



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 Research Fellowships offered by the College in 2019.

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, Wednesday 27 February 2019. Application Forms can be downloaded from [the College website](#) and should be submitted to researchteam@college-optometrists.org.
9. Only one either Research Fellowship **OR** Clinical Research Fellowship will be awarded in 2019, and all applications for both Fellowships will be evaluated in conjunction with each other.
10. 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.
11. 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?
12. 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 17 June and Friday 5 July 2019.** The Research Fellowship Panel will select the Fellow and its decision is final. The Panel has the discretion to determine whether to award a Research Fellowship in a given round.
13. All applicants, whether successful or not, will be notified of the outcome by the College.

ELIGIBILITY

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

17. The College offers Fellowships 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

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

FINANCIAL PROVISION

19. 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

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

Email: researchteam@college-optometrists.org

Phone: 020 7766 4346

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