

HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

Guidance for applicants seeking awards made by the Chief Scientist Office, Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates.

The Guidance has the following sections:

- 1) Background**
- 2) Financial Support**
- 3) Completing the Application Form**
- 4) Making an Application**
- 5) Assessment of Applications**

all of which should be read thoroughly by all potential applicants to ensure that the form is completed correctly.

1) BACKGROUND

This Scottish Research Fellowship is designed to build future research capacity in Huntington's Disease. It is a collaboration between the Scottish Government Chief Scientist Office, the Scottish Huntington's Association and the RS Macdonald Charitable Trust.

The Scheme is subject to competitive entry and will help nurture a cadre of researchers capable of going on to lead development in their discipline by providing the opportunity to undertake a PhD. The scheme complements an on-going commitment to develop the research and development capacity of the NHS and is structured to combine opportunities for research training and supervised leadership of a research project.

Who can apply?

The aim of the fellowship is to significantly improve the evidence base for the clinical and psychosocial care of people living with Huntington's disease and therefore this fellowship will be of interest to applicants from all medical and scientific backgrounds.

The fellowship will be of particular interest to those who have already worked or wish to develop their career in neuro-degenerative disorders. Applications are welcome from individuals with a social science background who may currently be working in a non-health setting.

Applications will be assessed by peer review and considered by an expert panel who will recommend funding based on scientific excellence and potential benefit (both in terms of the applicant and the NHS).

Supervision arrangements and environment

The relevance of each supervisor to the studentship and details of how the team will share the supervisory duties should be listed. This section should describe the support that will be available for the student, training and skills they will achieve. It should refer to the environment within the specific research group and also any wider departmental/divisional systems.

Medical applicants must consult their Postgraduate Medical Dean in respect of their proposed clinical training prior to submitting the application and must ensure that the appropriate reference form has been completed by their Postgraduate Medical or Dental Deanery.

Residence Eligibility Requirements

Residence eligibility is required for the duration of the award. Overseas applicants who do not hold right of residence or settled status in the United Kingdom should discuss these arrangements with their proposed supervisor.

Tenure of award

The duration of the Award is up to 3 years, and successful applicants must be in a position to begin the award no later than January 2016.

Awards within the scheme are made to individuals and 'hosted' by an institution nominated by the award holder (the Grantholder). The Grantholder must be in Scotland and awards will not be transferable out with Scotland. Any transfer of the award to another institution within Scotland must be discussed and agreed in advance with CSO and transfer salary and supervisory arrangements must be agreed between the new and old Grantholders. Appropriate institutions include universities or medical/dental schools and might include Research Council Institutes and Units, Charity-funded Research Institutes or other approved academic analogues with linked commitments to an NHS Organisation. Applicants are expected to make their own arrangements for acceptance in the nominated grantholding institution.

Applicants are advised to seek out a centre that offers good career development and research training opportunities as well as providing the most appropriate environment for the particular research they wish to undertake. The reason for the choice of centre should be made clear in the application. It should be noted that the scheme will not fund work overseas and that costs must remain within the limits described below.

Basic salary costs for the duration of the Award will be met by CSO at an appropriate level for the applicant. It is recognised however that clinical candidates may wish to retain some NHS clinical duties to maintain their skills and keep abreast of developments. The award therefore allows for up to 2 sessions per week of clinical duties (in practice this is often one clinic session plus one on-call session). Additional locum clinical duties may also be undertaken however these will not be funded through the award. In the event of an early progression to CCT for Fellows in the later stages of specialist training additional salary costs as a result will not be met by CSO.

Part time working arrangements

Applicants may wish to undertake their award on a part-time basis. The cost of the award should be requested on a pro rata basis (not exceeding the equivalent of 3 years full-time). Applicants who wish to undertake the scheme on a part time basis should consider carefully how they will manage the award and the time taken to obtain a CCT.

Review of progress

Award holders will be required to provide progress reports at 6, 12 and 24 months during their award, with continuation dependent upon satisfactory progress. A final report will also be required. The agreed term of the award should provide for the preparation of annual and final reports. In addition award holders may be invited to meet with CSO at 12 months into the award and attend any events organised by CSO for the cadre of Fellows.

2) FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Funding will normally cover:

- a) reimbursement of the basic personal salary (not out-of-hours bands) of the award holder (including superannuation and national insurance), with increments, based on an appropriate point for the individual on the relevant pay scale.
- c) Research costs up to £30k over three years (ie up to £10k per annum for three years or pro-rata for part-time awards) to cover the costs of the research. NHS Service Support Costs will also need to be estimated separately and stated within the application.
- d) Fees for registration for a PhD (at appropriate home student rates at the relevant institution)
- e) Additional **research** training costs up to £2000 where appropriate. Training in clinical skills, even where related to the proposed research, will not be funded. Costs for attending conferences should not be applied for under this heading as these should be applied for by successful Fellows and will be considered on a case-by-case basis

In addition, if the proposed research is a trial falling with the scope of the Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trial) Regulations 2004, the following research costs may be included

- Authorisation fees and charges.
- Pharmacy costs – if the production of placebos or other activities can conveniently be undertaken in an NHS hospital pharmacy along with normal routine pharmacy preparation, storage and distribution, without incurring significantly greater costs than normal handling of other medicines, then they should be classed as NHS support costs. However, if the activities including the preparation of placebos involve additional formulation (e.g. placebo injections) and/or production under standards of Good Manufacturing Practice in licensed premises or otherwise with significantly greater costs than normal handling, then they should be regarded as research costs and included in this heading.

Justification for these costs should be fully provided in the application – **applications containing blanket costings for research costs will not be accepted**. Good Clinical Practice compliance and the cost associated with other activities e.g. pharmacovigilance, will normally be expected to be met through NHS trials management arrangements. Any exceptional costs falling outwith the above allowable research costs should be fully documented and explained.

Costing your Application

You are advised to seek guidance from the Research Grants/Contracts or Finance Office of the proposed Grantholder before completing the financial section of the application form.

3) THE APPLICATION FORM

Font Size and Format

Your application should be typed throughout, using a clear monospaced or San-Serif font (such as Courier, Helvetica or Arial). You must use a typeface which is not smaller than 10 point (12 point if you choose a narrow typeface). **Any applications which contain typewritten material smaller than this will be returned to you unprocessed.**

If you are filling in the application form electronically, please bear in mind that some cases boxes will expand to fit the text, however you must stay within any specified word or page limits. It is essential that you check your application very carefully before submitting it to us to make sure that all text you have entered is visible on both the electronic and printed versions.

Project Proposal (Section 13)

This should be separated into the following sections and sections i to vii must not exceed 4 pages . Please use sub-headings as appropriate

- i Introduction (citing key references (see vii), searches used etc)
- ii Results of any pilot studies
- iii Aims
- iv Research questions
- v Plan, methods
- vi Timetable
- vii Relevance of the research to the NHS and potential patient benefit (If the proposed research is lab-based, then this section is particularly important)
- viii Key references

Financial information (Section 17)

This section of the application MUST be completed by the Research Grants/Contracts or Finance Office.

Costs should be apportioned by Financial Year as operated of April-March by CSO and additional columns added if required.

Requests for salaries should be based on actual costs at the time of application; increases for inflation should not be included. Salary requests should take account of expected increments in future years. The salary requested for the award holder should be at the level appropriate to the research experience and responsibilities of the individual and must be in accordance with the salary scales and terms and conditions of service applying at the employing institution. Please ensure that any anticipated advancement in salary, promotion and incremental progression are taken into account when identifying a starting salary. (You should also ensure that progression for any anticipated promotions over the tenure of the award is included in the application).

Completing the Form

You are required to provide all the necessary information within the space provided. All questions should be completed or marked "not applicable".

Applications should be signed by the appropriate administrative officials of the proposed institutions to confirm that all of the financial details shown on the application form, including the salaries, are correct.

All fellowship applications should be signed by the appropriate administrative authority (e.g. the institution's finance officer) and the Head of Department of the prospective host institution. In signing the officials are indicating their formal approval of the application, their willingness to offer

an appointment to the individual (if successful) for the tenure of the award subject to their normal employment practices, their approval of the salaries sought, and the acceptance of the CSO Standard Conditions of Grant which are available from the CSO website.

Declarations (Personal Data)

All personal and other data on applications, whether funded or not, will be stored on the CSO Applicant monitoring database. As well as aiding the internal processing of applications CSO may make public in any form summary information about the application and any subsequent award including the title and abstract of research as it sees fit.

By signing the form, applicants are confirming that CSO may hold and process, by computer or otherwise, all personal information supplied with the application.

4) MAKING AN APPLICATION

The application form is made up of a number of different parts:

Part A	To be completed by you. This also includes the section detailing the support requested. Part A must be signed by the Head of Department and appropriate administrative official (e.g. finance officer/unit administrator) of the proposed grantholder, and the sponsor of the research. Section 15a must be completed and signed by your supervisor(s).
Part B	Supporting statement from your current Head of Department.
Part C (Medical Applicants)	This must be completed by your Postgraduate Medical Dean
Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (Part D)	This information will not be made available to referees. Separate forms should be completed by the applicant and supervisor(s)
Nomination of Independent Expert Reviewers (Part E)	Please nominate three independent expert reviewers from whom the panel will try to secure comments of at least one.
Research Details Proforma (Part F)	Applicants are required to complete this form, which is used to provide information on successful applications to CSO partner agencies

It is your responsibility to co-ordinate the submission of all parts of your application and ensure that the **signed original** (incorporating Parts A-F), along with **8 copies of Parts A-C** are sent to

Mrs Karen Ford, Research Administrator, Chief Scientist Office, GE14, St Andrews House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG to be received no later than

Friday 20th March 2015

A copy of Part A only should also be emailed to Karen.Ford@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Faxed, late or incomplete applications will not be considered in the competition. Proof of postage will not be accepted as evidence of receipt. Receipt of applications will be acknowledged. Extensions will not be granted so please ensure you allow sufficient time to obtain all of the necessary signatures before the deadline.

5) ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

Applications are assessed by a process of peer review, whereby experts from the research and user communities assess the quality of the proposed training and environment; the potential of the applicant; and the scientific excellence and patient benefit of the proposal. Short-listed candidates will be invited to interview by the Selection Panel. Comments from the expert referees assist the Panel in reaching a decision. The selection panel will consist of representatives from the funders, one or more experts in the field of Huntington's Disease, and a lay representative

Outcome of the Assessment

Applicants will be informed as soon as a final decision has been taken on their application. Candidates who are interviewed will usually be notified of the decision as soon as possible after funding arrangements have been confirmed. The decision of the Panel is final and no appeals will be considered.

Interview Dates

Interviews will take place at St Andrews House, Edinburgh on a date (likely to be during May 2015) which will be notified when your application is acknowledged.

The Applicant

The Panel will look for evidence of commitment to an academic career. Supporting evidence will include productivity, e.g. any publications from previous research. The Panel will also look for evidence that the applicant has the potential to become a leader in their field and to lead a research team. Applications where the applicant wishes to gain a PhD purely for the purposes of career progression are unlikely to be successful.

The Project

The Panel will wish to fund the highest application both in terms of the individual and the project. The Panel will seek to judge the scientific merit of the research taking into account its originality and importance and judging the extent to which it will increase knowledge relevant to improving treatment options in Huntington's Disease. They will be interested in the translational aspects of the research and how it will benefit patients. The methodology will require to be convincing and appropriate. The Panel will take into account the extent to which the project has been initiated by the individual rather than their supervisor(s).

It is likely that the project will undergo further development if and when the applicant commences the award and so a fully described protocol is not required. However, the Panel will look for evidence at this early stage that the work is achievable, feasible and deliverable within the timeframe and that it can be pursued alongside any training and/or clinical commitments and the information provided should provide such evidence. The panel will give greater weight to a more preliminary protocol where it is clear that the applicant has been heavily involved in writing than to a fully described protocol where the applicants involvement is less obvious

Supervision

The panel will look for confirmation that the supervision for the candidate and the research is of high quality and is able to cover all aspects of the training and supervisory requirements of the individual.

The Research Centre(s)

The Panel will wish to judge the standing of the proposed Centre(s) in the field. You are encouraged to describe your breadth of experience in centres other than the one you currently work in. If you are proposing to remain at a centre where you have already spent a year or more, you should explain your reasons for doing so.