

MND ASSOCIATION NON-CLINICAL FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

Summary Application Guidelines

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MND ASSOCIATION

NON-CLINICAL FELLOWSHIP AWARDS

OBJECTIVES

The MND Association supports biomedical research on Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis and related conditions, in all relevant disciplines. As described in the Association's [Research Strategy](#), the objectives of the MND Association research funding programme are to support research aimed at understanding the causes of MND, elucidating disease mechanisms and facilitating the translation of therapeutic strategies from the laboratory to the clinic. Additionally, we aim to attract scientists into MND research and provide support for career development, as shown by our provision of studentship grants.

We now invite post-doctoral scientists with relevant experience who are ready to lead a research project as Principal Investigator, to apply for an **MND Association Non-Clinical Fellowship Award**.

These awards will be open to scientists across a range of disciplines, generally excluding those with a medical qualification. The award may only be held at a university or other *bona-fide* research institute in the UK and Ireland – the host institute.

PROCEDURE

Research proposals are considered in outline initially and a full application may be invited thereafter. Full applications are independently peer reviewed prior to consideration by the Association's Biomedical Research Advisory Panel (BRAP). Fellowship applicants will be interviewed by a committee, including members of the BRAP and MND Association staff, the interviews taking place in October or early November. Recommendations are then considered by the Board of Trustees of the MND Association. Please see the [MND Association Biomedical Research Governance Overview](#) for details on the application and review process.

GUIDELINES (summary application)

Purpose of the Association's Non-Clinical Fellowship Awards

The essential purpose of a fellowship award is to provide the opportunity for a researcher, with relevant experience and demonstrated expertise and ability, to apply for funding in their own name. The grant will provide support for a single project, e.g. a piece of work designed to answer a single question or a small group of related questions.

Personal Direction

While the prospective fellow will be the principal applicant, they must name as co-applicant the Head of Laboratory in which they intend to work, and who guarantees that suitable space, facilities and equipment are available. The Laboratory Head will be prepared to commit time to support and advise the prospective fellow. A letter of support from the Laboratory Head must be submitted with the initial summary application.

It is recommended that a second co-applicant is named as 'sponsor'. This individual may work in the same or different laboratory, or even a different institute. They will be prepared to act as a mentor to the fellow throughout the term of the grant. Both the Laboratory Head and the Sponsor must have contracts of employment that extend beyond the proposed end date of the fellowship.

Applicants may stay at the same department/institute where they are based at the time of application or may use the fellowship as a way to facilitate a move to a new host institute.

The grants will be awarded at two levels:

Junior Non-Clinical Fellowship

These are aimed at individuals who will have 2 – 6 years post-doctoral experience at the time of commencement of the grant. The Association may accept applications from exceptional candidates in the final year of their PhD, but such applicants should consult the Association for advice prior to submitting their summary application.

The application should be for a term of between 24 and 36 months.

The maximum funding for a junior fellowship based outside London will be £115,000 per year, with an overall maximum of £345,000 for a three-year award.

The maximum funding for a junior fellowship based within London will be £120,000 per year, with an overall maximum of £360,000 for a three-year award.

Senior Non-Clinical Fellowship

These are aimed at individuals who will have 4 – 10 years post-doctoral experience at the time of commencement of the grant.

The application should be for a term of between 36 and 48 months.

The maximum funding for a senior fellowship based outside London will be £140,000 per year, with an overall maximum of £560,000 for a four-year award.

The maximum funding for a senior fellowship based within London will be £145,000 per year, with an overall maximum of £580,000 for a four-year award.

For both Junior and Senior Fellowships

In considering length of post-doctoral experience and eligibility for the fellowship scheme, allowance will be made for career breaks, periods of part-time working, time spent in outside academic research, periods of parental or long-term sick leave, caring responsibilities, or other personal circumstances. Allowance can also be made for periods when the applicant was unable to work or their work was disrupted because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Any such periods of time when the applicant was not working full-time as a post-doctoral researcher should be specified clearly on the applicant's CV. As CVs will be passed to the reviewers of the summary application, detailed reasons for non-working/part-time working periods are not required.

We aim to support and accommodate flexible working arrangements for anyone successful in obtaining a fellowship, if the employing institution agrees to the request.

If the applicant is unsure about their eligibility in terms of post-doctoral experience, or intends to undertake an award part-time, they should contact the Research Grants Team for advice before submitting their summary application.

At both levels, the application budget may include costs to support other staff, eg full or part-time technical support as necessary and appropriate. The Association will not contribute towards employment costs of the Laboratory Head or Sponsor.

All fellowship applications should include an amount of £1,500 per year towards the cost of attending conferences etc, which may be used as specified in the [Terms and Conditions for Fellowship Awards](#). This is intended to encourage the fellow to present their work and to attend meetings where they may build networks to enable future collaborative research. The cost of other relevant training courses or travel to collaborate with other researchers may also be included in the budget, but such costs must be distinct from the annual £1,500 for conference attendance.

COLLABORATORS

Where the viability of a project depends on collaboration/involvement with investigators not named as co-applicants, the exact role of the collaborator(s) should be clearly stated. Confirmation from each collaborator, indicating their willingness to participate, must be enclosed with the full application.

Applicants should remember to include any costs likely to be incurred when working with collaborator(s) within the allocated budget (separate from the costs of conference attendance).

OVERSEAS APPLICANTS

Fellowships must be based at a university or other *bona-fide* research institute in the UK and Ireland. At the time of the application, the applicant may be based elsewhere.

The MND Association will not impose any criteria on the nationality of the applicant. However, if an applicant is not a UK citizen, they will probably require a visa to take up a fellowship. It will be the responsibility of the host institute to support the applicant in this process. Researchers to be supported by MND Association grants are eligible for the UK Global Talent Visa.

SUMMARY APPLICATION

Applicants need to make an initial approach, by completing an online summary application indicating:

- the relevance to *classical* MND (i.e. ALS, PMA, PLS. Other conditions will only be considered if a direct benefit to MND research can be demonstrated)
- the aim(s) of the work
- an outline of the proposed work plan
- how the study fits in with other work in the laboratory/institute
- approximate cost and time scale
- the potential clinical and/or translational relevance of the research

The online summary application form will be linked from the MND Association website in the 'for researchers' section and **will be made available from mid/late March until the**

published closing data (late April/early May). There may also be a link from the Association's home page. The Fellowship Grant Terms and Conditions, Research Strategy, Research Governance Overview and the Guide to Completing the Online Summary Application Form are also available online.

It is essential to be familiar with the information provided in these important documents when applying for a fellowship award.

TIMING OF APPLICATIONS

The deadline date for summary applications for the next round of grants is normally the last Friday in April or the first Friday in May. Following review by members of the Biomedical Research Advisory Panel (BRAP), full applications will be invited in early June, with a deadline for submission in mid-July. The BRAP meeting to consider invited full applications is during the following October. The most promising candidates will be interviewed in late October or early November. Recommendations for funding will be considered by our Board of Trustees in late November. The earliest start date for any awarded fellowship is the following February.

INFORMATION ON COMPLETING THE SUMMARY APPLICATION FORM

Prior to completing the form, please read the important information below (this page will also appear as the first page of the form).

DATA PROTECTION

All information provided will be entered into our grants management database and used solely for the purpose of the grants application process (please see our [Biomedical Research Governance Overview](#) section 3). When a grant has been awarded, contact details will also be added to the Association's contact database for the purpose of providing you with MND Association information only, e.g. deadline dates for future grant rounds, symposium details, and any other relevant information. (There will be the opportunity to opt out of receiving such communication.)

Continued on next page.

COMPLETING THE FORM

To enable our records to be as accurate as possible, it is important to provide all relevant information requested as well as completing the mandatory fields, marked with an asterisk. Please read and use the *Guide to Completing the Online Summary Application Form* when filling in the form.

The form consists of ten pages. Please work your way through these using the **previous** and **next** buttons (at the bottom of each page) to navigate through the form. **Any formatted text, diagrams or tables etc will need to be prepared offline and uploaded on the attachments page** (there is provision for two uploads with a maximum of 10MB each). It is not possible to insert these documents direct into the form itself.

All applicants for Fellowship awards must submit a CV with a publication list and a letter of support from the future Laboratory Head. If the applicant is moving laboratory, even within the same institute, there should also be a letter of recommendation from the current or most recent previous Laboratory Head. The CV and letter(s) should be either word or PDF documents. DO NOT upload these with your summary application but send by email to research.grants@mndassociation.org.

Further information is provided as you complete the form by clicking on the '?' sign for help and information on individual questions.

The form consists of the following pages:

1) Applicant Details 2) Institute Details 3) Co-applicant Details 4) Collaboration Details 5) Project Details 6) Summary Details 7) Estimated Costs 8) Attachments (figures, tables, pictures and publications) 9) Declaration 10) Applicant Feedback Survey (optional)

The step prior to submission is to review the application (at the bottom of the feedback page) and make revisions if needed. Once it has been submitted, it will not be possible to edit the form further.

AFTER SUBMISSION

An initial automatic acknowledgement, together with a copy of the form will be sent via email.

If you do not receive this email, please contact us at research.grants@mndassociation.org. A further acknowledgement will be sent to the lead applicant a few days after the closing date for submissions, once MND Association staff have had time to check all applications for eligibility.

After consultation with its Biomedical Research Advisory Panel, the MND Association will normally respond within six weeks, to advise whether submission of a full application is appropriate or not. The closing date for full (formal) applications will be at least four weeks from the date of communication.

(These guidelines may be subject to change, please check online before completing the Online Summary Application Form)