa. For example, it may be that they have the permissions for the use of certain samples or the right environment for some data collection. In these cases, including one of the CAN African partner institutions and the Crick would still be necessary, but some of the Fellowship can be spent at a third institution. If this may be applicable, please contact Jennifer Brown, the CAN Programme Manager, at can-fellowships@crick.ac.uk.

## Pay, location and duration

### What will my salary be?

Fellows will be employed by their chosen African partner institution, and as such will be paid on the pay scale of that institution, commensurate with their years of experience. For the time that Fellows are in London, they will receive a salary uplift in line with the Crick pay scale and reflecting their number of years of experience. This will continue to be paid through the African Partner institution.

### How long will my Fellowship be?

Each Fellow will receive funding for four consecutive years. This should provide enough time to conduct world-class science and to get the most benefit from the Fellowship. This should be reflected in your proposal and Gantt chart.

### How long do I have to spend at the Crick and the African partner institution?

It is mandatory that at least some time is spent at both the Crick and the African Partner Institute but there is no prescribed time. This should be driven by the science and your proposal. You should detail how long you intend to be at the Crick and at the African Partner institution in your proposal and Gantt chart.

### What happens after the Fellowship?

We will provide Fellows with a significant amount of support to write funding applications to continue their research beyond the Fellowship. It is hoped that Fellows will secure the funding they require to make the transition to being an independent researcher on the African continent.

# Visas and relocating

### What support is available to me for relocating and settling in a new place?

There will be a lot of support available from the CAN Programme Manager, in collaboration with the Human Resources departments at both the Crick and the African Partner institution. Support will be given for applying for visas and settling into the UK.

The Fellow will be supported with their science by mentors at the Crick and the African Partner institution, as well as through the Science Technology Platforms.

### Can I relocate with my partner or family as part of this Fellowship?

It is possible to relocate partners or families as part of the Fellowship and the CAN Programme Manager can assist with visa applications and logistics. However, no additional funds will be made available for family relocation.

# Research

### What is a science technology platform (STP)?

The Crick's STPs provide researchers with access to state-of-the-art equipment, technical advice and instruction in the effective use of the different technologies. In-house expertise and services help the Crick's scientists streamline their research so that they can achieve their research goals quicker.

### I want to use a technique, but I've never done it before: is training available?

The Fellowship aims to equip Fellows with the scientific skills to perform their own research. As a result, if there is a technique that applicants would like to use (and justified by the research plan) but have no prior experience it will be possible to include training in the Fellowship application and is encouraged. The training can take place at the Crick or at the African partner institution and applicants should discuss their training wishes with potential mentors at the institutions.

### Can I use this Fellowship to shift my field of research?

The Crick African Network recognises that it can be challenging to make the transition to independence and that this Fellowship could be such a vehicle to make a shift away from the research of previous supervisors, to conducting a more independent programme of research. The Fellowship will provide a supportive environment for Fellows to make space for learning and leadership opportunities. If applicants want to use the Fellowship to transition into a different field of research this should be made clear in the application, as well as identifying what support they require to achieve it.