

# MENTOR-BASED FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM IN REHABILITATION

## MENTOR-BASED POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM IN REHABILITATION RESEARCH

The Society welcomes applications for support of mentors and institutions that provide training of postdoctoral fellows in research related to multiple sclerosis rehabilitation which may serve to advance the mission of the Society.

This program provides support for a mentor-institution combination which is responsible for the recruitment, selection, and training of postdoctoral fellows to pursue a career in rehabilitation research applied to multiple sclerosis and similar disorders. The mentor should be an established and active researcher in MS or a related field. The fellowship will provide for support of a postdoctoral fellow who will work closely with the mentor. The mentor and fellow may come from a variety of different fields including medicine, physical, occupational, or speech therapy, psychology, rehabilitation engineering, nursing, or other fields. The research training may focus on fundamental as well as applied studies but must be relevant to both rehabilitation of individuals with MS and to the Society's mission.

In order to submit a proposal for research support, investigators must first register with our apply online site ([www.mssocietyapplyonline.org](http://www.mssocietyapplyonline.org)) and complete a pre-application. Staff of the Research Programs Department will review the pre-application to determine whether the research plan is appropriate and relevant to our goals.

### GENERAL

The fellow selected by the mentor should hold a Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent degree. The program of training to be supported should enhance the likelihood that the trainee will: (a) perform meaningful and independent research relevant to multiple sclerosis rehabilitation and (b) obtain a suitable position which will enable him or her to do so. This award is made to a mentor-institution combination and not directly to the postdoctoral fellow. The award is designed to emphasize opportunities for new research training and broadening scientific competence of the postdoctoral fellow.

### ELIGIBILITY

**Mentor and Institution:** The mentor must hold a faculty appointment at an accredited institution and have adequate research funding and support to provide an appropriate training environment for the postdoctoral fellow. It is the responsibility of the mentor and institution to recruit and select one or more appropriate postdoctoral fellows and to provide an appropriate program of training and experience leading to independence in the conduct of rehabilitation research in multiple sclerosis. Once postdoctoral candidates are selected, their credentials will be submitted to the Society for final review and approval.

**Previous Training of Postdoctoral Fellows:** Fellows with 0-36 months of previous postdoctoral training may apply for this award. Applicants must hold, or be candidates for, a Ph.D., M.D., or equivalent degree. However, a fellowship under this program cannot be activated for a doctoral candidate until the Society has received written notification from a university or professional school that an appropriate doctoral degree has been awarded.

**Citizenship:** U.S. citizenship is not required either for mentors or postdoctoral fellows working at institutions in the United States. Mentors and institutions outside the United States may apply to this program but are requested to submit dual applications to governmental granting agencies and/or other non-profit funding agencies in their own country.

### REVIEW OF APPLICATIONS

**Timing:** The Society utilizes a Web-based facility for the submission of Mentor Based Postdoctoral Fellowship applications. All applicants are required to use this facility for the completion of their proposals. In order to submit a proposal for research support, investigators must first register with our apply online site ([www.mssocietyapplyonline.org](http://www.mssocietyapplyonline.org)) and complete a pre-application. Staff of the Research Programs Department will review the pre-application to determine whether the research plan is appropriate and relevant to our goals.

Completed applications, including all required supporting documents, received by the Society by the August deadline will be considered for activation on or after the following July.

**Application:** The mentor and organization are considered jointly to be the "applicant" and must provide: (1) a description of the facilities and environment available for training; (2) the academic qualifications of the proposed mentor; (3) a brief account of the nature of the ongoing research and training activities within the mentor's organization as they relate to the program of

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training proposed, including research projects available to the fellow; (4) a meaningful description of the proposed program of training, including the nature of the mentor/fellow relationship; and (5) an exact and itemized statement of all financial requirements, (under the limitations noted below). Supplemental grants are rarely made to cover costs not specifically requested in the original application.

In addition to the above, the following elements should be incorporated in the application:

- Specific selection criteria for the postdoctoral fellow(s) to be trained
- Specification of the discipline(s) of the postdoctoral fellow(s) to be trained
- An emphasis on training for a career in a specific field of **rehabilitation research**
- A well articulated training plan with enough specifics to allow for meaningful evaluation
- The major focus of training to be on **rehabilitation research** with exposure to other fields
- Evidence of the track record of the mentor(s) in training postdoctoral fellows, peer-reviewed research and publication
- A description of how the different disciplines represented in the training program will work together
- A statement to the effect that the fellow(s) will write and submit at least one grant and one scientific article during the course of the award

**Selection of the Postdoctoral Fellow:** It will be the responsibility of the mentor to identify and recruit the postdoctoral fellow and to submit the fellow's qualifications to the Society for approval. Information concerning the proposed fellow is **not** to be submitted as part of the original application for support. Instead, the mentor will submit the fellow's qualifications at some point **after** the application for support has been submitted. The qualifications for the proposed fellow can be submitted either: 1) prior to notification of the outcome of the review of the mentor's application for support or 2) after the mentor's application for support has been approved. This will provide the mentor with ample time and opportunity to identify and recruit the most promising candidate. The Society will review the qualifications of the proposed fellow when this is submitted and provide an answer to the mentor in a timely fashion. Funds to support the postdoctoral fellow will not be released until the Society has reviewed and approved the mentor's selection.

### CONDITIONS OF AWARD

**Duration of Mentor-Based Award:** The mentor-based fellowship program will have a term of five years. However, the term of training of each postdoctoral fellow will be determined by the mentor based on the period of time required for the training needed for development of an independent investigator. Support for a given postdoctoral fellow will not usually be provided for more than three years. Each mentor-based fellowship award will provide sufficient funds to support a single postdoctoral fellow for five years. However, the mentor may divide this time in a variety of ways such as support for a single postdoctoral fellow for three years followed by a different fellow for two years. At its discretion, the awardee organization may consider requests for reinstatement of a fellowship interrupted by military service, maternity leave or other major events.

**Salary:** The salary levels requested for each year of the fellowship award must be based on the Society's salary scale listed below plus a maximum of 25% for fringe benefits. The amount of the salary must relate to the applicant's professional status and previous training and experience. The current annual salary for postdoctoral trainees is determined by the number of FULL years of relevant postdoctoral experience at the time of appointment. Relevant experience may include research experience, internship, or residency. No additional costs for fringe benefits beyond the standard 25% are allowed. The current salary scale for the Society's Postdoctoral Fellows is as follows:

#### Salary Scale for the National MS Society Postdoctoral Fellows

<u>Years of Relevant Postdoctoral Experience</u>	<u>Salary</u>
Less than 1	\$41,576
1	\$43,792
2	\$46,954
3	\$48,807
4	\$50,635
5	\$52,812
6	\$54,899
7 or more	\$57,361

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The salary paid to the fellow cannot be less than the above scale but can be higher if the institution opts to supplement the funds granted by the Society. The salary for each additional full year of salary support is the next level in the salary structure.

Supplementation or additional support to offset the cost of living may be provided by the awardees institution but must not require any significant obligation from the trainee. The extent of supplementation must be stated when the postdoctoral fellow is nominated, and the Society must be notified of subsequent additional support. Fellows may spend up to 20% of their time in teaching or clinical duties, if appropriate, for example to meet requirements for licensure or certification. However, it is the intent of this fellowship award that the majority of the fellow's time will be spent on the approved Society's training program.

Similarly, Society postdoctoral salaries may be used to supplement other support to reach the total amount recommended by Society Advisory Committees. Under no circumstances may the conditions of salary supplementation interfere with, detract from, or prolong the trainee's approved Society's training program.

Awards are paid to the training institution on a quarterly basis. The mentor, the grantee institution, and the fellow will each be advised by letter of the duration and amount of the award and will be provided with a budget that reflects the approved expenditures for each grant year. Payment of subsequent years is dependent upon a) availability of funds; and b) receipt, review, and approval by the Society of annual financial and research progress reports. Fellows are considered employees of the institution and their salaries are paid by the institution according to the payment policy and schedule of the institution.

**Relocation Costs:** Funds to cover the cost of travel to the institution where the training is provided are available but only for the fellow and not for family members or for transportation of household belongings. The relocation costs must be requested at the time the postdoctoral fellow is nominated and the amount requested must be comparable to economy class transportation by air or equivalent.

**Travel Allowance:** An allowance of no more than \$2,500 per year may be made to help institutions defray the costs of travel for the postdoctoral fellow to one or more scientific meetings.

**Mentoring Expenses:** An allowance of no more than \$10,000 per year may be made to help institutions defray the costs incurred by the mentor in the course of providing training and supervision to the postdoctoral fellow. The funds may be used for salary support, supplies or similar expense. However these funds cannot be used for the purchase of equipment or for travel.

**Unexpended Funds:** Any unexpended funds remaining at the end of each award year may be carried over to the next year. Unexpended funds remaining at the termination of the award must be returned to the Society.

**Change in Terms of the Award:** Any change to the conditions of an award, including a change in the direction of the research training or in the level of activity by the fellow or mentor, requires prior approval by the Society. Failure to notify the Society will be considered grounds for revocation of a postdoctoral fellowship award.

**Transfer of a Fellowship Award:** The transfer of an award from one institution to another along with transfer of the mentor and fellow cannot be made without prior approval in writing by the Society. A new application face sheet and budget request will be required from, and must be approved by, the new institution. For research involving human subjects and/or animals, written approval from the new institution's Institutional Review Board and/or the Animal Care and Use Committee must be received prior to initiation of payment. In addition, the original institution must submit an acceptable report of expenditures and return all unexpended funds to the Society before a final transfer can be made. No interruption of financial support should be involved if the request to transfer the award is received by the Society at least 90 days prior to the anticipated date of transfer and the financial report is submitted from the original institution prior to the transfer date.

**Change of Mentor:** If the mentor becomes unable to continue the supervision of the fellow's training, a replacement may be named by the sponsoring institution pending the prior approval by the Society.

**Personnel Policies:** Fellows are not considered employees of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society but rather of the institution where the training is provided. The fellowship is to be administered in accordance with the prevailing policies of the sponsoring institution, including vacations, sick leaves, holidays, etc.

**Non-Research Activities:** Postdoctoral fellowships are awarded to support training in research and are not intended to support clinical training directed toward the completion of internship and/or specialty board certification or as a substitute for funding the conduct of research ordinarily provided by research grants. Similarly, postdoctoral fellowships cannot be used to provide support for individuals whose primary responsibility is teaching and/or service, although fellows are encouraged to spend up to twenty percent of their time in teaching or clinical duties, if appropriate.

**Termination of a Postdoctoral Fellowship:** Whenever a fellow or a mentor elects to terminate a postdoctoral fellowship on a date prior to that indicated in the letter of award, the Society must be notified immediately in writing of the action taken and

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of the date involved. Grounds for revocation of a postdoctoral fellowship will be deemed to exist: (1) if a fellow is unable to carry out the research at the original institution; (2) if a mentor requests in writing that the fellowship be terminated because of unsatisfactory performance by the fellow; (3) if a fellow requests in writing that the fellowship be terminated for any reason; (4) if the fellow's mentor becomes unable to continue the supervision of the fellow's training and a replacement acceptable to the Society is not named within 30 days by the sponsoring institution; (5) if the fellow changes any aspect of the award from that which was originally approved by the Society, including the mentor, the department, the institution and/or the specific aims of the training, without prior notification and approval by the Society; (6) when annual reports of progress and recommendation for continuation are not received from both the mentor and the fellow within one month of the end of each award anniversary year; or (7) for a cause established by due process of law; or as a consequence of an institutional review committee's determination of fraud or malfeasance.

### ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

- 1) **Annual Financial Reports:** A brief account of the expenses made for each fellowship award is due before each anniversary date during the term of an award. Any unexpended funds remaining at the end of each award year may be carried over to the next year. Forms and instructions for this report will be sent to the financial officers about 30 days before the anniversary date of the award.
- 2) **Final Financial Reports:** A full account of all expenses made for a fellowship award is due within 90 days of the termination of the award. Any unexpended funds remaining at the end of the award must be returned to the Society. Forms for this report will be sent to the financial officer of the awardee's institution with the final quarterly payment. These forms are self-explanatory.
- 3) **Bonded Financial Officer:** The Society requires that the financial officer administering grant funds be bonded. Unless otherwise indicated in the application for an award, it is understood that such officials are bonded as a prerequisite to assumption of office.

### PROGRESS REPORTS

**Over the term of the award, the Society requires several different types of progress reports from recipients:**

- 1) **Annual Progress Reports:** For Fellowships awarded for more than one year, the fellow and the mentor must submit separately every twelve months an acceptable report of progress and recommendation for continuation. This report is due before each anniversary date during the term of an award along with a copy of the annual approval letter from the IRB and/or IACUC. Approximately two months before the end of a funding cycle, the Society will provide forms and detailed instructions for completing the progress report. Attached to the report should be two reprints of all published reports and preprints of all reports in press or submitted but not yet published of the results of research accomplished under the fellowship. Manuscripts will be respected as privileged communications.

Award payments to the institution will be discontinued after each twelve-month period pending receipt of such reports, unless the Society receives prior notification of an acceptable reason for the delay of such reports. When such reports become overdue by one month, the postdoctoral fellowship grant will be terminated automatically as of the date when the report was due. Grants so terminated will not be reactivated.

- 2) **Final Progress Report:** The fellow and the mentor are expected to submit separately a final report of progress to the Society within 15 days following the termination of the award. Approximately one month before the termination date, the Society will provide forms and detailed instructions for completing the progress report. The final report (not to exceed three pages) must include a summary of work conducted during the final year of support; and a statement describing the overall benefits of the training experience and their future plans. To assist the Society in keeping track of our former fellows, we request that the Society be notified of changes in their professional address.
- 3) **A Status Report:** The Society periodically (every 4-5 years) conducts surveys of its past postdoctoral fellows to assess their career output since their postdoctoral years. To assist the Society in keeping track of our former fellows, we request that the Society be notified of changes in their professional status, professional address, and the area of research interest.

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### PUBLICATIONS AND REPRINTS

All fellows are expected to send to the Society preprints or reprints of each publication supported in whole or in part by the fellowship grant. As soon as a manuscript is accepted for publication, a copy of it, with the name of the journal and the expected date of publication, should be sent by email to the Associate Vice President of Research Information ([cathy.carlson@nmss.org](mailto:cathy.carlson@nmss.org)). Manuscripts will be respected as privileged communications. As soon as reprints of a published article are available, or if a press release from the institution is being prepared for distribution, please send to [cathy.carlson@nmss.org](mailto:cathy.carlson@nmss.org).

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society must be acknowledged in all dissemination materials (e.g., publications, scientific exhibits, scientific presentations, press releases, etc.) related to research supported in full or in part by the Society. The following acknowledgment, or its equivalent, should be used:

*"This investigation was supported (in part) by a postdoctoral fellowship from the National Multiple Sclerosis Society."*

