

University Fellowships Update

This report provides an overview of the University Fellowships program at Loughborough University and proposes changes to improve the program's prestige and alignment with the university's core plans.

Background

- The University Fellowships program was introduced in 2016 to replace the previous system of Study Leave. It aimed to remove any linkage between eligibility to apply and time served in post. Unlike other universities' sabbatical leave policies, staff at Loughborough University can apply for fellowships without having to accrue service.
- The purpose of the Fellowships is to allow academic staff to dedicate a period of working time to a specific activity that supports the university's strategy. The proposal suggests relaunching the scheme with clear linkages to the Core Plans.
- A link to the current scheme can be found here <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/pay-pension-reward/fellowships/>

Proposed Changes

- The proposed changes to the program include making all fellowships for 12 months, starting on either 1 August or 1 February. Shorter periods focusing on specific activities will be managed through School-based processes. The maximum number of fellowships available each year is initially proposed to be 10, with applicants able to bid for up to £10k to support their Fellowship.
- There will be a single application round each year in November/December for fellowships that begin in the following academic year. Processes will be implemented, including positive action, to ensure diversity targets are met, with at least 40% of applications from female academics and at least 15% from BAME academics (these are the figures set by Governance & Nominations Committee for committee representation).
- Senior HR Business Partners will work with their portfolio areas to review whether these targets are being met from their areas and if necessary to work in collaboration with their stakeholders to investigate strategies to improve this.
- The primary criteria for success will be the level of ambition and fit to the university's strategy, taking into account the grade and circumstances of the applicant. Multidisciplinary teams of two or three people will be allowed to apply, but such applications must clearly demonstrate multidisciplinary collaboration.

- Fellows will be required to prepare a Final Report after completing their fellowship, which will be part of their PDR (Performance and Development Review). These reports will also be used for marketing publicity for the Fellowship scheme and individuals.
- The proposed changes remove the customary practice of offering fellowships to staff who have provided distinguished service in leadership roles. An alternative scheme will be set up for this purpose.
- An annual event will be organized to allow newly completed fellows to share their achievements with the new cohort of successful fellows.
- OD (Organisational Development) will offer career development support to all successful fellows.

Next steps

- The upcoming April 2024 round of the current Fellowship scheme will take place as normal.
- A working group will be arranged comprising of a number of key stakeholders from across the University which may include a Dean, PVC, marketing colleagues, OD colleagues to determine how this work in practice.
- A procedure for the new scheme will be uploaded on the intranet and communicated to colleagues. It is anticipated that this will be published and available from Summer 2024.