



## HRS Research Fellowship Awards 2023-24 Instructions for Applicants

### OBJECTIVE

The Heart Rhythm Society has established post-doctoral fellowships in cardiac electrophysiology, encouraging and supporting research training of individuals in **either basic or clinical electrophysiology**.

These fellowships assist diverse awardees to begin careers in electrophysiology research while obtaining significant research results.

### ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

The applicant should intend on pursuing a career in independent research and have an interest in additional training under the supervision of a sponsor or mentor prior to a career in independent research. Fellowship recipients should use this award to promote their long-term goals in the field. HRS values the contributions of applicants who demonstrate an interest and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Specific criteria include:

- Applicants must have an MD, Ph.D., DO, DVM, or equivalent doctoral degree at the time of award activation.
- Applicants may not hold this post-doctoral fellowship while enrolled in a degree-granting program unless they are in the ABIM Clinical Investigator Pathway residency.
- Applicants currently enrolled in graduate or medical school may only apply if they will graduate prior to award activation. These candidates must provide a letter from their current institution verifying their graduation date.
- Individuals with current or prior faculty/staff rank, with the exception of MDs or MD, PhDs who hold a title of an instructor, or similar, due to patient care responsibilities (e.g., residents, clinical fellows, or those who have taken a year out to work as clinicians between residency and fellowship), will be excluded from consideration for this award.
- Candidates with a current or prior job title of Assistant Professor or higher from any institution are not eligible for this fellowship.
- At the time of award activation, the candidate **cannot have completed three or more years of research experience cumulative** of post-medical or post-graduate school (whichever degree is applicable).
- We encourage international post-doctoral fellows. However, the applicant must be able to effectively communicate their results in English.
- Applicants must devote at least **80 percent (80%)** of their effort to research or activities directly related to the proposed research.

Please contact [awards@HRSONline.org](mailto:awards@HRSONline.org) if you have questions about your eligibility.

### SCIENCE FOCUS

The proposed research must be relevant to the goals and aims of the Heart Rhythm Society. Appropriate fields of study include epidemiological, outcomes research, and clinical and basic investigations within the general area of cardiac electrophysiology.

## **HRS DIVERSITY COMMITMENT**

HRS stakeholders share a common passion for accomplishing our mission to end death and suffering from heart rhythm disorders. We believe our diverse backgrounds, experiences, and interests are assets in reaching that goal. We are committed to providing an inclusive environment in all our activities where everyone feels valued, respected, and welcome. We strive to have organizational leaders who represent all aspects of our diversity and who promote the diversity, equity, and inclusion that are essential to our success.

## **SPONSOR**

Fellows must receive counsel and direction from a senior investigator interested in the conduct and progress of the research project, and each fellow must have a qualified sponsor.

**Each sponsor is limited to one application per funding cycle.** If more than one applicant lists the same sponsor, all applications with that sponsor will be withdrawn.

## **BUDGET ITEMS**

The only allowable budget items are applicant salary, fringe benefits, and indirect costs. The total of all budget items must equal the \$50,000 award amount.

Although not a requirement, if indirect costs are requested, the maximum allowable amount is \$4,545 (10% of direct costs). Supplies, project costs, and meeting and travel expenses are not allowable budget items.

The sponsoring institution may supplement salary, as allowable in the budget, provided the salary is comparable to the salary paid by the sponsoring institution to fellows of the same post-graduate year as the applicant.

## **ANNUAL AWARD AMOUNT**

\$50,000 (inclusive of indirect costs)

## **AWARD DURATION**

One year. Awardees are permitted to submit a new application for a second year.

## **APPLICATION SUBMISSION**

The applicant is responsible for submitting all materials, including sponsor letters, to the website by **Sunday, January 22, 2023, at 11:00 p.m. Eastern Time. No late submissions will be accepted, and no exceptions will be made.**

Applications must be submitted via the website and cannot be mailed or emailed to the Heart Rhythm Society.

## **REVIEW PROCESS**

Three members of the Heart Rhythm Society Research Fellowship Subcommittee will review each application, and the reviewers will remain anonymous to the applicant. Any contact between the reviewer and the applicant is prohibited; evidence of communication will result in the application's disqualification and the reviewer's dismissal. Each reviewer is required to disclose any relationships that may prove a potential conflict of interest, including monetary interest, institutional affiliation, and prior knowledge of the applicant. If there is a potential for bias, the reviewer will be recused from reviewing the application. The Subcommittee Chair will have final decision-making authority concerning issues that may arise during the review process.

The review process is as follows:

- **Triage:** Any application that is not complete per the application guidelines will be dismissed prior to the Subcommittee review process. Applicants who have begun an application submission will be notified two weeks prior to the deadline date if it is incomplete. It is the applicant's responsibility to upload two (2) reference letters by the deadline. The application submission site will be closed on **January 22, 2023, at 11:00 p.m. ET** and no further applications or document uploads will be accepted.
- **1<sup>st</sup> review:** Each application that passes through triage will be submitted to three non-conflicted Subcommittee members for review. Applications will be scored via the criteria listed in the review criteria section below. Each reviewer will also provide subjective comments to be shared with the applicant. The top 10-15 applications will be selected by processing and comparing the mean data of the three scores. In the event of a tie, the subcommittee chair, utilizing the subjective comments provided by the reviewers, will determine the final ranking.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> review:** The top 10-15 applications will be subject to a subcommittee conference meeting. Reviewers will be privy to the scores of each application and defend their comments. After thoroughly reviewing each of the final applications, the applications accepted for the fellowship will be determined by vote count. Applications from the 2<sup>nd</sup> review will receive in-depth feedback from the subcommittee proceedings along with notification of rejection or an award acceptance letter.

All applications will receive either a rejection or award acceptance letter, including written feedback from the reviewers.

## **REVIEW CRITERIA**

When preparing your application, please refer to the following review criteria and carefully address each of the following points. An individual applicant is not expected to fully meet each of these points. Strengths in one particular area will be weighed against potential weaknesses in another (e.g., the inexperience of a mentor can be balanced by a particularly well-thought-out training plan; lack of publications by an applicant can be balanced by a clear plan for achieving an academic career, etc.)

### **Criteria 1 – Evaluation of the Investigator (one-third of the overall score)**

1. Does the applicant have the potential for an academic/clinical career?
2. Is the applicant's career and training plan clearly and convincingly described?
3. Do the investigator's history and sponsor/referee assessments support the likelihood of success for the stated career plan?
4. Does the applicant have prior research experience and/or publications?
5. Is there a clear rationale supporting the applicant's need for additional training?

### **Criteria 2 – Evaluation of the Sponsor, Training Plan, and Environment (one-third of the overall score)**

1. Does either the mentor or a collaborator have published or demonstrated experience with all research methods necessary for the project?
2. Is there evidence that all resources necessary for the proposal's success are in place and operational prior to the start of the proposal?
3. Does the mentor have the experience necessary to direct the applicant's training (as evidenced by his/her track record of senior author publications, independent funding, and the success of prior trainees)?
4. Does the mentor have adequate current funding to support the research project?

5. Does the mentor provide a comprehensive training plan that will enhance the applicant's ability to reach his/her career goals?
6. If collaborators are a part of the proposal, is there written documentation of their support?

### **Criteria 3 – Evaluation of the Research Proposal (one-third of the overall score)**

1. Does the applicant clearly state the hypothesis to be tested in the proposal and the specific aims that will be used to address this hypothesis?
2. Significance: Does the proposed study address an important problem in cardiac electrophysiology? What will be the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods, and technologies that drive this field?
3. Innovation/novelty: Is the project truly original, or is it derivative from past studies or publications?
4. Feasibility: Do the application's background information and preliminary data justify the hypothesis? Do the preliminary data and the publication records of the applicant, mentor, and/or collaborators demonstrate competence with all research methods used in the proposal? If clearly acknowledged, applicants can present preliminary data generated by the sponsor or collaborators.
5. Approach: Is the conceptual framework, design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, well-reasoned, and appropriate to the hypothesis and aims of the project? Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and discuss alternative tactics if problems arise?

### **ACTIVATION AND DURATION OF THE AWARDS**

A full-year fellowship is awarded for a period of not less than one year and starts **July 1, 2023**. Activation dates other than **July 1, 2023**, must be approved by HRS staff and the fellowship subcommittee chair. A request for an alternative activation date must be made in a separate letter accompanying the application. Full-year fellowship awards cannot be activated before **June 1, 2023**, or after **November 1, 2023**.

### **RENEWAL AND EXTENSION OF FULL-YEAR AWARDS**

Fellowship recipients are eligible to apply for competitive renewal of the fellowship, which will provide one additional year of funding. Competitive renewal applications should be accompanied by a 1-page supplement specifically indicating the work accomplished during the previous period of support and clearly showing justification for renewed funding. This supplement is not included in the 4-page limit for the research, and it cannot be used to describe the proposed research. Competitive renewal applicants will not be limited to three cumulative years of post-graduate research experience. HRS funds a maximum of two years only; applications for a third year of funding will not be considered.

### **LOCATION OF THE FELLOWSHIPS**

As previously stated, this is an international fellowship opportunity. All applicants will be considered by the same application criteria, and all research will be regulated by the ethical standards and reporting responsibilities set forth below. All written and verbal correspondence must be in English. All funding will be paid in United States Dollars. It is the responsibility of the applicant to make all necessary arrangements for any fellowship, both with the institution where the research and/or training will occur and with his/her research mentor, who will supervise the recipient's activities. Such arrangements must be acknowledged by signature from an authorized official of the institution and the research mentor.

## **ETHICAL STANDARDS**

The Heart Rhythm Society requires 1) that any research involving human subjects conform to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association (*Clinical Research* 1992 Dec; 40 (4): 653-60) and Title 45, US Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46 Protection of Human Subjects, and 2) that any research involving animals will conform to the Guiding Principles in the Care and Use of Animals approved by the Council of the American Physiological Society. The sponsoring institution and the mentor must provide evidence that all investigations engaged in by the fellow are under the institution's control and its investigational review board or other appropriate body. Documentation of regulatory approval must be provided to the HRS office prior to the release of fellowship funds.

## **REPORTS**

According to the NIH Public Access Policy, the results of work carried out by a fellow must be made publicly available through scientific channels. All reports on work supported by the fellowship should acknowledge the Society's support. An appropriate format for such acknowledgment may be: "This work was performed during Dr. \_\_\_\_\_'s tenure as the (full name of award) Fellow of the Heart Rhythm Society". An electronic or paper reprint of each published article should be furnished to the Heart Rhythm Society.

In the year of the award, fellowship awardees will be required to present data from their research at the 'Research Fellowship Presentations of Research and Awards' held during the Heart Rhythm Society's Annual Meeting. In addition, a one-page abstract of the fellowship project must be submitted for distribution at this program.

A final financial report and a report summarizing research progress and accomplishments during the funding period are to be submitted to the Heart Rhythm Society office no later than the last day of support for the fellowship. **Failure to submit these reports by this deadline will result in forfeiture of the remaining monies owed.**

## **TRANSFERS**

If the recipient of a fellowship leaves the site where he/she agreed to perform the fellowship, ceases work with the approved mentor, or ceases to continue the activities for which the award was made, the award will terminate unless alternate arrangements were approved in advance by HRS staff and the chair of the Fellowship Subcommittee.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND VACATION**

A leave of absence will be granted during the period of a full-year fellowship with the prior approval of HRS staff, the chair of the Fellowship Subcommittee, the mentor, and the institution. Vacation for a full-year fellow may be taken per the institution's policy where the fellowship is being performed but may not exceed 24 of the institution's scheduled workdays per fellowship year.

## **NOTIFICATION**

The Fellowship Subcommittee will review all applications and make award recommendations to the Research Committee of the Heart Rhythm Society. The Heart Rhythm Society will communicate the results by the last week of March 2023.

## **PAYMENTS**

Unless otherwise specified, quarterly installments of the full-year fellowship award will be mailed to the sponsoring institution. The final installment is contingent upon receipt of the documentation described in the REPORTS section.

## APPLICATIONS

Complete applications must be uploaded to the online submission site no later than **January 22, 2023, at 11:00 p.m. ET.**

If you have any questions, please contact [awards@hrsonline.org](mailto:awards@hrsonline.org).

**All parts of the application, including all online fields and required attachments, must be completed and submitted as directed by the submission deadline. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed.**

The online portion of the application includes the completion of the following submission steps: title, applicant information, general information, references (including reference letter templates), and keywords.

Below is a list of the required forms and instructions for proper completion.

## ADVICE FROM THE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Please pay attention to the following issues that commonly arise during peer review. Applications usually score poorly for one of the following reasons:

- Project lacks novelty and will only minimally advance current knowledge.
- Project is too broad or complex in scope and does not appear feasible over the one-year time period of the proposal.
- Project and/or hypothesis does not appear feasible based on provided background literature or preliminary data.
- Project requires expertise beyond the scope of the applicant or sponsors published skills, and no documentation of an appropriate collaboration is provided.
- Sponsor statement does not clearly address training in the context of moving the applicant toward a career in EP research.
- Sponsor does not provide requested information on past trainees or does not address all components of the training plan.
- Candidate does not discuss all components of the candidate's career development statement. Please take seriously the need to describe the detailed career development process pertaining to your goals. Do not just describe the skills that you hope to acquire over the next year.
- Candidate does not commit the required 80% effort to the research, or the candidate has more than the allowed three years of cumulative post-graduate research experience.

## REQUIRED FORMS

### Curriculum Vitae

- Attach a copy of your medical school or graduate school diploma. If the diploma is not in English, provide a certified translation
- Attach biographical sketch (may not exceed four pages) in the below format (NIH format is also acceptable)
  - Format
    - **Positions and appointments:** List in chronological order previous positions, concluding with your present position.

- **Honors:** List any honors. Include present membership on any Federal Government public advisory committee.
- **Selected peer-reviewed publications (in chronological order):** Do not include publications submitted or in preparation. For publicly available citations, URLs or PMC submission identification numbers may accompany the full reference. Note that copies of these publications are no longer accepted as appendix material.
- **Research Support:** List selected ongoing or completed (during the last three years) research projects (Federal and non-Federal support). Begin with the projects that are most relevant to the research proposed in this application. Briefly indicate the overall goals of the projects and your role (e.g., PI, Co-Investigator, Consultant) in the research project. Do not list award amounts or percent effort in projects.

#### **Proposed Budget, Full-Year Fellowship**

- Provide salary, fringe, and overhead costs
- Provide the correct information for the person and place checks should be mailed to at your institution

#### **Candidate Plan for Career Development**

- Clearly describe your career plan. This should include background on your previous education and experiences, your current plans, including, but not limited to, the submitted research project, and your future goals. Describe how each of these components will assist you in achieving an academic career that advances the cardiac electrophysiology field
- Describe the feasibility of completing your proposed research within one year and how it fits into long-term research plans

#### **Description of Proposed Fellowship**

- Limit to four (4) pages. The length for each section is suggested in parentheses below, but there is no formal space limitation for sections beyond the overall limit of four pages for the research proposal. References are not counted within the four-page limit, but applicants are encouraged to make references concise.
- Statement of hypothesis and specific aims (½ page)
- Background information, including preliminary data. Limit the background section to information that would be necessary for an EP expert to understand the proposal's rationale. Give sufficient preliminary data to support the feasibility of the hypothesis and approach. Briefly explain the applicant's involvement in obtaining the preliminary data. With appropriate referencing, it is acceptable for the applicant to provide preliminary data generated by the sponsor or collaborator that was not necessarily the applicant's work. (1½ pages)
- Specific research plans, including proposed methods, data analysis, potential problems and alternative plans, and a timeline for the research. (2 pages)

### **Sponsor Statement**

Each fellow must have a qualified sponsor. Fellows are expected to receive wise counsel and direction from a senior investigator interested in the conduct and progress of the research project. This individual should not be one of the individuals providing you with a reference.

Each sponsor is limited to one application per funding cycle. If more than one applicant lists the same sponsor, then all applications with that sponsor will be administratively withdrawn.

In addition to the template, you must also attach the following documents on the submission site:

- List all current and previous (for the past five years) research trainees, including years under your supervision, degree received under your supervision, salary and project support, and current position.
- Sponsor statement (Use Arial 11-point font, maximum four pages), specifically address all seven elements listed in the instructions
- A copy of the sponsor and any significant collaborator's biographical sketch (NIH format, use Arial 11-point font)
- A detailed list of equipment and resources directly available to the applicant for use in the completion of the proposed work.

### **Institution Letter**

All applicants are required to submit a letter from the institution where the research will be performed. An administrative official currently employed with the institution should complete this letter. Please follow the additional instructions located on the form.

### **Letters of Reference**

- Letters should be written by the individuals listed on the References portion of the online submission.
- The sponsor cannot provide either of the letters of reference.

### **Fellowship Agreement**

All applicants are required to submit a Fellowship Agreement form. This form outlines the requirements you must adhere to during the year-long fellowship program. If your submission does not include a signed form, your application will be automatically withdrawn.