

## Sir Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellowships

**Successful Sir Henry Wellcome Postdoctoral Fellows Issac Bianco, Marie-Jo Brion, Andrew Wood, Rebecca Holmes and Shelley Cox talk about their experience of applying to this scheme.**

**IB:** I heard about it in the first year it was running and it was a rumour circulating in UCL, so that's how we caught wind of it. And then I looked on the Wellcome Trust website to find out details about the application process.

**M-JB:** The application procedure was actually really good, because to start with a very small initial application, to know whether or not the Wellcome Trust was interested, and it gave me a chance to get collaborators on board and to develop an idea but without sort of having to spend months on it.

**AW:** It was a little bit daunting because there was fairly scant information on exactly what was required of applicants and what sorts of things would be looked upon favourably, and so I called the Wellcome Trust and emailed various people asking them for advice, and generally got the impression that there were no hard and fast rules as to what the ideal applicant would look like.

**RH:** The application process was fine, the interview was more worrying than it actually was at the time. I found it quite helpful and useful, the kind of questions that I got asked.

**IB:** The interview was actually fine, it was not as worrying as I thought it was going to be. People were pretty friendly.

**M-JB:** I think it's a tough experience for newly graduated PhD students but it's, I think, a good start into the research process.

**SC:** The interview was challenging (laughs), but the main point for me was to demonstrate my commitment to a career in science and that set me the road that I'm on now and I'm very grateful for that opportunity.

**RH:** When I first heard I'd got it, it felt really nice, a reinforcement that I could carry on with the ideas that I was having now in terms of feeling like you've been validated in terms of your ideas and your science and as a scientist.

**IB:** Some of the feedback I got from reviewers who read my proposal is that the Wellcome Trust are looking for fairly ambitious research proposals, and I think this is kind of also reflected in the duration of the fellowship: it's four years funding. I guess imaginative projects, think big.

**M-JB:** I got the feeling that the Wellcome Trust is looking for people who specifically want an independent career path, you know, sort of want to spread their research interests and their collaborations from where they're based in their PhD, to give people opportunities to develop their own ideas and to establish their own links internationally, and to fund people who are interested in going and physically experiencing different institutions and learning from them and building their career.

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**SC:** The Fellowship itself I think is without a doubt the best possible scheme for an early-stage researcher. I think it's an absolutely outstanding scheme and I'm hugely grateful for the opportunity.

[End of transcript]

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