



Postgraduate Fellowship Guidance for Applicants 2018-19

Email: research@stroke.org.uk Tel: 0207 566 1543

This document is intended to assist the completion of the Stroke Association Postgraduate Fellowship Application Form. The guidance is intended to be used in conjunction with the Conditions of Award.

If you have any questions, please email research@stroke.org.uk and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

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 the stroke research leaders of the future. Postgraduate Fellowships are intended to provide the necessary skills and training for the development of an independent career in stroke research, and to allow candidates the opportunity to obtain a postgraduate qualification (MPhil or PhD).

Remit of the award

The Stroke Association supports Fellows who plan to conduct stroke research into clinical and applied health, including social care research. This includes research that is conducted to answer specific questions relating to day-to-day practice in health services or community settings, and which has the potential to have an impact on the health or well-being of people affected by stroke. A clear trajectory to patient benefit is essential.

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 (including psychologists and pharmacists).

The Stroke Association will not fund basic or pre-clinical research through its wholly-funded Postgraduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship schemes.

This does not apply to our joint Clinical Fellowship programmes with the Medical Research Council (MRC) or Association of British Neurologists (ABN), which are open to research across the whole pathway.

Deadline for applications

The closing date for applications is 5pm 1 November 2018

Interview date: 14 February 2019.

The Research Department will send out invitation letters for interview. Please hold the interview dates 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.

Awards will be made in March 2019.

Award amount and duration

The funding will be £105,000 across 3 years (£35,000 per year) subject to the Fellow making satisfactory progress. Awards will be made initially as £35,000 a year for two years, with a discretionary extension of £35,000 for the third year. This funding can be allocated as appropriate by the Supervisor and the host institution; however, payment of the candidate's stipend and tuition fees must be prioritised over other research expenses if this is not supported using alternative funds.

If your university only allows 4 year PhDs you are permitted to apply for this funding scheme when you are in the first year of your PhD, applying for funding for the last 3 years of funding.

The postgraduate fellowship is a full-time studentship if it undertaken at 1.0FTE. Fellowships may be taken up on a part-time, pro-rata basis but the minimum working hours would be equivalent to 0.6 WTE. Applications from candidates seeking less than the full 3 years of funding will be considered in exceptional circumstances. However, the Stroke Association will need a letter from the Postgraduate Office of the host institution confirming the candidate will be able to obtain a PhD during the period of the Stroke Association funding.

Eligibility

Your proposed project must be based at a University/ NHS trust/ Statutory Social Care Organisation/ Research Institution within Great Britain or Northern Ireland.

Fellows must have at least two supervisors: one lead supervisor who bears overall responsibility for the training and the research project and a second supervisor who may be less active in supervision and support. Additional supervisors are not mandatory but are permitted.

You will be asked to give details of whether you have involved your local Research Design Service (RDS) or Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) in the development of the research proposal, including details of any discussions you have had with the RDS/CTU, improvements to the proposal as a result of the advice offered and their ongoing involvement in the project.

Please note: involvement of a CTU is **mandatory** for clinical trial applications.

For clinical trial applications, you will need to outline your lead supervisor's track record in running clinical studies and the expected role of your supervisor in ensuring the study will recruit to target and stay on track within your expected timescales.

Physicians and similar medical professionals are not eligible to apply for a Postgraduate Fellowship and should apply for a Clinical Research Training Fellowship, which will be awarded jointly by the Stroke Association and MRC. Please see the MRC website or email the Research team for further details of this.

Please contact the Research Team if you are unsure of, or have any queries regarding, your eligibility for this award.

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

Patient and Public Involvement

It is desirable for applicants to have involved people affected by stroke in the planning and development stages of their funding application, and to continue to do so should their application be successful. This involvement should be meaningful, and people affected by stroke should have a real opportunity to contribute to your research.

In the application you will be asked how you have involved public and/or patients in this research and/or the application, how you will involve public and/or patients in this research going forward, what the impacts and benefits will be for them (short and/or longer term) and how you plan to disseminate this work to them.

We are able to offer you advice or answer questions you may have about involvement. If you would like to us to contact people affected by stroke to gain feedback on your proposal we can help, however please beware that we will not support any request made to us less than four weeks prior to the application deadline.

You can find out more about how we can help you to involve people affected by stroke in your work [here](#).

Resubmission policy

Our resubmission policy permits you to resubmit previously unsuccessful applications to this call once. Should you choose to resubmit your unsuccessful application, we would ask that you take on board the comments of the reviewers and incorporate any suggestions accordingly.

If you are unsure whether you can resubmit an application, please contact the Research team at research@stroke.org.uk with the month and year you applied and the reference number of your application which can be found on your rejection letter.

Details of support requested

In the main budget table of the application form we would like you to include all the funding you are requesting from the Stroke Association. You will also be required to fully justify all the funding you are requesting.

Where the study takes places within the NHS, we ask you to outline any associated NHS Support costs and NHS Treatment costs. Please include this information in the supplementary spreadsheet on the budget page and not in the main budget table.

For costings regarding NHS Treatment and NHS Support costs, and AcoRD costings, please refer to Clause 6 in our **Conditions of Award**. If you have any questions about attributing the costs of research, we would recommend that you consult your AcoRD specialist, this may be in your institution's Research & Development (R&D) office or your finance team or local Clinical Research Network (CRN). More information can be found here: [Attributing the costs of health and social care Research and Development \(AcoRD\)](#)

Please note that if your application is successful, the funding provided will be the figure that you have requested (unless this is queried by the panel). After the Award Acceptance form is signed, the amount awarded will not be increased if there are errors in your calculations so please ensure that the total amount requested is correct.

If you have financial support from other sources, the nature and tenure of the support should be disclosed in either the project proposal section of the application form, or in the justification textbox underneath the budget table.

Support may be sought for the following items:

- Stipend and tuition fee of the fellow, in line with the host institution's policy. Please account for inflation in the costings in the application form. (Payment of the candidate's stipend and tuition fees must be prioritised over other research expenses if this is not supported using alternative funds.)
- Dissemination costs: Open Access publishing costs, conference attendance fees.
- Research costs: consumables, travel expenses, [Patient and Public Involvement](#).
- There is no maximum limit for imaging costs. However you will have to justify your request and ensure that costings are in line with institutional and national practices.

Proposed research project

The proposed research project statement on page 5 of the application form should not exceed 2500 words. Please provide your references separately. Please include a Gantt chart/timeline as a file upload.

Your proposal statement should incorporate all of the following points, although not necessarily in the order listed below:

- Hypotheses, aims and objectives
- Background to the project
- Detailed plan of investigation, including proposed methodology
- Potential problems and contingency plans
- Dissemination plans
- Value of this programme to stroke research
- Please include details on the input the proposed fellow has had in the development of the project and the application. The adjudication committee will give added preference to an application where the candidate has been involved in the design of the study.

You will also be asked to provide:

- An outline of the trajectory of your research into the clinic, following the conclusion of the fellowship
- Details of qualifications to be achieved and how progress will be monitored
- Background information about the institution where the fellow will be based
- Proposed programme of training
- Supervision and support for the fellow
- Supporting statement from the fellowship candidate
 - Why you are applying for this fellowship and why a postgraduate fellowship would be beneficial to you
 - Future careers aspirations: outline your future career plans following completion of the research project and training and gaining of your qualification.

Please see page 5 of the application form for more guidance.

Application checklist

- Fellows must have at least two supervisors: one lead supervisor who bears overall responsibility for the training and the research project and a second supervisor who may be less active in supervision and support. Additional supervisors are not mandatory but are permitted.
- You are required to submit your application online, via our award management system, before the deadline (5pm 1 November 2018):
<https://strokeassociation.flexigrant.com>
- We will not accept paper/Word/PDF copies of the application form.
- Online signatures: The **Primary Supervisor**, the **Secondary Supervisor**, the **Head of Department** and the **Finance/Research Administration Officer**

from the HEI must provide their approval of your application in order to allow you to submit the application. This is done by you inviting them into your application form via the 'Participants' tab in the system and them typing their details into the corresponding declaration page. This acts as their signature. If your application is funded, wet copies of their signatures will be required.

- At the time of application, you do not require approval from the **Research Sponsor**, however if you are successful, wet copies of their signature will be required.

Awards that we fund require a Research Sponsor if the research is linked to the NHS. To identify who would be suitable to act as the Research Sponsor, we advise you talk to your supervisor(s) and your institution's Research Office. The Research Office will know whether or not you need a sponsor (and are often the sponsor in many cases). For more information about this, please take a look at: <http://www.hra.nhs.uk/resources/before-you-apply/roles-and-responsibilities/sponsor/>

It is suggested that the Research Sponsor could be 'the employer of the chief investigator, the educational institution (e.g. for student research), or the care organisation where the research is to take place'. Please email research@stroke.org.uk if you require further guidance.

- You are not required to have the necessary ethical approval at the time of application. If successful, ethical approval for your study will have to be gained before you can begin your award. You are required to send us a copy of the ethical approval when it is gained.

Adjudication

During the adjudication of Postgraduate Fellowship applications and the selection of Fellows, reviewers and panellists 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 the candidate will receive (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 including: (15%)
 - The purpose of the proposed research project must be directly related to stroke. It must be clear how the research could ultimately be

translated into clinical practice and, therefore, provide benefit to stroke patients.

Postgraduate 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.

Postgraduate 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. If you have not been shortlisted for interview, you will be informed at the end of January.

The interview usually lasts for around 30 minutes. The candidate will be invited to give a short (8 minute) presentation to the panel outlining their proposed research project, including the research question, a brief background to the research, an outline of the methods and outcome measures, how they propose to analyse the data, and how their research could improve care for patients with stroke. 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 explore the proposed research project, and will ask questions on any part of the application or detail of the proposed project, and how a Stroke Association Fellowship would help further their career aspirations in stroke. 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.

Successful applicants will be required to provide an accurate start date upon accepting the award. We advise candidates to begin the award within 6 months of receiving the offer letter, but the start can be delayed if requested at the discretion of the Stroke Association.