

Postdoctoral Fellowship Guidance for Applicants

Purpose of the award

The Stroke Association's research strategy aims to increase the UK funding base and capacity for stroke research across the full stroke care pathway. These Fellowships are aimed at developing the stroke research leaders of the future. Postdoctoral Fellowships are intended to provide the necessary skills and training for the development of an independent career in stroke research.

The Postdoctoral Fellowship will allow a Fellow to hold research funds in their own name, and to undertake an independent research project under the supervision of an established member of the stroke research community. It is a condition of award that the Fellow seeks to obtain further research funds during the tenure of the award in order to consolidate and advance their career. The maximum funding amount that can be applied for is £175,000 over a period of 3 to 5 years. Fellowships may be taken up on a part-time, pro-rata basis but the minimum working hours would be equivalent to 0.6 WTE. I.e: Applicants cannot apply for the full amount if they want to work part time over 3 years only. If they would like to do this, the cost of the award will be reduced accordingly.

Eligibility

Postdoctoral Fellowships are open to those who have undertaken up to approximately 6 years active research subsequent to obtaining their PhD qualification, excluding career breaks and other periods of leave such as sickness and maternity. We specifically welcome applications from Nurses and Allied Health Professionals; however, those conducting applied research in the area of stroke will also be considered eligible. Please contact us if you are unsure of, or have any queries regarding, your eligibility for this award.

We do not expect postdoctoral fellowships to include animal research; however, if your proposed project does involve animals, it is mandatory to complete the relevant question in the application form. Applications may be referred to the NC3Rs for review. Where animal work is sub-contracted, these questions must be completed by the organisation conducting the animal studies. Please note, we will also ask peer reviewers who will assess your application if there is appropriate justification for the use and number of animals. Applicants should refer to the NC3Rs website for further information and guidance on the responsible and ethical use of animals in research, and this will help to answer the question in the application form: www.nc3rs.org.uk.

N.B If applicable, we must have a copy of your ethical approval and any animal license necessary before you can take up the award.

Adjudication

During the adjudication of Postdoctoral Fellowships and the selection of Fellows, the interview panel will score the application based on:

- The PERSON the background, career aspirations and potential of the candidate to become a stroke research leader in the future (40%)
- The SUPERVISION that will be received by the candidate (15%)
- The INSTITUTION the candidate will be based at (15%)
- The proposed TRAINING programme the candidate would undertake if awarded the Fellowship (15%)
- The PROJECT that will be carried out during the Fellowship (15%)
 - o The purpose of the proposed research project must be directly related to stroke illness. It must be clear how the research could ultimately be translated into clinical practice and, therefore, provide benefit to stroke patients. Details of the proposed research project, future plans and aspirations for further research and funding must also be provided.

Postdoctoral Fellowships are awarded on the recommendation of a panel made up of members of the Stroke Association's Research Awards Pool using the system of expert peer review and a candidate interview.

Postdoctoral Fellowships are awarded annually in March, with a closing date in November. Applications are invited by means of advertisements in the medical press and the Stroke Association website (www.stroke.org.uk).

What happens to your application?

Your application will be reviewed by at least two external expert peer reviewers, and adjudicated by an adjudication panel made up of members of the Stroke Association's Research Awards Pool.

Peer review scores are used to rank applications and shortlist for interview with agreement from the Chair of the Adjudication Panel. If an application is shortlisted, the proposed candidate is invited to attend an interview. The Research Department will send out invitation letters for interview.

Please hold the interview date in your diary from now on until we confirm if you have been shortlisted. You will receive a letter confirming this approximately two weeks before the interview date. The interview usually lasts for around 50 minutes. The candidate will be invited to give a short (8 minute) presentation to the panel outlining

their research proposal and its outcomes, as well as their background, career aspirations, and the benefits that the Fellowship would bring to them personally. The candidate will then be interviewed by a panel made up of up to four members of the Research Awards Pool and invited experts (if applicable) and members of the Research Team from the Stroke Association. The panel will be particularly interested in:

- The Fellow's career to date
- The Fellow's career aspirations
- The Fellow's research experience
- The research proposal outlined in the Fellow's application
- What benefit the Fellowship would bring to the Fellow

The panel will also explore the proposed research project, and will ask questions on any part of the application or detail of the proposed project. Presentation skills of the applicant will also be assessed.

Following the interview, the panel will discuss the merits of each of the candidates, and will make a recommendation to the Stroke Association Council of Trustees on the applicant(s) who should receive a Fellowship. Successful Fellows will be informed in writing. Unsuccessful applicants will also receive a letter containing feedback from their interview and anonymised external peer reviewer comments.