



# THE COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRISTS

## CLINICAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

### INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS 2019

#### 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 Clinical Research Fellowship offered by the College in 2019.

#### PURPOSE

3. The College Clinical Research Fellowships provide support for staff in hospital settings by:
  - a. allowing them to consolidate their research skills and make the transition from post-doctoral research trainee to proven independent investigator;
  - b. supporting an active current research project in any area of optometry where proof of concept is evident;
  - c. facilitating the future acquisition of research funding from the major grant awarding bodies.
4. The Clinical Research Fellowship is primarily aimed at developing successful applicants and readying them for a career as a researcher. Although an applicant'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 Fellowship will make to the applicant's potential to develop a successful research career, or a career featuring regular research work.
5. The Clinical Research Fellowship is intended to bolster the provision that a hospital already has in place to support applicants in their efforts to develop a research career. The Fellowship, while it may be the only source of external funding, is not intended to serve as the sole form of support for a successful applicant, 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 hospital. 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 Clinical Research Fellowship recipient can take full advantage of the Fellowship.
6. The Clinical Research Fellowship may be used to buy equipment and to buy out 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 AWARDS PROCESS

8. The closing date for applications is 5.00pm, Wednesday 27 February 2019. 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 Clinical Research Fellowship **OR** Research Fellowship will be awarded in 2019, and all applications for both Fellowships will be evaluated in conjunction with each other.
9. The selection of Fellows 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.
10. The Clinical 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 Fellowship holder 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?
11. From the submitted applications, a shortlist of applicants for interview will be drawn up. Those on the shortlist will be invited for interview at the College. **Please note that the interviews will take place between Monday 17 June and Friday 5 July 2019.** The Clinical Research Fellowship Panel will select the Fellow and its decision is final. The Panel has the discretion to determine whether to award a Fellowship in a given round.
12. All applicants, whether successful or not, will be notified of the outcome by the College.

## ELIGIBILITY

13. Fellows must be members of the College at the start of the Clinical Research Fellowship application process and remain in membership for the duration of the Fellowship.
14. Fellows should have a PhD and have been appointed to a full or part time NHS position in a hospital eye department within the last ten years, or be an established hospital optometrist who has recently been awarded their PhD, and should not currently hold a major grant award.
15. 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**

16. The College offers Clinical Research Fellowships to hospitals within the UK. A hospital may only submit one Clinical Research Fellowship application per round.

### **PERIOD OF SUPPORT**

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

### **FINANCIAL PROVISION**

18. 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**

19. 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

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