



End of fellowship evaluation questionnaire for MSCA fellows: Results

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1. Background

At the end of their fellowship, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) fellows are requested to complete a short survey¹ covering various issues including their integration within the host institution and the impact of the fellowship on their skills development, career and employability.

Below we present the key findings from the 13,728 fellows who have so far responded under Horizon 2020. They represent nearly half of the approximately 28,000 fellows who finished their fellowship by the end of January 2021. 58.3% of the respondents are fellows in RISE², followed by 26.9% in ITN³, 7.5% in IF⁴ and 7.3% in COFUND⁵. The vast majority are hosted in universities or public research institutes. The answers were gathered between October 2017, when the questionnaire was launched, and January 2021.

The survey shows high levels of satisfaction among MSCA fellows but identifies some areas for improvement which will be targeted in Horizon Europe.

2. Relationship with host institution

Almost 90% of fellows felt (very) well integrated in the host institution, while 77.8% rated the assistance by the host as (very) good and 83.7% reported that the scientific supervision was good or very good.

While the levels of satisfaction are very high, it is worth noting that 10.5% of fellows considered the assistance to be fair and 5% (very) poor. Similarly, 9.4% of fellows rated the supervision as fair and 4.7% as (very) poor. It is an area that needs to be improved.

This ties in with the Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA) / European Council for Doctoral Candidates and Junior Researchers (EURODOC) [Declaration on Sustainable Researcher Careers of May 2019](#), in particular the recommendation to “*deploy career management services at organisations employing researchers*”, and with the outcomes of the [MSCA Presidency Conference of September 2020](#), which prepared the ground for the drafting of new Guidelines for supervision that will be introduced under the new MSCA programme.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/Evaluation_for_MSC_fellows

² MSCA Research and Innovation Staff Exchange

³ MSCA Innovative Training Networks

⁴ MSCA Individual Fellowships

⁵ MSCA Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes

3. Strong impact on career and employability

Around 90% felt that the fellowship had a (very) good impact on both their personal development and their professional development. Fellows were also asked about the impact of the fellowship on their employability. 75.5% considered the impact as very good (34.8%) or good (40.7%). The remaining fellows opted for fair (16.1%) or (very) poor (3.6%) with a 4.9% non-response rate. IF fellows were most satisfied with 86.3% rating it as very good (55.7%) or good (30.6%).

At the end of their fellowship, 75.2% of IF fellows indicated that they were employed, 3.8% enrolled in education or training and 6.1% not looking for employment. Among those IF who had found a job at the end of their fellowship, 75.1% reported that the fellowship had helped to a (very) large extent, a further 17.5% to some extent while 6.6% felt that it had little or no effect.

In Horizon Europe, MSCA will promote sustainable research careers through better career development services and career guidance at host organisations, notably for careers outside academia.

4. Engagement with non-academia

All MSC actions involve engagement with non-academia ranging from the European Industrial Doctorates where all fellows have exposure industry to COFUND where 7.7% of fellows had a secondment beyond academia. For the RISE action, almost one-third of the researchers report exchanges with a non-academic partner, while among ITN more than a quarter of fellows reported a secondment outside academia compared with 8% of IFs. There is therefore scope to increase the level of exposure.

In Horizon Europe, MSCA will introduce incentives to encourage more exposure to the non-academic sector for more fellows (Doctorates and Postdocs).

5. Impact of training and fellowship in general on skills development

Almost 60% of IF fellows thought the training provided during their fellowship was very good with a further 29.4% rating it as good. Among ITN, the vast majority of fellows were also positive, though 13.4% reported it as fair and 3.5% poor.

Fellows were asked about the impact of the fellowship on a range of skills. They could choose between "strongly increased", "increased", "unchanged as already aware" and "unchanged as the fellowship did not help". Combining the categories "increased" and "strongly increased", satisfaction rates are relatively high:

- Research knowledge – 93.9%
- Ability to building international/intersectoral partnerships – 89.8%
- Presentation/communications skills – 85.2%
- Quality of your scientific output – 81.8%

- Project management – 78.5%
- Awareness of open access – 71.1%
- Grant and proposal writing – 63.6%
- IPR knowledge – 54.9%

In Horizon Europe, MSCA will continue to strongly encourage transferable skills training.

6. High level of overall satisfaction

Up to 94.8% of IF fellows rated their overall satisfaction with the fellowship as (very) good. Similar shares were reported by fellows in RISE (92.7%), COFUND (87.3%) and ITN (85.8%). Fellows were also asked if the fellowship had met their expectations. Overall, 38.8% felt it had exceeded their expectations while for 53.5% it had matched them. Of the remainder, 5.4% reported that the fellowship did not match their expectations, with a 2.2% non-response rate.



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