

ECTRIMS POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Programme Description and Application Guide

Updated July 2026

ECTRIMS offers a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship for young neuroscientists to facilitate their conduct of and training in basic, clinical or applied research on the topic of multiple sclerosis (MS) and related diseases. The goal of the programme is to maximise the exchange of information and to help grow the pool of well-trained research scientists focused on the treatment and research of MS and related diseases.

KEY INFORMATION

- For scientists and physicians of any nationality holding an MD, PhD, ScD, or equivalent, to provide mentored research training related to MS. Qualifying degree must be obtained by the time of application.
- 1- or 2-year funded fellowships in a European laboratory or clinic.
- Citizens of any country are eligible to apply to this programme. However, research training must be undertaken in a European laboratory or clinic.
- Research must be related to MS, in any relevant specialty or field.
- 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 application requires documents from the candidate, the proposed mentor, and the proposed host training institute, as well as other professional referees.
- The applicant is responsible for collecting all supporting documents and submitting them through the online application system. All documents must be submitted as PDFs.
- Fellowships must commence before the end of the calendar year in which the fellowship has been awarded.
- Successful fellows and their mentors will be asked to provide progress and financial accounting reports at the end of each year.

Application deadline: 1 December 2026

- **NOTE:** Institutes are not limited to any number of applications, however the same mentor may not be proposed in more than 1 application per cycle, all categories combined. Per award cycle, institutes will be limited to 3 awards total among all fellowship categories and only 1 award within any given category.

I. 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 obtained their advanced degree(s) by the time of application.
- 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 five years of postdoctoral experience beyond their final degree (PhD, MD, ScD, BSc 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 categories.

Research Plan and Mentor

- The ECTRIMS Postdoctoral 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 or related disease research topic (basic, applied or clinical, in any relevant specialty area) will be considered.
- 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.

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.
- 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 any given category.

However, institutes are not limited to the number of applications submitted in any given category or application cycle, if they all have different proposed mentors

Term

- The ECTRIMS Postdoctoral Research Fellowship has a duration of 1 or 2 years.
- In most circumstances, fellowships will be initiated to coincide with the fall academic year initiation in September or October but can begin 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 programme administrator; move to training site complete; work actively beginning) before the end of the calendar year in which the fellowship is awarded. Any exceptions to this must be approved by the ECTRIMS Fellowship Committee.

Funding Support

- The fellowship will provide annual funds of 55,000.00 EUR for all fellows.
- 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. A stipend will be paid out by the host institution to the fellow according to the institution's own payment policies and schedules.
- ECTRIMS funding must be used by the institution to pay the fellow's stipend (or salary) at the institutionally appropriate rate for the fellow's stage of training. Should there be any remaining funds, the remainder of the funds 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 salary plus benefits exceeds the amount provided by the ECTRIMS funds, it is the responsibility of the institution/ mentor to supplement the ECTRIMS funds to cover the entire required costs.
 - If the annual or prorated ECTRIMS funding 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 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 spent on teaching or clinical care not associated with any research project or additional course work, as deemed appropriate by fellow and mentor.
- The anticipated research project must be described in detail by the applicant and mentor in their proposals to ECTRIMS. See below: **Supporting documentation, Part 1, Point 4.**

Changes in the Fellowship Agreement

- It is anticipated that the entire fellowship period will be undertaken within the host institution and with the identified mentor as planned. However, in special circumstances, ECTRIMS will consider requests to transfer the fellowship to a new European 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 host institution by ECTRIMS.
- The ECTRIMS Postdoctoral 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, with any unused funds returned to ECTRIMS by the host institution.
- ECTRIMS may revoke or terminate a fellowship early if the fellow is unable to carry out the research 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 as a consequence of an institutional review committee's determination of fraud or malfeasance.

Reporting

- Fellows and their mentors are required to provide annual progress and financial reports at the end of year one, as well as final progress and financial reports at the conclusion of the fellowship period. All reporting forms will be provided by ECTRIMS.

All progress reports will be kept in confidence at ECTRIMS to protect proprietary information before it is published.

- Fellows and their mentors will also be required to respond to a short “lived experience” survey (online) at the end of year one and at the conclusion of the fellowship period.

→ End of Year 1:

- Financial report from host institute must include 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). Financial reports are due within 30 days after the completion of Year 1.

- Short “lived experience” survey taken by both mentor and fellow (online link to be issued towards the end of the programme)
- Fellow to write a short mid-programme progress report (form to be provided by ECTRIMS), to be submitted to their mentor for comment before the fellow submits the completed report to ECTRIMS.. Mid-programme progress reports are due 30 days prior to the end of the first-year period and should be received at the ECTRIMS Secretariat prior to initiation of the second year of training.

→ **End of Fellowship:**

- Financial report from host institute must include 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). Financial reports are due within 30 days after the completion of the fellowship.
- Short “lived experience” survey taken by both mentor and fellow (online link to be issued towards the end of the programme)
- Fellow to write a full narrative report (form to be provided by ECTRIMS) including a summary of training, accepted up to 6 months after the conclusion of the fellowship, to be submitted to their mentor for comment before the fellow submits the completed report to ECTRIMS.
- Copies of any published papers emerging from the work should be submitted as they appear.
- **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 their original home institution for employment, to the extent possible. 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.

II. APPLICATION PROCESS

ECTRIMS Postdoctoral Research Fellowships will be awarded in a competitive review process conducted by members of the ECTRIMS Fellowship Committee. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- candidate's qualifications, including education, previous employment history, current employment responsibilities, self-stated goals of training, and an evaluation of the candidate's career plans; as well as their commitment to collaboration and knowledge exchange or transfer;
- 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.

Supporting Documentation

The applicant is responsible for collecting all supporting documents listed in Parts 1 and 2 below and submitting them through the online application system.

All documents must be submitted as PDFs.

Part 1: Documents provided by the applicant

All documents should be submitted as a PDF.

1. A completed online application, available through the ECTRIMS website
2. An abbreviated curriculum vitae (CV) and bibliography of the applicant **via the form "Biographical Sketch" provided by ECTRIMS, available for download in the online fellowship application system**
3. Applicant's statement of intent, to include goals and career plans upon completion of the fellowship, as well as how the research project will be applied in future work. **The "Statement of Intent" form provided in the online fellowship application system should be used.**

4. A research project description (not to exceed 5 pages – including figures, tables and references). **The “Research Plan” form provided in the online fellowship application system should be used.**
5. Confirmation of the applicant's ability to communicate in the local language used at the host institution (certifying exam results or personal declaration not to exceed 1 page).

Part 2: Further Supporting Materials

Applicants are responsible for forwarding the necessary forms to the proposed mentor and host institution for their use.

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 found in the online fellowship application system should be used to provide this information.** 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 Head of the Department (or other relevant institutional official) at the proposed host institution accepting the applicant as a fellow, should a fellowship be awarded.
 - Note: If the proposed mentor is the Head of the Department at the proposed host institution, only 1 letter of endorsement/support is necessary.
- 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:

- Up to 2 additional 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.

Note: Applicants should not arrange for more than 3 letters of recommendation (1 from the proposed mentor and up to 2 from additional referees). There is no benefit to applicants who provide supplementary letters of recommendation.

Final Reminder and Recap

All supporting documents are to be submitted by the applicant using the online application system by 1 December 2026.

Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

Notification of ECTRIMS Award Deliberations

The ECTRIMS Fellowship Committee will review all proposals after the application period. Notification of the review outcomes will be made by the end of March 2027, to facilitate logistics involved in relocation by the following autumn.

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