

# MSCA Fellowship Experiences

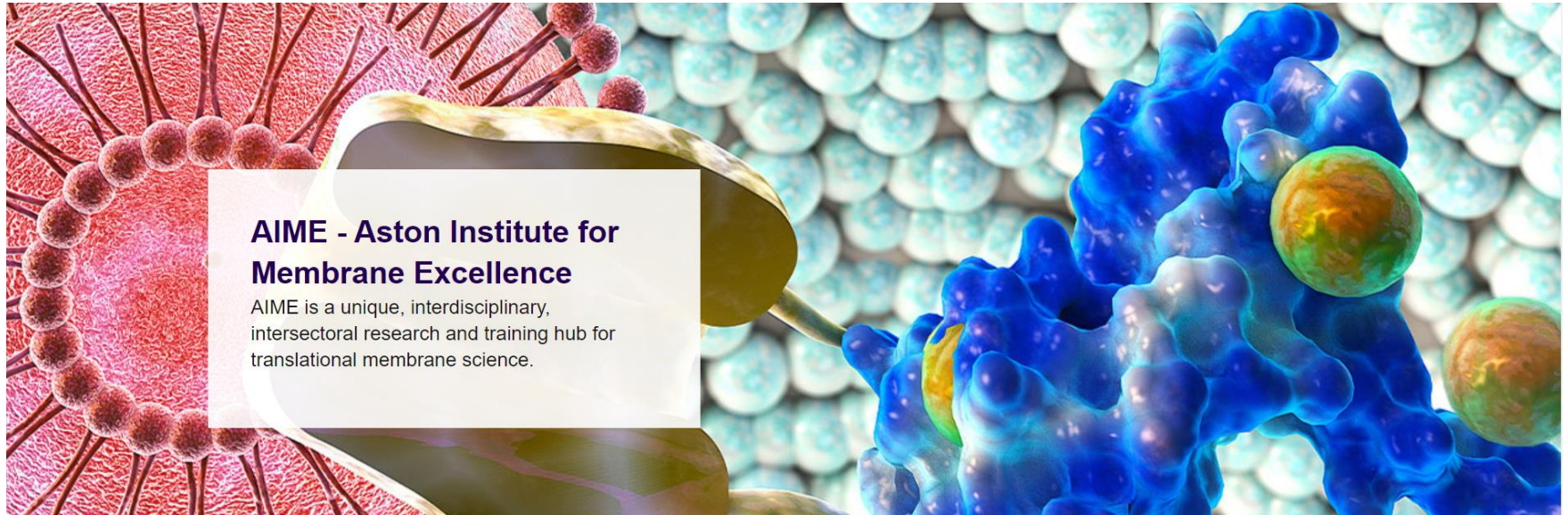
**Dr Alan Goddard**

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# A bit about us



## **AIME - Aston Institute for Membrane Excellence**

AIME is a unique, interdisciplinary,  
intersectoral research and training hub for  
translational membrane science.

# The Fellow

- The Fellow has to be excellent – ours is!
- Use your networks to find them.



Ushasree Mrudulakumari Vasudevan

Postdoctoral Researcher

Verified email at khu.ac.kr - [Homepage](#)

[Enzyme](#) [Bioconversion](#)

FOLLOW

TITLE

CITED BY

YEAR

[Thermostable phytase in feed and fuel industries](#)

UM Vasudevan, AK Jaiswal, S Krishna, A Pandey  
Bioresource technology 278, 400-407

81

2019

[Alginate derived functional oligosaccharides: Recent developments, barriers, and future outlooks](#)

UM Vasudevan, OK Lee, EY Lee  
Carbohydrate Polymers 267, 118158

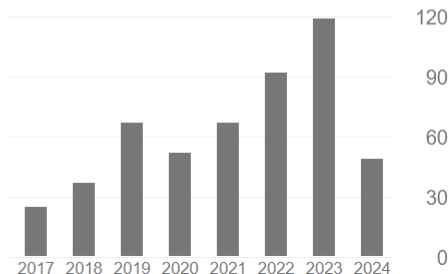
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2021

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# Finding fellows, other thoughts

- Lots of European Universities advertise MSCA 'masterclass' opportunities and associated support for applicants.

**Call for Expressions of Interest for a joint application under the EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme – Call: MSCA-PF-2024**

Università Politecnica delle Marche (UNIVPM) is hosting the second edition of the 'MSCA MasterClass @UNIVPM' initiative. This opportunity is particularly targeted towards individuals applying for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellowship (MSCA-PF) and selecting UNIVPM as their host institution. The MasterClass offers a chance for chosen researchers to familiarize themselves with UNIVPM while also obtaining a comprehensive proposal writing clinic with the assistance of the International Projects Team and a professional expert.

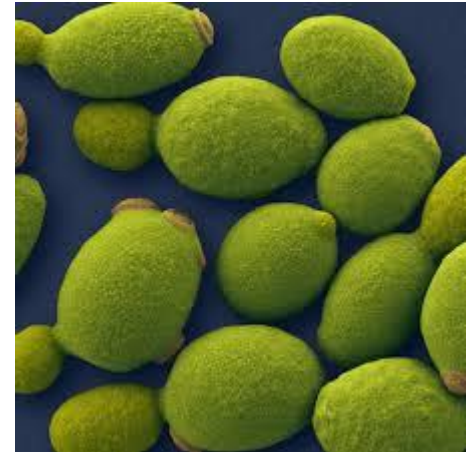
- Consider mining reserve list candidates from recent recruitment.
- Pay attention to cold calls – This project originated from a cold call.
- Make sure your social media pages mention fellowship opportunities.

# Application process

- Start early!
- Engage with your Research supports immediately.
- Familiarise yourself with the forms, requirements and the portal.
- Put together a timeline and try to stick to it.
- EU reviewing is very formulaic – follow the guidance exactly!

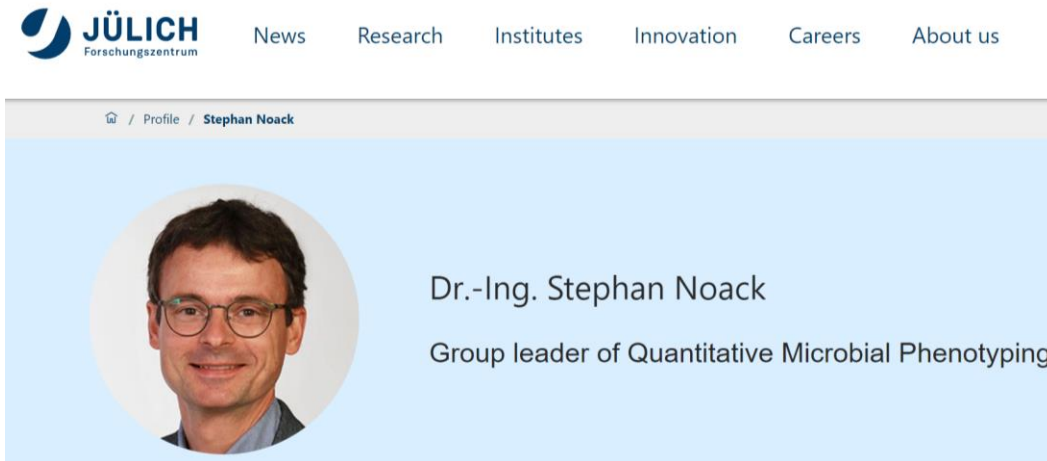
# The project

- ***A synthetic yeast methanotroph for methane based sustainable biomanufacturing***
- Excellence
- Impact
- Implementation
- Use your experience to make it better!



# Co-host

- Must add real value and expertise here.
- Possibly beneficial to be at a different institution.
- Use your networks to find a suitable person / group.



# Work together!

- This really is a partnership, use the collective knowledge:
  - Fellow
  - Academics
  - Institution (including Research Support)



# Developing the Proposal

- You guide but don't write the whole thing.
- If the Fellow can't write the proposal, will they actually be competitive?
- Polish it!
- Refer to the guidelines. Triple check everything.
- We probably spent no more than 2 days in total on it each.

# Research Support view on developing proposal

- In the background I e-mail the Fellow and the host monthly with a list of things to consider...Mostly related to part A, but also related to generic sections of B1. We have some template material.
- I try to start by getting the CV done and out of the way as soon as possible.
- If proposals are not looking good, I work with the host to cull them. Some people just cannot write...
- I try to arrange a peer review for all proposals. Not easy.
- Strong, willing candidate might also be suitable for RS Newton, or UKRI fellowships.

# Training Needs

- Aston has a real track record here which helps.
- Some will be quite generic.
- Ensure that most are specifically tailored to the researcher and the project.
  
- Consider this in both directions between Fellow and Host(s).

# Repeat Applications

- In this case, the Fellow had applied to various schemes but not with us.
- Use the feedback to improve!

## Evaluation Summary Report

### Evaluation Result

Total score: 99.00 % (Threshold: 70 /100.00)

# Example Feedback

## Criterion 2 - Impact

Score: **4.90** (Threshold: 0 / 5.00 , Weight: 30.00% )

- **Credibility of the measures to enhance the career perspectives and employability of researchers and contribution to their skills development.**
- **Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.**
- **The magnitude and importance of the project's contribution to the expected scientific, societal and economic impacts.**

### *Strengths*

- *Upon completion of the project, the researcher will have significantly strengthened their scientific profile and acquired key competencies and skills to pursue a successful career in academia, fulfilling their career goal. The project will provide valuable scientific and transferable skills training and lead to new collaborative networks that will be beneficial for future career opportunities.*
- *Dissemination to the scientific community is well planned, the expected publication output in high impact journals is realistic. Public engagement measures are of good quality with clearly identified target audiences, a range of media will be used to maximize impact from communication activities.*
- *There is realistic potential for exploitation of the technology to convert methane using yeast chassis; protection of intellectual property will be facilitated by an experienced technology transfer office present at the host organisation and the IP strategy is sufficiently detailed at this stage of the project to ensure that the window for an economical transfer is present from the start of the project.*
- *Expected scientific impact is high as project will significantly contribute to bridge current technological gaps in the field of methane bioconversion with a good potential for opening new research avenues in this area.*
- *Project presents a credible case for significant economic impact, targeting a sizeable market for methane bioconversion products, including the bioplastics industry.*

### *Weaknesses.*

- *The magnitude at which the project is contributing to expected social impact is not clearly defined in measurable terms, for examples in relation to reduction of greenhouse gases.*

# Top Tips - Alan

- Find a good Fellow.
- Guide them but don't write it for them.
- Consider the scoring criteria at all times.
- Get advice from experts within and outside your institution.
- If unsuccessful, go again, addressing the feedback.
  
- Try and enjoy the process!

# Things to consider – Paul

- Have an early meeting with the fellow and host team to make sure they understand what is required of them. Make sure the fellow understands that they write this proposal.
- Obvious, but make sure the team have the correct template and guidance... They might even read them...
- Get ready to see a first draft where the margins are incorrect, the font is wrong, the subheadings have been ‘adapted’.
- Keep a close eye on how the proposals are developing, if fellows and hosts are unresponsive it’s usually a bad sign.