

ECTRIMS RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

ECTRIMS offers a postdoctoral research fellowship exchange programme for young neuroscientists to facilitate their conduct of and training in basic, clinical or applied research related to multiple sclerosis (MS). The goal of the programme is to maximise exchange of information and to help grow the pool of well-trained research scientists focused on problems in MS. Current and recent fellows have worked in a spectrum of basic and clinical research areas in labs throughout Europe. Generally, a maximum of two fellowships will be awarded each year.

PROGRAMME TERMS

Eligibility:

- Scientists and physicians who hold or are candidates for an MD, PhD, ScD or equivalent professional degree are eligible.
- Candidates must have received their advanced degree(s) prior to initiation of the fellowship.
- More senior candidates may have no more than 5 years of postdoctoral experience beyond their final degree (PhD, MD, ScD or equivalent) at the time of application.
- In general, successful applicants will be less than 40 years of age at the time of application; exceptions under special circumstances will be considered.
- Only candidates who are citizens of countries that are members of ECTRIMS or citizens of countries in the European geographic area who wish to spend their fellowship period in a European laboratory or clinic will be eligible to apply.

Research Plan:

- The ECTRIMS Research Fellowship is a research-focused experience. Prospective fellows must identify and present a cogent basic, clinical or applied research project to be undertaken during the fellowship period, in collaboration with the fellowship mentor at the host institution.
- Applicants pursuing a research fellowship experience in any MS-related research topic (basic, applied or clinical, in any relevant specialty area) will be considered.
- The research plan must be reviewed and certified by the host institution's ethics committee (or equivalent body) or animal care committee (or equivalent body). Certification must be in hand prior to payment being made to the host institution for the fellowship stipend.

Fellowship Location:

- The fellowship period will be spent in a European research laboratory or clinic focused on problems associated with MS.
- The laboratory or clinic should, in most circumstances, be located in a different European country from that of the fellow's citizenship, to help facilitate cross-border exchange and communications; exceptions will be considered under special circumstances.
- The prospective fellow must determine in advance the fellowship location and identify a proposed mentor, all of which will be considered along with the fellow's own qualifications and research plan, in the review and selection process.

Term:

- Fellowships of 1 or 2 years duration will be available.
- Fellowships of shorter duration than 1 year will be considered only under special circumstances which must be detailed in the application process.
- In most circumstances, fellowships will be initiated to coincide with the fall academic year initiation.

Support:

- The fellowship will provide an annual stipend of €50,000 for fellows with clinical (medical) degrees or €40,000 for fellows with basic science or applied (eg, clinical psychology) degrees.
- Payment will be made annually to the host institution, which will be considered the employer of the fellow. Salaries will be paid by the host institution to the fellow according to the institution's own payment policies and schedules.
- The stipend is intended to provide living wages to the fellow; no cost-of-living increase is anticipated in a second year of a two-year fellowship period.
- Healthcare benefits and other benefits are expected to be provided by the host institution.
- It is expected that the actual research to be undertaken at the host institution will be supported by the host institution/mentor.
- No additional support for travel, books, journal subscriptions, etc. will be provided.
- Fellows will be expected to attend annual ECTRIMS Congresses during the term of their fellowship and to make a presentation (at a young researcher's section or elsewhere) on their funded research. ECTRIMS will separately support travel and accommodations for Congress participation. .

Activities During the Fellowship Period:

- The ECTRIMS Research Fellowship is intended to be a full-time research and research training experience; however,
- Up to 10% of the Fellow's time may be spend in teaching, clinical care not associated with any research project or additional course work, as deemed appropriate by fellow and mentor.

Changes in the Fellowship:

- It is anticipated that the entire fellowship period will be undertaken within the host institution as planned. However, in special circumstances, ECTRIMS will consider requests to transfer the fellowship to a new mentor or institution. Authorization must be requested and provided prior to any such change. Unexpended funds at the original host institution must be returned to ECTRIMS in the event of an approved institutional transfer, and the balance will be reissued to a new host institution by ECTRIMS.
- The ECTRIMS Research Fellowship is an individual award and is not transferable to a different fellow at the host institution.
- ECTRIMS must be notified of early termination of any fellow and unexpended funds at the host institution must be returned to ECTRIMS.
- ECTRIMS may revoke or terminate a Research Fellowship early if the fellow is unable to carry out the research as planned, if a mentor requests termination because of unsatisfactory performance by the fellow, or in the event of cause established by due process of law or as a consequence of an institutional review committee's determination of fraud or malfeasance.

Reporting:

- Fellows and their mentors are required to provide an annual progress report at the end of Year 1, and a final progress report at the conclusion of the fellowship period. Copies of any published papers emerging from the work should also be submitted as they appear. All progress reports will be kept in confidence at ECTRIMS to protect proprietary information before it is published.
 - Year 1 progress reports are due 30 days prior to the end of the year 1 period and must be received at the ECTRIMS Secretariat prior to initiation of Year 2 training; Final progress reports are due within 30 days of the completion of the fellowship training period.
 - Annual progress reports must include a summary of research undertaken, a letter of continuing support from the fellowship mentor and an accounting from the mentor and/or host institution of how funds provided for the fellow were allocated (stipend, overhead, etc.) and whether additional funds were provided to the fellow by the host institution or other granting agency (source, amount, purpose).
- Publications that emerge from the work undertaken during the fellowship period should acknowledge The ECTRIMS Research Fellowship Programme for its support.

Post-Fellowship Follow-Up:

- After the fellowship period, it is desirable, but not required, for the fellow to return to his/her original home institution for employment, to the extent possible. Post-fellowship career plans should be detailed as part of the application process.
- ECTRIMS Research Fellows will be required to maintain contact with the ECTRIMS Secretariat, so that post-training career paths can be tracked, to assist with overall programme evaluation.

APPLICATION PROCESS

ECTRIMS Research Fellowships will be awarded in a competitive review process conducted by members of the ECTRIMS Research Fellowship Review Committee. Applications will be evaluated based on the:

- candidate qualifications, educational history and evaluation of career plans
- qualifications and characteristics of the proposed fellowship mentor and host institution
- the proposed research plan, including assessment of the scientific quality, innovation, perceived feasibility, quality of letters of endorsement from the proposed mentor and from referees at the fellow's home institution, etc.

To these ends, the fellowship application should include:

Part 1:

1. A completed on-line application, available from the ECTRIMS Fellowship Administrator (fellowship@ectrims.eu) or the ECTRIMS web site (www.ectrims.eu).
2. A complete curriculum vitae plus bibliography of the applicant
3. A research project description, to be no longer than 6 pages long, including figures, tables and references.

Part 2:

The following additional items must be submitted electronically to fellowship@ectrims.eu by 1 December. These should be submitted as confidential documents and should NOT be submitted with the materials requested in Part 1. Please be sure to ask referees to clearly identify the NAME of the applicant on all pages of his/her letters.

1. Letter of endorsement of the proposed mentor, with special reference to interactions he/she has had with the proposed fellow and to the proposed research plan. A current curriculum vitae and full bibliography for the proposed mentor should be included.
2. Letter of support from the department chair (or other relevant institutional official) at the proposed host institution accepting the proposed fellow, should a fellowship be awarded.
3. Up to three letters of reference from professionals acquainted with the proposed fellow, from his/her home institution or elsewhere, that addresses the fellow's qualities and likelihood for success in a research and/or clinical career. One of these letters should be submitted from the degree mentor for the proposed fellow.
4. If applicable, a letter from the home institution indicating that the fellow will be welcomed back to the institution and the nature of the position that will be available, once the fellowship period has been concluded.

REMINDER: The application CV/bibliography and research project outline are to be submitted by the applicant to the ECTRIMS Fellowship Administrator using the online application by 1 December of each year.

Mentor letter plus CV and institutional and referee support letters are to be submitted SEPARATELY as confidential documents to the ECTRIMS Fellowship Administrator (fellowship@ectrims.eu) by 1 December of each year.

Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

The ECTRIMS Fellowship Review Committee will review all proposals during the early winter of each year; notification of the review outcomes will be made by March 15 of each year, to facilitate logistics involved in relocation by the following fall of each academic year.

For questions and further information, please contact the ECTRIMS Fellowship Administrator at:
fellowship@ectrims.eu