

APPLYING FOR FELLOWSHIPS

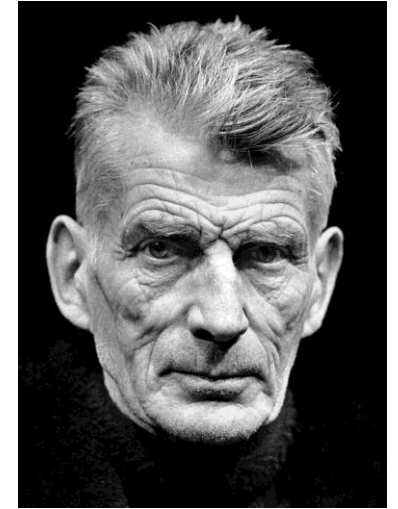
A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

JONATHAN TINSLEY



2024:

- Future Leaders Fellowship (FLF)
 - Placed on Liverpool's reserve list
- Ernest Rutherford Fellowship (ERF):
 - Invited to interview
 - Rejected after interview, with negative feedback!
- Royal Society University Research Fellowship (URF)
 - Rejected at panel stage
- EPSRC Open Fellowship
 - Withdrew application



"Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."

Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho*

2025:

- Future Leaders Fellowship (FLF)
 - Selected for submission by Liverpool
 - Not invited to interview
- Ernest Rutherford Fellowship (ERF):
 - Invited to interview
 - Rejected after interview, with very positive feedback!
- Royal Society University Research Fellowship (URF)
 - Passed panel stage
 - Not invited to interview
- University of Liverpool AI Research Fellowship
 - Successful!



"I have measured out my life with crap proposals"

T. S. Eliot, Paraphrased

- Every application offers the chance to improve.
- Get as much feedback in advance as possible.
- Utilise reviewer feedback to improve future applications.
- Approach reviewer feedback with equanimity and implement it as much as possible.
- Learn to synthesise the range of feedback you will receive.
- Remember, if one person can misinterpret, then anyone can.



"One must imagine Sisyphus happy."
Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*

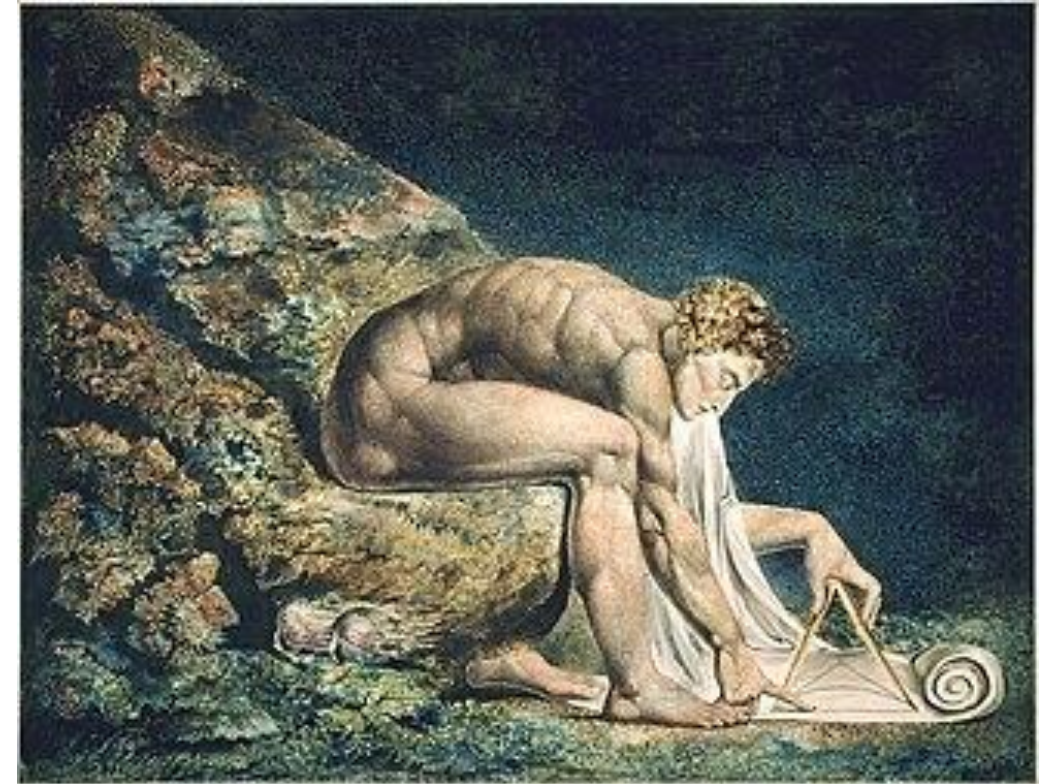


"Then teach them, and show them, without being indignant."
Marcus Aurelius, *Mediations*, Trans. George Long

- In my opinion, this is by far the most important part of the proposal
- You need to think about what it is that is genuinely interesting about what you want to do
- What is the future of your research and the field?
- The reviewers and the panel want to see someone with the ideas and vigour to tackle important questions, both now and in the future
- The Vision lets you make a strong first impression on the reviewer



- Target the judgement criteria.
- Try to make your Vision seem feasible.
- Dispose of any sense of shame.
- Don't worry too much about technical descriptions – you are trying to show that you know what you are talking about it.
- Have a clear plan for the work, every team member, and the outputs.
- Be clear and open about risks. If you don't have any, is your application really exciting enough?
- Plan mitigations for every risk.



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- Use the CV to identify gaps in your 'narrative' and actively correct them.
- Tailor the CV to the application – different schemes and different funders want to see different things.
- Think creatively regarding your contributions – you will have done a lot!
- Use Publication Lists to further highlight your leadership and augment CV.
- EDI affects everyone – if you think about it seriously, you will be able to say something sincere and serious.
- EDI and Ethics statements won't get you a Fellowship, but they may lose you one.



- Practice and plan.
- Presentation needs to be snappy – show that what you are doing is interesting and give the panel just enough so they feel like they have understood it.
- Tailor to the call – think about what the call is targeting and be focussed on that.
- Be as 'evidence-based' as possible in all your answers. Avoid 'listing' achievements.
- Be calm and prepared to be rejected.



- There is no set formula for getting a Fellowship or position – it will be individual.
- Try to understand what you want to do and why – if you can do this, then large parts of the application will become simple.
- The quality of the writing is important.
- Get as much feedback – informal and formal – as you can.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help and opinions.
- Build upon rejections and feedback.

