



## RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

### INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS 2020

#### INTRODUCTION

1. To further the objects of its Research Fund Trust Deed, the College of Optometrists encourages and supports appropriate research into optometry and related subjects through a number of Scholarships, Bursaries, Awards to recognise research excellence and grants towards practice-based research.
2. This guide sets out the Research Fellowship offered by the College in 2020.

#### PURPOSE

3. The College Research Fellowships provide support for post-doctoral researchers employed as Lecturers to consolidate their research skills and make the transition from post-doctoral research trainee to proven independent investigator by:
  - a. promoting the establishment of a research laboratory;
  - b. supporting an active current research project in any area of optometry where proof of concept is evident;
  - c. facilitating the acquisition of research funding from the major grant awarding bodies.
4. The Research Fellowship is primarily aimed at developing successful applicants and readying them for a career as a researcher. Although a researcher's potential will be partly judged on how robust the proposed research project is, of greater importance will be the candidate's commitment to research and what difference the award will make to the applicant's potential to develop a successful research career.
5. The Research Fellowship is intended to bolster the provision that an institution already has in place to support new lecturers in their efforts to develop a research career. The Research Fellowship, while it may be the only source of external funding, is not intended to serve as the sole form of support for a new lecturer, and should instead be seen as a way of increasing the opportunities available for those already being given some form of research support within the institution. The Confirmation of Support Form, completed by the Head of Department, should explicitly state what forms such support currently take and what additional support may be given to ensure the Research Fellowship recipient can take full advantage of the Fellowship.
6. The Research Fellowship may be used to buy equipment and to buy out teaching time, so long as such requests are fully justified in the application. Please note that, as a charity, the College does not expect to pay the full economic costs of time bought out.
7. The College may choose to identify strategic priorities or themes for particular Scholarships. If so, these will be announced in advance.

## SELECTION AND AWARD PROCESS

8. The closing date for applications is 5.00pm, Thursday 13 February 2020. Application Forms can be downloaded from [the College website](#) and should be submitted to [researchteam@college-optometrists.org](mailto:researchteam@college-optometrists.org).
9. Only one either Research Fellowship **OR** Clinical Research Fellowship will be awarded in 2020, and all applications for both Fellowships will be evaluated in conjunction with each other.
10. The selection of the Fellow is based on the scope and content of the material detailed in the Application and Confirmation of Support Forms completed and submitted by the applicant and the Head of Department.
11. Applicants are asked to provide the names of one independent reviewer and one reference, either or both of which may be contacted as part of the application review. Please note, both should have previously agreed to be contactable by the College for this purpose and both should be available to undertake this task in March 2020. Applicants may not nominate as a peer reviewer or reference any person who is Head of Department at any submitting institution, or who is a currently a College Research Committee member (see Appendix A for membership).
12. The Research Fellowship Panel will apply the following criteria when considering applications:
  - Has the applicant demonstrated their potential as a high-calibre researcher?
  - Has the applicant's existing research achievement demonstrated appropriate ability to undertake this Fellowship?
  - How valuable is the Fellowship to the applicant's development as an optometric career researcher?
  - What opportunities will the Fellowship create for the applicant?
  - Has an adequate level of support for the Fellow been confirmed by the Institution/Head of Department/Supervisor?
  - What type of research is being undertaken by the applicant?
  - Is the overall approach of the application convincing, coherent and effective?
  - Are the objectives achievable within the timescale and resources, taking into account clinical and teaching commitments?
  - What is the potential impact on other research?
13. A shortlist of applicants will be drawn up, and those on the shortlist will be invited for interview at the College. **Please note that the interviews will take place between Monday 8 June and Friday 26 June 2020.** The Research Fellowship Panel will select the Fellow and inform applicants of the result of their application within one week of the date of their interview. The Panel's decision is final. The Panel has the discretion to determine whether to award a Research Fellowship in a given round.
14. All applicants, whether successful or not, will be notified of the outcome by the College.

## ELIGIBILITY

15. The Fellow must be a member of the College at the start of the Research Fellowship application process and remain in membership for the duration of the Fellowship.
16. The Fellow should have been appointed within the last four years to a Lecturer

position in a UK Department/School of Optometry or be an established Lecturer who has recently been awarded their PhD, and should not currently hold a major grant award.

17. Applications for Fellowships are made on the understanding that the Fellow agrees to accept the Terms and Conditions relating to the Fellowship and any amendments issued during the course of the Fellowship. On appointment the Fellow will be sent an Acceptance Form to sign to indicate acceptance of these conditions.

## **LOCATION OF AWARDS**

18. The College offers the Fellowship to institutions within the UK. An institution may only submit one Research Fellowship application per round. The requirements of the Trust Deed that governs the Research Fund that supports these Fellowships mean that priority is given to applications from the UK Optometry Departments. Applicants from other UK institutions or other departments within the UK institutions that have an optometry undergraduate programme are allowed, and will be considered within the terms permitted by the Trust Deed.

## **PERIOD OF SUPPORT**

19. The Fellow and the College will agree a start date and a completion date for the Fellowship.

## **FINANCIAL PROVISION**

20. The maximum value of a Fellowship is £30,000. A payment schedule will be discussed and agreed with the Fellow, but funds will normally be made available in three installments:
  - 40% at the start of the project on receipt of the Acceptance Form;
  - 30% halfway through the project on receipt of a satisfactory Progress Report;
  - 30% at the end of the project on receipt of a satisfactory Final Report.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

21. Assistance with any of the above may be obtained from the research team.

**Email:** [researchteam@college-optometrists.org](mailto:researchteam@college-optometrists.org)

**Phone:** 020 7766 4346

**Post:** The College of Optometrists  
42 Craven Street  
London  
WC2N 5NG

## **Appendix A – Research Committee Members**

Professor Leon Davies FCOptom PhD FAAO SFHEA (Chair)

Stephanie Campbell MCOptom (Vice-Chair)

Professor Peter Allen BSc (Hons) PhD FCOptom

Professor Paul Artes MCOptom BSc PhD

Lorcan Butler MCOptom

Emeritus Professor David Caplin

Tony Cowburn BSc (Hons)

Dr Irene Ctori MCOptom

Professor Chris Hammond BA Hons MA BM Bch MRCP (UK) FRCOphth MD

Angharad Hobby BSc (Hons) MCOptom

Professor Edward Mallen MCOptom BSc PhD (President Ex-officio)

Matt Roney BSc MCOptom

Dr Mary-Ann Sherratt MCOptom PhD DipGlauc Dip TP (IP)

Dr Laura Sweeney MCOptom Dip TP (IP)