



**MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION  
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**QUALITY NOT QUANTITY IS THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH  
FELLOWSHIPS, SAYS ACADEMY REPORT**

The Academy of Medical Sciences is urging funders of non-clinical research fellowships in the biomedical sciences to concentrate on improving the quality of existing schemes, rather than increasing the number of places available.

The conclusion comes in a new report "*The freedom to succeed*" published this week by The Academy's Academic Careers Committee, chaired by Professor Keith Gull of Oxford University.

The report's authors conducted focus groups with research fellows at ten UK universities as well as consulting representatives from key funding agencies and higher education institutes.

The number of research fellowships grew rapidly during the 1990s and they have become a key part of the career paths of many biomedical scientists. The Academy was prompted to undertake this review by the large number of researchers now approaching the end of their fellowships.

The focus groups revealed that many research fellows are confused about their status within universities. The quality of contact between fellows and funding agencies also varies enormously. The focus groups revealed that fellows have little contact with industry and tend not to consider the commercial sector a potential career route. Fellows with families spoke of the pressures that can be caused by the need to relocate during fellowships.

Professor Gull said: 'Research fellowships should be a tool to empower and motivate the best and brightest biomedical scientists.'

'Some of the issues we have identified can be dealt with by individual fellows taking a more proactive approach with their funder and with the higher education institutes where they are based. We have also outlined a number of practical steps and models of best practice that will help funding agencies and universities to develop more effective partnerships, with better planned exit strategies'.

Copies of "*The freedom to succeed: A Review of Non-Clinical Research Fellowships in the Biomedical Sciences*" are available from The Academy of Medical Sciences, 10, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1H 5AH or from the website <http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk/>

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### **Notes for Editors**

The independent Academy of Medical Sciences promotes advances in medical science and campaigns to ensure these are translated as quickly as possible into benefits for patients. The Academy's eight hundred Fellows are the United Kingdom's leading medical scientists from hospitals, academia, industry and the public service.

The Academy Officers are Sir Keith Peters FRS, PMedSci *President*, Sir John Skehel, FRS, FMedSci *Vice-President*, Sir Michael Rutter, FRS FBA FMedSci, *Vice-President*, Sir Colin Dollery, FMedSci *Treasurer* and Professor Patrick Vallance, FMedSci *Registrar*. The Executive Director is Mrs Mary Manning. Further details may be obtained from Academy of Medical Sciences, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. Tel: 020 7969 5288; Fax: 020 7969 5298; email: [apollo@acmedsci.ac.uk](mailto:apollo@acmedsci.ac.uk) or see website: [www.acmedsci.ac.uk](http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk)