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Dear Frank

Thank you for the letter from yourself and colleagues of 2 August with regards to the new arrangements for fellowships. I apologise for the delay in responding as a result of my being on leave.

Following your letter, I have reviewed the decision made with respect to fellowships for the mathematical sciences. However, on reflection, I have concluded that we should keep to our original decision under the first phase of the new arrangements.

Let me set out my position.

As you are aware, both the recent and previous International Reviews of Mathematical Sciences recommended that statistics and applied probability required special attention. Since 2004 EPSRC has taken several actions to increase the capability of statistics in the UK, including statistics mobility fellowships and three Science and Innovation Centres, but it is clear that further action is required. By limiting fellowships to just these areas at this stage we are able to make a clear and bold statement about our commitment to these areas.

However, it should be noted that the restriction of fellowships to these areas only applies to this initial period of applications. We are continuing to work on identifying our other priority areas within the mathematical sciences (and across the whole EPSRC portfolio) and you can therefore expect that later in the autumn we will start to accept fellowships in other areas of the mathematical sciences.

The decision to maintain postdoctoral fellowships in theoretical physics (rather than all areas of physics) was made within the context of the review of the whole physical sciences portfolio and based on the priority areas that have been identified for support at this stage. On the same basis, it was decided that postdoctoral fellowships for the mathematical sciences should be limited to statistics and applied probability for this initial period.



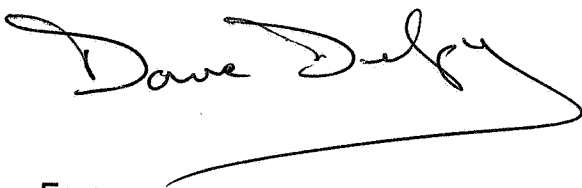
I am well aware that fellowships – particularly at the postdoctoral level – are highly valued by many in the mathematical sciences community and I have been very impressed by the calibre of people we have supported through our fellowship schemes over the years. The scheme should not, however, be seen as the only mechanism by which mathematicians can obtain funding for their independent research. Full economic costing of research grants enables academic researchers to apply for up to 100% of their time whilst postdoctoral research can be employed on a grant as a research co-investigator if they have made a substantial contribution to the development of the proposal. Whilst these mechanisms may not have the prestige of a fellowship, they do provide researchers with an alternative route for support. In addition, we allow 10% of an institution's Doctoral Training Grant to be used for an EPSRC Doctoral Prize (formerly known as PhD Plus) to support the very best students for up to one further year as they establish their research careers. Furthermore EPSRC should not be seen as the only source of fellowship provision as other bodies also offer fellowships.

I recognise that this position will not be welcomed by all parts of the mathematical sciences community, but I hope that you recognise that we believe our position to be in the best interests of statistical and applied probability research in the UK and that you are reassured that the situation remains dynamic and other areas of mathematical sciences will be eligible to apply for fellowships in the coming months.

I hope that in the next few weeks the Council for Mathematical Sciences will work with the Mathematical Sciences programme to collect and reflect on the information needed to make decisions on other areas of mathematical sciences, so that they can be made as quickly as possible and be communicated accordingly to the community.

For your information, I attach a letter that Dr Philippa Hemmings will be sending to the Heads of Departments of Mathematical Sciences to clarify our position on fellowships.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Delfino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Encs

cc: Professor Michael Walker OBE
Professor Angus Macintyre FRS
Professor Valerie Isham
Dr Penny Davies
Professor Richard Eglese

Dear Head of Department

I am writing to give you more information about EPSRC Mathematical Sciences fellowships. I would be grateful if you could pass this message on to colleagues in your department.

The recent fellowship announcement introduces a new framework for fellowships across EPSRC that is linked to our strategic plan goals of Shaping Capability and Developing Leaders. The rationale for Shaping Capability is that to maintain the UK's global research standing in light of increasing international competition, and with limited funding available to us, we must focus our investments into areas of excellence that are of long-term strategic importance to the UK. This means that EPSRC fellowships will no longer be universally available in all areas and all career stages but rather that priorities will be identified, and updated on a rolling basis.

Statistics and applied probability is a priority area where we have evidence, including the recommendations from the International review of Mathematics, that we need to grow capacity throughout the different career stages and we need to encourage talented researchers to stay in academia after their PhDs. We recognized that other actions are likely to be needed to grow capacity and strengthen statistics research in the UK, but we hope that this is a valuable first step. We are still reviewing the other areas of mathematical sciences, including their current researcher capacities.

The decision to restrict fellowships to Statistics and Applied Probability only applies to this initial period of fellowship applications. We are gathering contextual information and engaging with stakeholders, in particular getting advice from our Strategic Advisory Team, to inform our decisions on which research areas will be included in future. This will be an ongoing process and priority areas will be updated throughout the Delivery Plan period. **The areas for which we will accept fellowship applications will be updated towards the end of the year and will include further areas of Mathematical Sciences.** There are no closing dates for fellowship applications, but applications will be short-listed in batches, initially twice a year, and we have also removed eligibility restrictions.

We would remind you that early career and established researchers can apply for an appropriate proportion of their time on a standard research grant whilst postdoctoral researchers could be supported as named researcher-co-investigator if they have made a substantial contribution to the development of a research proposal and thus can be supported via employment on a research grant. Any student who has recently received support for their PhD studies from EPSRC in the form of fees and/ or stipend is also eligible for an EPSRC Doctoral Prize (formerly PhD Plus) and up to 1 year's additional support through this mechanism.

We are committed to working with all stakeholders in UK Mathematical Sciences, including universities and the learned societies, to ensure that the people pipeline in Mathematical Sciences supports the leaders of the future, and we welcome any constructive feedback and suggestions.

Yours sincerely

Dr Philippa Hemmings
Theme Leader, Mathematical Sciences Capability