**Development Pathway to Independence programme**

**Information for applicants**

## What is the Pathway to Independence (PI) programme?

Development's PI programme aims to support researchers in the developmental biology and stem cell field as they transition from postdoc to principal investigator. This competitive scheme provides mentorship and networking opportunities, and helps to raise the profile of those individuals selected to be part of the programme.

## Why is Development offering this programme?

Development is published by a not-for-profit publishing organisation, The Company of Biologists, whose mission is to support the biological community. We already offer a number of grants to the research community, including meeting grants to help offset the cost of running conferences and travelling fellowships to support early-career researchers make collaborative visits to other laboratories. The PI programme extends the range of support we offer to the community, and targets a group of people who can sometimes struggle to receive the advice they need to navigate the job market successfully. We aim to support researchers from a diverse range of backgrounds and from all parts of the world. Find out more about why the programme was launched and the fellows we've supported on Development's website.

## What exactly does the programme offer?

Selected 'PI fellows' will receive the following:

- A tailored mentorship session with one of our Editors (which could, for example, involve a mock job interview, or help the fellow refine their research proposal).
- An in-person meeting in Cambridge involving professional leadership training and scientific discussion - including the opportunity to give a practice job talk and receive feedback.
- The opportunity to be featured in the journal and/or on the Node to help raise their profile.
- Networking opportunities with other PI fellows both in and between yearly cohorts.

This programme has been developed in consultation with previous cohorts of PI fellows, and will continue to evolve to ensure we provide the most useful support.

## Who is eligible to be a PI fellow?

The programme is open to any researcher worldwide who is active in a field relevant to Development (animal and plant developmental biology, stem cells or regeneration) and who plans to enter the job market in the year of the programme. Applicants are required to have a preprint or published paper related to their independent research proposal.

**How do I apply?**

To apply to be a PI fellow, you will need to complete a short application form via our grants portal. You will have to create an account if you don't already have one, then select 'Development PI programme' from the menu on the left-hand side). You will be asked to provide information about your research career to date and your future research plans. You will also need to upload a CV, publication list (including preprints) and letter of support from your current supervisor.

You will have the opportunity to select which of our Editors you would most like to meet.

**I applied previously but was unsuccessful: can I apply again?**

Yes. Given the small number of individuals we can support each year, we recognise that we had to decline many excellent applications and are happy to consider these candidates again – assuming you have not yet secured an independent position. We will assess these in the same way we do new applications; a prior negative experience will not count against you.

**What's the deadline for applications and when will I find out if I have been successful?**

Applications must be submitted by 1 February 2027. We aim to announce the successful candidates in March 2027.

**How are candidates selected?**

Given our limited resources, we will only be able to support a small number of candidates. All applications are reviewed by our team of academic and professional Editors. Successful applicants will be selected based on their research record and future plans, the extent to which they are likely to benefit from the PI programme and meeting the eligibility criteria described above.

Applications from shortlisted candidates will receive an in-depth review by one or more academic Editors.

A final selection will be made by a committee comprising our Editor-in-Chief, Executive Editor and a small number of academic Editors.

**How has the programme helped fellows selected in previous years?**

Our first cohort of PI fellows report that the programme has been hugely beneficial as they navigate their path to independence. The feedback we have received from them includes:

*"This programme made me feel part of a community of talented future group leaders and provided me with great opportunities to promote my applications. Sharing is caring!"*

*"Through their multiple networking and training opportunities, the PI program empowered me with tools to help launch my independent group and connect with peers at the same career stage, creating a supportive environment."*

*“This programme has been a game changer for me as I search for an independent position, giving me unprecedented visibility in the community as well as amazing training that will help me in my transition to being a PI.”*

We hope that future PI fellows will find the programme equally rewarding, and that - as the programme develops - we will build a supportive network of young PIs across the developmental and stem cell biology field.

**What if I have other questions?**

If you still have questions about this programme, please contact devpip@biologists.com

**Example application form**

APPLICANT/ORGANISER INFORMATION | RESEARCH CAREER TO DATE | FUTURE RESEARCH PLANS | DOCUMENTATION

**Surname:** Applicant

**First name:** Test

*** Home address line 1:**

**Home address line 2:**

*** Home address city:**

**Home address zip / post code:**

*** Country:** ------ Select One ------

**Institutional email address - * see tool tip:** test@email.com

APPLICANT/ORGANISER INFORMATION | **RESEARCH CAREER TO DATE** | FUTURE RESEARCH PLANS | DOCUMENTATION

* **Year and month PhD awarded:**

**Institution name:** COB
**Address line 1:** Bidder Building
**Address line 2:**
**City:** Histon
**State / county:**
**Zip / Postcode:**
**Country:** United Kingdom

* **Name of current supervisor:**

* **Do you have a first author publication or pre-print from your current post-doc position?**

If you answer No to this question you will be ineligible for the programme.

Yes

**Can you provide a DOI?:**

* **What have you discovered / developed and why is it important?**

Please highlight up to three research outputs (these can include preprints). 250 words maximum.

250 words left

* **What contributions have you made to your department or community to promote the development of research culture (e.g. diversity and inclusion, outreach activities, community building, etc.)?**

250 words maximum.

250 words left

* **Have you had any previous relationships with The Company of Biologists?**

e.g. Travelling Fellowship recipient; author in one of our journals; preLighter etc

Yes

* **Please provide details of previous relationship**

* **I confirm that I do not have a current PI position or have not accepted a PI position.**

You must answer Yes to this question to be eligible for the programme.

☐ Yes

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*** Provide a single-sentence, scientific summary of your planned research programme as an independent investigator (more details can be provided in the 'scientific vision' box below).**

*** What is the scientific vision for your research program? What do you aim to achieve in the first 5 years?**

250 words maximum.

250 words left

*** Where do you plan to apply?**

Please indicate your plans regarding job applications, including specific institutions and/or geographic locations. This will help us to match you up with the most appropriate editor and to help coordinate peer-to-peer mentoring

**With which of our editors would you most like to meet for a mentorship session (select up to 3)**

- ☐ Swathi Arur
- ☐ Dominique Bergmann
- ☐ James Briscoe
- ☐ Benoit Bruneau
- ☐ Anna Bigas
- ☐ Cassandra Extavour
- ☐ Paul François
- ☐ Anna-Katerina Hadjantonakis
- ☐ Haruhiko Koseki
- ☐ Thomas Lecuit
- ☐ Matthias Lutolf
- ☐ Irene Miguel-Aliaga
- ☐ Samantha Morris
- ☐ Ken Poss
- ☐ Liz Robertson
- ☐ Debra Silver
- ☐ Peter Rugg-Gunn
- ☐ James Turner
- ☐ James Wells
- ☐ Stephen Wilson

*** What opportunities for mentorship/training for the postdoc-to-PI transition do you currently have access to, through your current institution or elsewhere?**

Your answer to this question will help us ensure we provide successful candidates with complementary opportunities rather than repeating what you already have available to you.

*** What do you hope to get out of being part of the programme?**

250 words maximum

250 words left

*** Which of these categories best describes your research topics (select up to 3)**

- ☐ Cardiovascular development and regeneration
- ☐ Cell biology
- ☐ Cell fate control and differentiation
- ☐ Chromatin and epigenetics
- ☐ Computational and systems biology
- ☐ Development and disease
- ☐ Early embryogenesis
- ☐ Evo-devo and eco-evo-devo
- ☐ Gametogenesis and fertilisation
- ☐ Gene regulation
- ☐ Growth control
- ☐ Haematopoiesis
- ☐ Human development
- ☐ Immune system
- ☐ Mechanobiology
- ☐ Morphogenesis
- ☐ Musculoskeletal system
- ☐ Neural development
- ☐ Organogenesis
- ☐ Patterning
- ☐ Plant development
- ☐ Quantitative biology and modelling
- ☐ Regeneration
- ☐ Reproductive biology
- ☐ Signalling
- ☐ Stem cells
- ☐ Tissue engineering and organoids

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Only PDF files can be accepted. Instructions for saving a Word (.doc, .docx) or Excel (.xls, .xlsx) document to PDF for uploads below:

1. Click **File**
2. Click **Save As**
3. In the **File Name** box, enter a name for the file
4. In the **Save as type** list, select **PDF**
5. Click **Save**
6. If your Excel spreadsheet would be better viewed in landscape, please use **Page Layout** and change the **Orientation**

*** Curriculum Vitae**

Drop files here or browse files

Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: PDF

*** List of preprints/publications**

This can be a full list of publications from throughout your career. Please provide a full list only; manuscript uploads are not required

Drop files here or browse files

Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: PDF

*** Letter of support from current supervisor**

Drop files here or browse files

Maximum file size: 2 GB | Allowed file types: PDF

**If you are unable to provide a letter of support from your supervisor please explain your reasons.**