



ECTRIMS POSTDOCTORAL 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 maximize exchange of information and to help grow the pool of well-trained research scientists focused on problems in MS. Initially, it is anticipated that several 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.
- At the time of application fellows should have no more than one year of prior postdoctoral training at the same host institution/mentor. More senior candidates may have no more than 5 years total 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.
- Citizens of any country are eligible to apply to this programme; however, postdoctoral research training must be undertaken in a European laboratory or clinic.
- Candidates and their mentors must affirm that there will be no language barriers that will impede the training experience.

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.

Fellowship Location:

- The fellowship period will be spent in a European research laboratory or clinic focused on problems associated with MS.
- For fellowship applicants who are European citizens, 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.
- The fellowship must be initiated (all paper work submitted to the administrator; move to training venue complete; work actively beginning) within 6 months of the receipt of an award letter from ECTRIMS or within 6 months of the completion of the doctoral degree for fellows who apply for and receive an ECTRIMS fellowship while still in pursuing their doctoral degree. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the ECTRIMS fellowship program (fellowship@ectrims.eu).

Support:

- The fellowship will provide an annual stipend of €55'000 for all fellows.
- ECTRIMS will also provide economy round-trip transportation from the successful candidate's home location to the training site; travel expenses for family members cannot be provided.
- Payment from ECTRIMS will be made to the host institution, which will be considered the employer of the fellow. Stipends will be paid by the host institution to the fellow according to the institution's own payment policies and schedules. Travel expenses for relocation to the training site can be reimbursed directly to the fellow, upon submission of receipts to ECTRIMS.
- The ECTRIMS award must be used by the institution to pay the fellow's stipend ("salary") at the appropriate rate for the fellow's stage of training. Should there be any remaining funds, the remainder of the award can be used to support institutional social benefits (health care coverage, pension, other benefits) that may be required by the institution.
- If the total stipend plus benefits exceeds the amount provided by the ECTRIMS award, it is the responsibility of the institution/ mentor to supplement the ECTRIMS award to cover the entire required costs.
- The expected fellow's total salary as well as the expected fellow's total social benefits costs per year have to be indicated by the host institution.
- If the annual or prorated ECTRIMS award is not sufficient for the total required costs of the fellow (salary plus benefits), additional source(s) of funding that will be used to cover the total costs have to be listed.
- 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 European 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 Postdoctoral 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 web site (www.ectrims.eu)
2. An abbreviated curriculum vitae and bibliography of the applicant, not to exceed 5 pages. You must use the form "biographical sketch" provided by ECTRIMS, available in the online fellowship application system.
3. Applicant's career plans (not to exceed one page)
4. A research project description, to be no longer than 6 pages, including figures, tables and references
5. A research project abstract summary, to be no longer than 250 words.
6. Applicant's proof (e.g. certificate) of local language knowledge.

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. From the proposed mentor:** 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. An abbreviated current curriculum vitae and bibliography for the proposed mentor, not to exceed 5 pages, should be included. The form “biographical sketch” provided in the online fellowship application system should be used. The applicant should send this form to the mentor.

- 2. From the training institution:**
 - 1) 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.
 - 2) Certification from the training institution accepting the terms of the ECTRIMS fellowship and payments. The necessary form is available from the online application system; the applicant should forward this form to the institution for completion and return to ECTRIMS.

- 3. From other referees:** At least 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. 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 and forms 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 the end of March 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.