

ECTRIMS-MEDEN FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION & APPLICATION GUIDE

Updated July 2025

PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The MOGAD Eugene Devic European Network (MEDEN) is a European group of clinicians and scientists who have set up research collaborations and meetings focused on neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorders and myelin oligodendrocyte antibody associated disorder. This fellowship programme will enable the awarded applicant to gain research experience either in a priority project at a MEDEN site, or on a separate project as proposed by the applicant.

Targeted project for 2025 and 2026:

A cross-sectional analysis of the European MEDEN NMOSD and MOGAD patients.

KEY INFORMATION

- For scientists and physicians of any nationality holding an MD, PhD, ScD, or equivalent, to provide mentored research training related to MS.
- 1-year funded fellowships
- Citizens of any country are eligible to apply to this programme. However, research must be undertaken within an institution in Europe that is either part of the MEDEN network or otherwise approved by the MEDEN Steering Committee.
- Research can be related to the targeted project for 2026, or another project related to this fellowship category.
- The application requires documents from the candidate, the proposed mentor, and the proposed host training institute, as well as other professional referees.
- Successful fellows and their mentors will be asked to provide progress and financial accounting reports at the end of each year.
- At the time of application, applicants should not have worked in any capacity at the same institution and/or under the same mentor as proposed in the fellowship application.

- The same mentor may not be proposed in more than 1 application per cycle, all fellowship categories combined.
- Institutes will be limited to 3 awards total among all fellowship categories and only 1 award per category.
- Application period: 1 August through 1 December 2025

PROGRAMME TERMS

Applicant eligibility:

- Scientists and physicians who hold or are candidates for an MD, PhD, ScD or equivalent professional degree are eligible.
- Applicants must have received their advanced degree(s) prior to the start of the fellowship.
- At the time of application, applicants should not have worked in any capacity at the same institution and/or under the same mentor as proposed in the fellowship application.
- It is recommended that applicants 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 under 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, research training must be undertaken in a European laboratory or clinic.
- Applicants and their mentors must affirm that there will be no language barriers that will impede the training experience.
- Applicants are restricted to 1 application per annual cycle, across all fellowship categories.

Research Plan and Mentor

- The ECTRIMS-MEDEN Fellowship is a research experience with a focus on a targeted project in the field of NMOSD/MOGAD. Applicants 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.

- The same mentor may not be proposed in more than 1 application per cycle, all categories combined.
 - If more than one applicant indicates the same mentor, the mentor will be contacted prior to the application review to select 1 application to go forward to the evaluation stage.

ECTRIMS strongly recommends that mentors limit their engagement to 1 applicant only per application cycle, in order to avoid pulling out of otherwise completed applications and leaving applicants with no mentor support.

Fellowship Location

- The fellowship period will be spent in a European research laboratory or clinic focused on problems associated with MS and/or related diseases. Proposed host institutions that are not part of the list below must be approved in advance of submission by the MEDEN Steering Committee by contacting the ECTRIMS Secretariat.

MEDEN network institutes include:

- **Lyon, France:** Hospices Civils de Lyon, Sclérose en plaques, pathologies de la myéline et neuroinflammation
 - **Oxford, UK:** John Radcliffe Hospital, Department of Clinical Neurology
 - **Berlin, Germany:** Charité-Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Experimental and Clinical Research Center (ECRC)
 - **Verona, Italy:** Neurology Unit, Department of Neurosciences, Biomedicine and Movement Sciences, University of Verona
 - **Barcelona, Spain:** Multiple Sclerosis Centre of Catalonia (Cemcat), Vall d'Hebron Barcelona Hospital Campus, Neurology-Neuroimmunology Department
 - **London, UK:** Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, Neuroimmunology Centre
- For fellowship applicants who are European citizens, the laboratory or clinic should be located in a different European country from that of the applicant's citizenship.
 - For all applicants, the fellowship must take place at a different institute and in a different country than the fellow's current placement. These conditions are in place to ensure the programme's goal of cross-border exchange. Exceptions may be considered under special circumstances, which must be detailed in the application process.
 - The applicant must determine in advance the fellowship location and identify a proposed mentor, all of which will be considered along with the applicant's own qualifications and research plan in the review and selection process.

- Institutes will be limited to 3 awards total among all fellowship categories and only 1 award per category.

Term

- Fellowships of a 1-year duration will be available.
- In most circumstances, fellowships will be initiated to coincide with the fall academic year initiation in September or October but can at any time following the award notification in April that is agreed between host institution, mentor, and fellow.
- The fellowship must be initiated (all paperwork submitted to the administrator; move to training venue complete; work actively beginning) within 6 months of the receipt of an award letter from ECTRIMS. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the MEDEN Steering Committee and the ECTRIMS Fellowship Committee.

Support

- ECTRIMS will provide a stipend of 55,000.00 EUR for a 1-year training programme.
- ECTRIMS will also provide economy transportation from the successful candidate's home location to and from the location of the host institute. Travel expenses for family will not be provided. Transportation expenses will be reimbursed directly to the fellow, upon submission of receipts to ECTRIMS.
- ECTRIMS funding will be paid directly 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.
- The ECTRIMS award must be used by the institution to pay the fellow's stipend ("salary") at the institutionally 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.
 - The expected fellow's total salary, as well as the expected fellow's total social benefits costs per year, must be indicated by the host 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.
 - If the annual or prorated ECTRIMS award is not sufficient for the total required costs of the fellow (salary plus benefits), additional sources of funding that will be used to cover the total costs must be listed.

- It is expected that the research activities to be undertaken at the host institution will be supported by the host institution/mentor. No additional support for equipment, work materials, consumables, books, journal subscriptions, etc. should be paid for by the fellowship funds.
- 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-MEDEN Fellowship is intended to be a full-time research and research training experience; however up to 10% of the fellow's time may be spent in teaching or clinical care not associated with any research project or additional course work, as deemed appropriate by fellow and mentor.
- Fellows may be asked to present the work related to their fellowship project and funding at MEDEN meetings during the term of the fellowship.

Changes in the Fellowship Programme Agreement

- It is anticipated that the entire training period will be undertaken with the host institution and mentor as planned. However, in special circumstances, ECTRIMS will consider requests to transfer the fellowship to a new mentor or institution. Authorisation 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 approved host institution by ECTRIMS.
- An ECTRIMS fellowship is awarded to an individual and is not transferable to a different fellow at the host institution.
- ECTRIMS must be notified of early termination of a fellowship and unexpended funds at the host institution must be returned to ECTRIMS.
- ECTRIMS may revoke or terminate a fellowship early if the fellow is unable to carry out the training as planned, a mentor requests termination because of unsatisfactory performance by the fellow, or in the event of cause established by due process of law or regulations or as a consequence of an institutional review committee's determination of fraud or malfeasance.

Reporting

- Fellows and their mentors are required to provide a report of the training experience and a financial report of expenditures at its conclusion, due within 30 days after the completion of the training programme. Forms for completing the reporting will be provided by ECTRIMS.
 - Reports must include a summary of the training, along with accounting information from the mentor or host institution (form provided by ECTRIMS) of how funds provided for the fellow were allocated 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-MEDEN Fellowship programme for its support.

Post-Fellowship Follow-Up

- After the training period, it is expected that the fellow will return to their original home institution for employment, or will obtain employment in a different institution. Post-fellowship career plans should be detailed as part of the application process.
- ECTRIMS fellows are requested to maintain contact with the ECTRIMS Secretariat, so that post-training career paths and publications can be followed with the goal of informing overall programme evaluation.

Application Process

ECTRIMS-MEDEN Fellowships will be awarded in a competitive review process conducted by members of a review board comprised of representatives of ECTRIMS and MEDEN. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

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

Part 1: Documents provided by the applicant through the online application system

All documents should be submitted as a PDF.

1. A completed online application, available through the ECTRIMS website;
2. A complete curriculum vitae for the applicant including a bibliography of any relevant publications;
3. Applicant's career plans (not to exceed 1 page)
4. A research project description (not to exceed 2 pages in length), including figures, tables and references
5. A research project summary (abstract) (not to exceed 250 words), which can be included in the document uploaded for point 4 as an additional page
6. Proof of knowledge of the training venue's local language (e.g. language certificate, personal letter of confirmation).

Part 2: Supporting Materials Provided Directly to ECTRIMS by Others

All documents should be submitted as a PDF.

The following additional items must be submitted electronically to the ECTRIMS Secretariat (secretariat@ectrims.eu) by 1 December 2025. These should be submitted separately by their respective authors 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 their letters.

1. From the proposed mentor:

- Letter of endorsement of the applicant, with special reference to any interactions they have had with the applicant and to the proposed research plan.
- Current abbreviated curriculum vitae and bibliography (no more than 5 pages) for the proposed mentor. The "Biographical Sketch" form provided in the online fellowship application system should be used. The applicant is responsible for forwarding this form to the proposed mentor for their use.

2. From the host institution:

- Letter of support from the department chair (or other relevant institutional official) at the proposed host institution accepting the applicant as a fellow, should a fellowship be awarded.
- Institutional certification accepting the terms of the ECTRIMS fellowship regarding the funding payments and the funding amount. The necessary form, "Acceptance of

ECTRIMS Payment Rules”, is available for download from the online application system. The applicant is responsible for forwarding this form to the proposed host institute for completion and submission to ECTRIMS.

3. From other referees:

- A total of 3 letters of reference from professionals acquainted with the applicant, from their home institution or elsewhere, that addresses the applicant’s qualities and likelihood for success in their chosen MS field and career track.
 - One of these letters should be submitted from the proposed mentor for the applicant.
 - If relevant, applicants should include a letter from the home institution indicating that the fellow will be welcomed back to the institution once the fellowship period has concluded and describing the nature of the position available.

Note: Applicants should not arrange for more than the 3 requested letters of recommendation. There is no benefit to applicants who provide supplementary letters of recommendation.

Final Reminder and Recap

The applicant's CV/bibliography and research project summary and description are to be submitted by the applicant using the online application system by 1 December 2025.

Mentor CV and support letter, as well as institutional and referee support letters and forms, are to be submitted **separately** by the mentor and/or institution as confidential documents to the ECTRIMS Secretariat (secretariat@ectrims.eu) by 1 December 2025.

Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Notification of ECTRIMS Award Deliberations

The MEDEN review committee will evaluate all proposals after the application period. Notification of the review outcomes will be made by the end of March 2026, to facilitate logistics involved in relocation by the following autumn.

For questions and further information, please contact the ECTRIMS Secretariat at: secretariat@ectrims.eu.