

RESEARCH COUNCILS' INDIVIDUAL MERIT PROMOTION SCHEME

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR CANDIDATES

Introduction

1. These guidance notes are intended to assist candidates to prepare for their Individual Merit Promotion interview. They should be read in conjunction with the regulations and procedure for Individual Merit Promotion as revised in 2012.

Purpose

2. The scheme is designed to give special recognition to scientific researchers who have made, and are likely to continue to make, an outstanding personal contribution to their field. The scheme applies to promotion above the former Unified Grade 7 level.

The Interview Panel

3. The Chairman of the Research Councils' Individual Merit Promotion Panel, Professor David Fowler will take the Chair for each interview and will be supported by as many panel members are available on the day (this could be up to 7). In addition, one or more special experts from outside the candidate's employing organisation will normally be co-opted to join the interview panel.
4. The current membership of the Research Councils' Individual Merit Promotion Panel is attached at Annex 1. Candidates will be informed in advance of the composition of their particular panel.

The Purpose of the Interview

5. As stated in paragraph 2, Individual Merit Promotion is awarded on the expectation that the candidate will continue to make an outstanding personal contribution to their field. The purpose of the interview is to examine the candidate's knowledge of his/her field, his/her past research output, and proposed future programme. The six publications selected by the candidate as being representative of his/her most significant work, may be the subject of particular attention.

Documents Available to the Interview Panel

6. The following will be made available to each Panel Member:
 - i) A complete copy of the candidate's nomination papers.
 - ii) Copies of referees' reports.
 - iii) Copies of the six items that candidates have selected as being representative of their most significant work.

The Interview

7. Candidates will be notified of the time and venue of their interview. They should ensure that they arrive in good time and should report to the Reception where they will be directed to the candidates' waiting area. From here, a representative of the Research Councils' Individual Merit Promotion team will show them to the interview room.
8. There is no set time for the interview but typically it will last about one hour.
9. The Chair will introduce him/herself and the other Panel members, who will be identifiable by the nameplates on the interview table. In addition to the Panel, there will be an expert from outside the employing organisation.
10. The Chair will briefly outline the scheme and is likely to emphasise the following:-
 - i) The scheme is not competitive; candidates are not competing for a specific number of places, as there is no limit to the number of Individual Merit holders.
 - ii) The emphasis is on the candidate's individual performance; it will be important for candidates to stress their contribution as distinct from that of their team/project or unit.
 - iii) The Panel will be as concerned with the candidate's future programme as with their past record and achievements.
11. The Chair will ask the candidate to give a prepared resume of their work and their key contributions to their field. Candidates should be prepared to give a short description (lasting no more than 10 minutes) of their work and how it has influenced the development of the field in which they work. They may be questioned on all aspects, but there is likely to be particular focus on those elements that they have selected as being representative of their most significant work. The Panel will also want to hear about your aspiration for your future research and how you would use your IMP if successful at interview. Candidates may use visual aids if they think that this would be helpful, but they should keep in mind the limited time available to them.
12. Following questions on the presentation, the Chair will invite Panel members and expert to ask general questions about the candidate's research. Towards the end of the interview, the Chair will ask if there is anything that the candidate wishes to add. Candidates should use this opportunity to highlight anything not previously covered or to modify, enlarge or redefine any previous comments.

Results of the Interview

13. Following the interview and after consideration of all the evidence obtained, the interview panel will decide if the candidate should receive the IMP.
14. The IMP team will inform the candidate's organisation of the Panel's recommendation after the decision to promote or not within 3 weeks of the interviews in March.
15. There is no appeals procedure against any decision in respect of Individual Merit Promotion since judgements are based on peer assessment of scientific quality. Unsuccessful candidates may be reconsidered for IM promotion in the following or subsequent years.

IMP MANAGER
July 2016

**INDIVIDUAL MERIT PROMOTION PANEL
MEMBERSHIP 2016/2017**

Professor David Fowler CBE, FRS, FRSE (Chair)
Professor of Biogeochemistry, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Professor J Zarnecki
Professor of Space Science, The Open University

Professor Tejinder Virdee FRS
Professor of Physics, Imperial College

Professor Angela Hatton
Microbial Ecologist, SAMS

Professor Graham Underwood
Executive Dean, Faculty of Science & Health, University of Essex

Professor Mary Fowler MA PhD FRAS FGS
Master of Darwin College and Dean of Science and Professor of Geophysics at Royal Holloway, University of London

Professor Eric Wolff FRS
Professor of Earth Sciences, University of Cambridge