



Africa Research Excellence Fund

Research Development Fellowships 2026/27

Guidance on Completing the Application Forms

Deadline for submission of all application
documents

13.00 hours GMT on 08 May 2026

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Purpose of this Guidance

Before reading this guidance, please ensure you have also read the **Scheme Information document**.

This guide is to help you to complete the Research Development Fellowship application form via the portal correctly and provide the reviewers with information to understand where you are on your research career journey, where you want to go and how the Fellowship will contribute to your research vision and research independence.

This guide should be read alongside the application in the portal. Please note that it covers selected questions only. You should complete all questions on the application form.

Required Application Documents

The application form for the Research Development Fellowships **must** be submitted via the online portal system. Please follow the instructions on the portal to register as a new user before starting your application. You will be asked to upload the following documents before submitting your application:

1. Letter(s) of support from the Host Sponsor(s).
2. Letter of support from the Host Institutional Lead (optional)
3. Letter(s) of support from the Employing Sponsor(s).
4. Letter of support from the Employing Institutional Lead (optional)
5. Two chosen publications to demonstrate the applicant's career history.
6. A resubmission document (for previously unsuccessful applicants only)
7. A copy of the applicant's most recently attained degree(s) certificate, usually the PhD certificate.

The application can then be submitted for signatures by the applicant's sponsors and named administrative authority at both the Host Organisation and Employing Organisation.

All applications must be written in comprehensible, good English, but complete fluency is not required.

Applicants can submit only one application per call.

Prepare to apply

Applicants should do the following:

- Understand the eligibility criteria and how to apply for the Research Development Fellowships from the Scheme Information document, application form, and this guidance document.
- Develop your ideas for a Fellowship, checking that your ideas map to the scope of AREF's Fellowship programme.

- Engage with your line manager and other senior leaders in your organisation. Discuss how developing you as a researcher can support their strategies for professional development.
- Identify and engage with your host organisation (HO). The HO is the centre of research excellence that will host your placement. **Please note that AREF does NOT have a list of centres for applicants to do their placement.** We expect that at this point in your career, you will have a good knowledge of the research experts in your field that you would like to learn from through this fellowship opportunity. You can also visit our website to see centres where our Alumni Fellows have previously undertaken their placements
- Confirm your two Sponsors. You must have at least one from your EO and at least one from your HO. The sponsors will provide your core support and facilitate the fellowship.
- Ensure that the two Sponsors understand the purpose and conditions of the Fellowship (see AREF's Terms and Conditions of award).
- Discuss your ideas and draft application several times with the Host Sponsor, and with your programme head or director in your EO.
- Ensure the proposal addresses the assessment criteria.
- Involve your finance, grants, and/or research administration in planning and budgeting.
- Leave enough time before the deadline for your application to be approved and signed through the portal system. Remember, those whom you have listed as signatories to your application (i.e. Sponsors/ Authorising Officer) may be away at the time of submission. Your application cannot be submitted without them first accepting participation and later confirming their signatory approval.
- **Please ensure that you have obtained approval from your appropriate employing institutional head, confirming that you will be allowed to undertake such a fellowship, BEFORE you start your application.**

Your Fellowship proposal

Shaping and planning your proposal starts with identifying your objectives.

The aim of the Research Development Fellowship Programme is to provide opportunities for talented human health researchers based in Africa through developing their skills, experience, networks, and research outputs.

Fellowships offer awardees the opportunity to develop their own research ideas, research skills and capabilities, to grow their research relationships through collaboration and mentorship, and to work towards a substantial research funding proposal.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have chosen to focus their career on research and are progressing on the pathway to become, but are not fully established as, independent researchers, with the potential to lead research that is original and innovative. This can be demonstrated through their employment, training, research experience, and outputs.

Applicants should demonstrate how the Fellowship fits into their career vision and personal development plan. AREF encourages innovative, imaginative and effective ways the Fellowship can enhance your capabilities

Before developing your application in detail, you may want to plan a Gantt Chart of your time and activities during each stage of the Fellowship.

Application Form

The application form can be accessed through the portal system at <https://programmes.eref-africa.org.uk/> and also via the AREF website.

PART A: SUMMARY INFORMATION

This section captures key information about you and your proposed Fellowship and is used to process and review your application. This is also where you will upload all the other application documents.

Please follow the instructions on the online portal system. Please ensure that all details, particularly email addresses, are entered correctly. If we cannot contact you, we will not be able to process your application.

Please make sure the name on your application is the same as the one you use for your published research.

Providing an ORCID iD is optional. This provides a unique digital identifier to distinguish you from every other researcher. If you do not have an ORCID iD you can register for one <https://info.orcid.org/what-is-orcid/>

PART B: RESEARCH EXPERIENCE & ACHIEVEMENTS

This section helps reviewers understand where you are in your career in terms of your employment and research training, and what you have achieved. We will use this section to assess your eligibility and suitability for the Fellowship.

1. Employment.

Your employment status helps reviewers to understand your current role and how much time you have to devote to research, as well as your employment history and experience. Please be specific so reviewers can understand your role and responsibilities.

2. Academic qualifications

This section will assess eligibility and help reviewers understand your academic and research training (and clinical training for those with a clinical background).

Please review the eligibility criteria in the Scheme Information document to ensure that your qualifications meet the criteria.

3. Research experience

This section helps reviewers understand your research experience and outputs to date

and assess whether you are an early career researcher.

3a. Summary of research experience

Briefly summarise your research projects and experience to date. In your summary of research projects, include information about your specific role(s) and main achievements. Achievements can include academic outputs, and also how you overcame challenges in implementing the project(s). Most successful applicants will have a year or two of postdoctoral experience.

3b. Why do you consider yourself an early career researcher?

The Research Development Fellowship is for early career researchers (ECRs) who are making the transition to research independence. We expect most **ECRs to be within eight years of their PhD and do not have more than ten years of active research experience.**

Please refer to the eligibility guidelines in the Scheme Information document and explain in this section why you consider yourself to be an early career researcher. This is particularly important if you are more than eight years post PhD.

PART C: CAREER VISION

This section helps reviewers understand where you plan to go with your career.

4. Describe your career vision and personal development strategy.

Set out your personal vision for your development as a researcher who can address key health challenges important to Africa. Make sure it is clear to reviewers how your career vision relates to your professional experience and expertise and builds on your achievements (described in Part B). It is important that the career vision is personalised and authentic and **not** generated by AI. It should relate to science and what you are proposing in the Fellowship as part of your journey towards research independence.

5. Describe your research focus and your research niche referring to your research experience and career development plans, and the potential impact on health in Africa.

Explain your area of research interest and the particular aspect you have decided to focus on (niche). Explain how your research could ultimately have an impact on human health on the continent.

6. Please give details of any gaps in your career path to date.

Include any other information so that reviewers can fairly assess your capacity to benefit from the fellowship, for example, time away from research for caring responsibilities of young children or elderly parents. **This question does NOT refer to gaps in scientific/technical knowledge in your research area.**

PART D: FELLOWSHIP

7. Fellowship Title

This should capture the purpose of your Fellowship so that people can understand your research area and what you are aiming to achieve during the Fellowship. Please avoid using very long and confusing titles. Look at the title of projects of our Alumni and existing fellows to give you some ideas:

<https://www.africaresearchexcellencefund.org.uk/our-fellows>

8. Summary of the Fellowship Plan

Summarise your Plan for the Fellowship so that non-scientists can easily understand (“lay summary”). Your plan needs a clear, logical, and compelling purpose.

Include details such as an overview of the technical activities you will complete during the Fellowship; what expected outcome of these activities; justification for objectives, and how these will enable you to tackle a research question in the future.

State your objectives, the main activities / steps. Bullet-point the immediate outputs and outcomes.

9. The Fellowship Plan

List the key stages and activities of your Fellowship Plan in the three tables. Table A covers the Preparatory Period at your EO before the placement; table B covers the Placement at the HO; and table C the Follow-Up period after the placement.

9a. Preparatory Period. This is the first Fellowship stage.

- This is the period from the start date of your Fellowship Award until the start date of your Fellowship Placement, to give you time to prepare for your Placement.
- Activities during the Preparatory Period normally take place at your Employing Organisation (EO).
- Enter the start and end dates and the number of months. This period can be between **1 and 3 months** and can start any time from **June 2027 to December 2027**.
- Set out the objectives for the preparatory period and the activities you will undertake to achieve them. Activities and costs must be well-specified and justified in relation to preparing for the Placement. These typically include:
 - Travel-related activities such as obtaining a visa (although you may need to start applying for a visa even earlier) and organising travel insurance and vaccinations.
 - If your host organisation (HO) is in Europe and particularly if you are traveling to the UK, please check that you have included costs for the **correct type** of visa in your budget. If the HO requires you to apply for a UK Temporary Work Visa, please note that you will have to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) of £1,035 excluding the visa cost of £298.
 - Another type of UK visa that you can apply for is an Academic Visit Visa for 12 months. This cost £200. You do not pay an IHS fee. However, you would not be able to access free healthcare through the UK’s National Health Service (NHS), so you should strongly consider paying of a private medical insurance cover. Please check the UK visa website for up-to-date information. <https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration>
 - Technical activities such as preparing samples and data and shipping them.
 - Obtaining and/or updating ethical approvals.

- Strengthening relationships on which your Fellowship depends, e.g., with your sponsors and mentors.

AREF does NOT fund collection of substantial new samples or datasets.

9b. The Placement at the Host Organisation: This is the second Fellowship stage.

- The Fellowship provides for ONE placement at your Host Organisation (HO).
- Enter the start and end dates and number of months, which must be between 3 and 9 months. The start date will normally be directly after the Preparatory Period. **Do not plan to start your placement period before August 2026. Avoid a placement start date between the middle of November and December due to the Christmas holiday break.** If you are considering a placement length different from the standard 3, 6 or 9 months, please contact AREF first via the "Contact Us" section on the portal which can be found on the lefthand panel on your homepage.
- The length of your placement should be based on the time required to complete your developmental programme, rather than requesting a maximum of 9 months as a default.
- We understand you might not be able to travel for more than 3 months, however, please consider whether this short time will give you enough time to achieve significant outcomes.
- Ensure that your budget for accommodation and subsistence is based on current and realistic living costs of the host country, while also considering potential inflation costs. Your host sponsor may be able to guide you.
- Placements can be undertaken at a **European** (including UK) or **African (all subregions, including North Africa)** centre of research excellence.
- Placements in the rest of the world are NOT supported.
- Placements are normally outside your own country.
- **If you are considering a placement in another institution in the same country as your Employing Organisation please contact AREF before developing a proposal. Please use the "Contact Us" section on the portal.**
- To qualify as a centre of excellence, your intended Host Organisation must be able to show evidence that it fulfils the eligibility criteria set out in the Scheme Information document.
- The Placement may also include a short visit to a further named institution for a well-specified training and development activity, if it adds value to the main placement.

Typically, the Placement Plan will comprise the following:

- **Specified intensive short course(s)** that advance your technical capabilities and have the potential for application at your EO. For example, you might seek to enhance skills in advanced analysis of samples and complex data; or to strengthen your ability to design robust studies through training in research design (for example, in epidemiological, environmental or social science methods, statistics etc). The training

must be applicable to a health problem. **The Fellowship is not for pursuing a Diploma or Master's degree courses**, although undertaking a specific short module may be justified.

- **Specified hands-on practical training**, working on-the-job alongside named advisors. Typically, you will train with the samples and/or data sets – either your own or those of your hosts. Your aim will be to learn methods and techniques or to generate pilot/preparatory data to support one or more research-grant proposals for submission in the near future. Details of the small project you are planning should be set out in 10. Research Training Project Abstract.
- **Enabling (“soft”) skills training**. Take advantage of your host institution offering training in soft skills development: personal effectiveness; managing people; managing data and intellectual property; ethics in research; collaboration and research communication. We expect AREF Fellows will be able to access their host university's postdoctoral researcher development programme, enabling soft skills training based on their needs. The AREF Research Development Fellowship includes a grant writing workshop programme, so you do not need to specify this in your application.
- **Introduction to potential collaborators and mentors**. Collaboration is more likely to follow where the potential partners have met each other and grown to know each other over time. If you propose to visit specific individuals during the placement, you should identify them on your application form.
- **Building your international research network**, e.g., through presentation at appropriate research conference(s), meetings and visits facilitated by the host sponsor. A scientist's reputation and access to information and opportunity is dependent on their publications and on their interactions in the wider research community.
- **Development of a substantive research proposal** to follow the Fellowship with your host sponsor's advice. Use the placement to share ideas and to benefit from colleagues' critical appraisal.
- **Develop your plans for transferring new skills and technologies** to your EO during the Follow-up Period.

A common reason for applications being declined is that these elements are poorly specified.

9c. The Follow-Up Period: This is the third and final Fellowship stage.

- This is the period immediately after your placement when you have returned to your EO.
- Enter the start and end dates and the number of months. This period can be between **1 and 3 months**.
- The Fellowship ends when the Follow-up Period is completed.

The maximum period for the whole Fellowship is 15 months. This should include a maximum of 6 months total for the Preparatory and Follow-up Periods combined and a maximum of 9 months for a Placement. The three stages should be timed to run immediately after each other.

- Enter the percentage of FTE you will spend on Fellowship activities during this period. The budget can include up to 50% salary contribution for the follow-up period to enable you to focus on Fellowship activities.

Typically, the Follow-up Plan will consist of activities for you to sustain the benefits of your placement and to transfer your new knowledge and skills to your EO. Typical activities include:

- Application of your new technical skills to a specific research project.
- Contributing to building capability, e.g., a technology platform or other institutional focus of advanced expertise.
- Formal teaching through a specific course or workshop.
- Coaching students and staff in your team in technical processes and soft skills learned during your Fellowship.
- Preparation and submission of new grant and Fellowship applications.
- Preparation and submission of research outputs associated with the Fellowship for publication.
- Further training with the host (at a distance) or at home.
- Scientific communication, including engagement with users of research, such as policymakers, schools, and communities.

10. Research Training Project Abstract

The main objective of the Fellowship is to develop new skills and networks. However, training activities while on placement are most successful if undertaken in the context of a small research project which can help you generate preliminary data for a grant application.

State the aim, methodology, and outcomes of your small research project including scientific detail (i.e., research techniques to be used, sample sizes, and how they were calculated) so that reviewers can understand your project. The work you describe here should link closely to your training aims and be designed to undertaken at the HO not at the EO.

The Fellowship is NOT for delivering a significant research project.

11. Ethical Considerations

Ensure you understand what ethics approvals or agreements, such as material transfer agreements, will be needed to undertake your Fellowship. This includes approvals to ship samples or share data.

12. Short courses in advanced research methods/technologies & researcher- development training.

Explain how this training will enable you to learn methods and techniques and, if relevant, to generate pilot/preparatory data to support one or more research-grant proposals for

submission in the near future. Include justification for the training with information such as learning objectives, resources used (samples, data, platforms), skills to be developed. It is mandatory for applicants to include at least one short course as part of their fellowship plan.

13. Other specific training during the Placement.

Provide details if you intend to undertake other specific training during the Fellowship, including on-the-job training that is not described above.

14. Conference Attendance

The Fellowship will support your travel and participation in ONE international research conference / workshop. This does not have to be in Europe or Africa. Please provide details of the conference and the reason for your selection.

15. Knowledge and Skills Transfer

How will you transfer your new knowledge and skills to your Employing Organisation or more widely within Africa?

If you propose holding local workshops, explain how they will be embedded in your Institution's training and/or capacity development programme and what support will be given by the appropriate academic authorities.

This may include application of your new technical skills to a specific research project; contributing to building capability e.g., a technology platform or other institutional focus of advanced expertise; formal teaching through a specific course or workshops; coaching students and staff in your team in technical and enabling soft skills learnt during your Fellowship.

A common problem with applications is it is not clear whether technical skills learnt during the placement can be implemented at the EO after the Fellowship. Be clear about the technology available at your EO, and if the technology isn't available, state how do you plan to use your skills in the future.

16. Sponsorship and mentoring

16a. Employing Organisation

Provide details of the Institutional Director and your Sponsor at our Employing Organisation (EO) who are supporting your application. Your EO Sponsor should be an experienced senior researcher who takes responsibility for facilitating your longer-term development as a researcher.

Your EO Sponsor must provide a Support Letter. The letter should include

- The sponsor's position at the institution.
- An assessment of the applicant and how the Fellowship will fit into their career development plans.
- Details of how they and the organisation will support your development as a

researcher if you receive an award, provide as much specific information as possible on the support that will be provided.

- A statement that makes it clear that the EO has read and can comply with the EO role and responsibilities as set out in the scheme information document.
- If the Fellowship takes you beyond the end of your current employment contract, the letter should contain a guarantee that your current employer will extend your contract to the end of your Fellowship at least.

The EO Sponsor must be authorized to represent the EO in agreeing to the Fellowship plan with you. If your EO Sponsor does not have the authority to represent the EO, the letter should be countersigned by someone with the required authority. This should be a Head of Department, Institution Director or other senior academic, who will be responsible for ensuring the EO delivers on the agreement.

- ★ **Please ensure that you have obtained approval from your appropriate employing institutional head, confirming that you will be allowed to undertake such a fellowship, BEFORE you start your application.**

16b. Host Organisation

The fellowship should be an opportunity to develop new collaborations and networks. **You cannot request a placement at your Employing Institution or the institution which awarded your Ph.D. or one where you have or have had an affiliation (e.g., honorary position).**

Provide details of the Institutional Director and your Sponsor in your Host Organisation (HO) who are supporting your application.

Your HO Sponsor should be an experienced senior researcher who agrees to be your advisor and host and should have appropriate subject and technical knowledge. Their role is *facilitatory, advisory and enabling* for your professional and career *development*.

The sponsor should help you to tailor the Placement to your needs and available opportunities. The sponsors are not project “supervisors”.

Other staff may also take responsibility for specific aspects of your Fellowship Plan (e.g., skills training at another centre).

Your HO Sponsor must provide a Support Letter. The letter should include:

- the sponsor’s position at the institution
- As much specific information as possible on the support to be provided which is consistent with the support required to achieve the activities and outcomes from the Fellowship.
- A clear statement that the HO has read and can comply with the Host Organisation role and responsibilities as set out in the Scheme Information document.

The HO sponsor must be authorized to represent their institution in agreeing the Fellowship plan with you, if not, it should be countersigned by someone with the required

authority. This should be a Head of Department, Institution Director or other senior academic, who will be responsible for ensuring the HO delivers the agreement.

Explain why you have chosen this organisation as your host, including why it is a Centre of Excellence in your research area.

Provide a clear rationale for choosing the HO and why it meets the criteria set out in the Scheme Information document. If the technology/skills you are learning is available at several places, including institutions closer to your EO, be clear in your application why this institution is a leader in its field i.e., a centre of excellence.

16c. How will your Career Mentor assist you?

Mentors should be independent of your current or proposed work. A “supervisor” is not usually an appropriate career mentor. You may have several mentors advising you on different aspects of your career and scientific strategies.

PART E: FUTURE RESEARCH

This section helps reviewers to understand the next steps in your research after the Fellowship. It should be clear how the Fellowship will provide skills, networks or collaborations to undertake this question. Do not describe what you will do during the Fellowship. Please include references in Box 20.

16. Future Research Question

Although the future research question is for a study and proposal that you should be developing through the Fellowship, and which will be implemented after the Fellowship, please be as specific as you can. Identify any critical dependencies on which setting up the project or completing your future project might be dependent on, such as recruiting a sufficient number of participants or collecting sensitive data.

17. Justification of the Question

Justify your research question and your research design and/or strategy in terms of impact; originality; current theory and empirical data; your own distinctive experience and capabilities, and those of your sponsors.

You may wish to address the novelty of the project; the data which support it; the strengths of your research design; and/or why you and your chosen environments are well suited to address the questions. In what ways will your future project be original or novel?

PART F: Fellowship Budget

Financial request:

Set out your proposed budget in GBP (£) for the Fellowship taking note of the maximum allowable amounts set out in the table below. Please follow the guidelines carefully and enter the correct information to ensure your application meets the eligibility criteria.

If your application is for a placement in your own country, please contact AREF for

the maximum amounts allowable.

Maximum budget allowable	Fellowship with 3-month placement	Fellowship with 6-month placement	Fellowship with 9-month placement
A. Preparatory period	£1,700	£1,700	£1,700
B. Placement period	Not specified as long as the Total is within the maximum allowed	Not specified as long as the Total is within the maximum allowed	Not specified as long as the Total is within the maximum allowed
C. Follow-up period	£3,300	£3,300	£3,300
D. Total including indirect* costs	£25,000	£37,000	£47,000

* For more information on allowable indirect costs see guidance below

*** If your preparatory period budget limit of £1,700 cannot accommodate the visa and medical/health insurance costs mentioned on page 9, these costs can be moved to the placement period section of the budget.**

	Expenditure Item	Notes
A. Preparatory period		
Prep-1	Pre- shipment preparation of samples & data	Applicants may propose that some sample preparation, data-cleaning and quality improvement or assurance may be necessary. The Fellowship is not intended for collecting a substantial set of new samples and data with AREF funding.
Prep-2	Shipment of samples & data	Transfer of materials or data should comply with institutional policies and national regulations.
Prep-3	Purchase of travel & medical insurance and travel vaccinations	Obtain institutional advice so that you have effective insurance cover (NHS surcharge in the UK), any relevant vaccinations and tests.
Prep-4	Visa fee and cost of obtaining the visa	Include any costs associated with obtaining a visa - for example, the travel costs to obtain the visa, visa fees etc.
Prep-5	Other specified costs	Explain any other costs required during the preparatory period. Provide a justification for, and breakdown of, those costs.
Prep-6	Indirect costs	Indirect/overhead/administration costs up to 10% of the direct costs can be requested within the maximum budget for African institutions only .
B. Placement period		
Place-1	Accommodation during placement	To cover your accommodation in the host country during the placement. Your HO can help you to cost accommodation. Indicate how these costs were calculated and include the monthly cost.
Place-2	Subsistence during placement	Reasonable costs for subsistence, based on consultation with the HO. This covers living costs and meals. Indicate how these costs were calculated and include the monthly cost.
Place-3	Settling-in allowance	Fixed at £300 as a single, one-off payment to help cover initial costs in the host country.
Place-4	Fellow's travel within Host Organization country	The allowance allows you to visit other relevant centres of expertise within reasonable distance of your Host. Explain why the travel is necessary in relation to your Fellowship placement plan.

Place-5	Return travel home	One economy class round trip ticket + 40kg baggage total.
Place-6	Training consumables	The consumables should relate to training and project development and not a substantive project. Provide a breakdown of the consumables and the cost.
Place-7	Short courses in advanced methods and researcher development training	Obtain information on the costs from the host or course. AREF will provide grant writing training as part of your Fellowship.
Place-8	International conference(s)	You are encouraged to present your research at ONE leading international conference (named in the application form) where you can extend your research network. Provide a breakdown of costs (travel, registration, accommodation).
Place-9	Other specified costs	Justify and breakdown any other costs required to undertake your placement.
Place-10	Indirect costs	Indirect/overhead/administration costs up to 10% of the direct costs can be requested within the maximum budget for African institutions only .
C. Follow-up period:		
Follow-Up1	Salary-related costs	You can request up to 50% of your basic salary (excluding employer supplementary allowances for housing, schooling etc) for part or all of the follow-on period, so that you can devote up to 50% of your time as an employee to the follow-on activities.
Follow-Up2	Research-related costs	For example, to implement techniques learned during your placement.
Follow-Up3	Other specified costs	Justify and breakdown any other costs required to undertake activities during the follow-up period.
Follow-Up4	Indirect costs	Indirect/overhead/administration costs up to 10% of the direct costs can be requested within the maximum budget for African institutions only .
D. Total		Total = A. Preparatory period + B. Placement period + C. Follow-up period:

- AREF does not set maximum amounts for travel and subsistence costs, consumables etc. The applicant, with advice from sponsors, should identify and cost the specific items of their Fellowship.
- The amount requested should be justified in relation to the activities proposed.
- Cost all activities described in your Fellowship plan. If activities listed will be funded from another source (e.g., funding that your HO may already have) please make that clear.
- Distinguish clearly between the three periods of the Fellowship (Preparation, Placement, Follow-up) and specify all costs as precisely as possible using current information.
- Normally AREF will pay A. Preparatory period and C. Follow-up period amounts to the EO and the B. Placement period budget to the HO.
- An **Authorised Administrative Authority (signatory)** of the Organisation to which payments are made must approve your budget before you submit your application (e.g., Director General, Unit Director, Institutional Director/Head, Head of Finance, Head of Governance, Head of Grants support or Provost; this will depend on your organizational structure). **Please ensure that you have obtained approval from your appropriate employing institutional head, confirming that you will be allowed to undertake such a fellowship, BEFORE you start your application.**
- If you are offered a Fellowship, AREF will request a more detailed budget spreadsheet and may ask for quotes to support the amounts requested.

What we do NOT fund

The following items are not supported under the AREF Research Development Fellowship:

- Salary for the Fellow during the placement: this must be guaranteed by the Employing Organisation
- AREF Research Development Fellowships are not intended to support you if your employment contract is about to end. To be eligible, you must have employment in place to cover the fellowship period.
- Housing, furnishing, transport, schooling or other benefits that the Fellow may be entitled to under his/her existing contract of employment.
- Fees to advisors or mentors.
- Residential or distance-learning Masters' course fees or other examination or professional fees.
- Unspecified travel, research, and training costs.
- Contingency funds.
- The direct costs of collecting or generating substantial new datasets or the costs of taking a research project from start to completion (i.e., the type of project that can be

supported through a standard research grant).

- Indirect costs for non-African institutions.

VALIDATION

This section indicates any missing information required to complete the application process.

Applicants, their sponsors (both employer and host) and their institution's authorizing officer contacts must validate (i.e., confirm their participation) in the application. An automatic email will be sent to the individuals to validate the application and later to sign/approve. **Please ensure that you give them enough time to complete this step.** Your application is NOT fully completed without this 2-step process. Please find additional instructions about the validation process on the portal.
<https://programmes.aref-africa.org.uk/>

Deadline for Completed Applications

13.00 hours GMT on 8 May 2026

Your application will be ineligible if the application form is not completed properly, if the supporting documents are not complete, or if they are received after the deadline.

Please ensure that all the information you provide is correct. If you provide incorrect information, your application may be considered ineligible, and any Fellowship award may be withdrawn.