



**RESEARCH
AUSTRALIA**

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP POLICY

Preface:

This document outlines the eligibility, selection and assessment criteria for appointment to this award the criteria, which must be met or addressed by all applicants.

1. Aims and purpose of the MSRA Senior Fellowships

- The MSRA Senior Fellowship award is available to Researchers and Practitioners.
- The MSRA Senior Fellowship Award aims to supplement the income of scientific, medical, applied or social sciences specialists who have undertaken a successful research program and wish to continue at nationally or internationally competitive levels.
- The candidates are expected to be future leaders in MS research and have already established a verifiable track record.
- The MSRA Senior Fellowship does not fully fund the total cost of a particular research. The fellowship provides salary support in order that existing and future research efforts can continue. The fellowship is awarded in the context of a proven track record and quality and likelihood of achieving the research aims as described in the Senior Fellowship application. It provides financial support to allow the applicant to continue the field of MS research.

2. Eligibility for award

- Applicants must hold a PhD or equivalent research qualification.
- Demonstrate track record in independent research as evidenced by appropriate publications and grant acquisitions at the time of applying.
- It will be necessary to provide evidence that an appropriate research environment and facilities are available.

3. Fellowship Package

- Senior Research Fellows - The funds provided by MSRA will be up to \$100,000 per annum.
- Senior Clinical Research Fellows – The funds provided by MSRA will be up to \$120, 000 per annum.
- The Senior Fellowship is of five years' duration from the day of acceptance.
- The Package covers salary and all salary on-costs (payroll tax, workers compensation, superannuation, long service leave). The funding provided by the Package will apply for the duration of the Fellowship and, with the exception of annual indexation, no additional funds will be provided.
- The Administering Institution should supply invoices in April and October of each year of the fellowship in advance. Please direct invoices as per Acceptance Email, which will be issued following confirmation that the applicant has been awarded the Senior Fellowship. The applicant and administering institution must sign this and email it back to sumsr@iinet.net.au. The financial management of the fellowship is managed from MSRA Sydney Head Office alin@msra.org.au Similarly, the annual financial statement should also be sent to this Office.

- Any changes to research approach should be directed and approved by the Chair of the RMC Research Committees. Please email sumsr@iinet.net.au in the first instance. Progress reports should be sent to this email address. The format template for completion will be sent to you in February of each year.
- MSRA Senior Fellows will not normally be able to receive benefits personally from another comparable Fellowship or another full time position in conjunction with their MSRA Senior Fellowship. Fellows will be required to inform MSRA if changes to their employment circumstances occur during the fellowship MSRA will review such appointments and make recommendations on a case-by-case basis. Should this change occur during a fellowship, please provide a submission detailing how this affects your research goals as outlined in your application and forward to Chair of the Research Management Committees at sumsr@iinet.net.au

4. Assessment Criteria.

In ranking applicants who fit within the aims of the award, the following criteria will be taken into account. :

- The quality of past achievements (especially in regard to academic record, awards and prizes).
- The sustained success and impact of research output.
- The extent of research funding.
- Breadth and impact of research.
 - Demonstrated research success as evidenced by track record (relative to opportunity in terms of both seniority and field of research and in the context of the applicant's research and if applicable practice career paths.
 - The potential for research achievement over the next five years.
- Quality and impact of achievements
- The commitment and broader contributions to the discipline (including contribution to MS research training).
- The quality of the research environment. These include the extent of facilities and infrastructure, which will be available to support the proposed research activities, will also be taken into account.

Specifically for Senior Practitioner Fellows:

- Senior Practitioner Fellows must, for their non-research time, be employed by a health care authority to provide clinical care, or public health services or related policy activity.
- Contribute to evidence-based practice in Australian health systems.
- Facilitate translation of research outcomes into practice for people with MS

5. Peer Review Process

- Applications are assessed and evaluated through a peer review process conducted by MSRA.
- Applications will be sent to external assessors. Wherever possible international assessors will be included. Wherever possible, if the applicant has indicated a “non” assessor, this will be respected and this assessor will not be approached.
- The specific criteria about which the RMC will seek advice from external assessors include:
 1. Research, with emphasis on independence, leadership and originality.
 2. Publications, overall and in the last five years.
 3. Contributions to advancement of MS research, including peer review activities and involvement in professional societies and the community.
 4. In addition, external assessors will be asked to comment on the quality and feasibility of the proposed research.
 5. They will also be asked to comment on the relevance of the application to the aims of the MSRA Senior Fellowship
 6. If applicable, to strengthen health practices and services by providing an opportunity for clinical, public health and health services researchers to combine research in MS with their professional career.
 7. Facilitate translation of research outcomes into practice for people with MS, and contribute to evidence-based policy development in the Australian health community.
- The RMC (members of whom a conflict of interest does not reside) will examine all applications and assessments from external assessors and evaluate them with reference to the aims of the Senior Fellowship Award The RMC will also determine whether initial applicants are suitable for the award and meet the selection criteria are competitive and which of those applicants will proceed to interview.

6. Assessment and Ranking

Using an international basis of comparison, ranking will be based on the following categories:

1 = Outstanding	Top 5% internationally
2 = Excellent	Top 10% internationally
3 = Very good	But not top 10% internationally
4 = Good	Worth consideration, but some reservations
5 = Fair	Not appointable, some major reservations

7. Interview

Short listed applicants will be invited to an interview. The interview panel will consist of some RMC members and may be supplemented by members of the MSRA Board.

Applicants must make themselves available for such an interview at the time and date requested. The applicant will be contacted by email from sumsr@iinet.net.au to agree the time of the interview.

8.. Finalisation of Recommendations

Following interview, and the ranking of applicants by the RMC and or Social Sciences Applied RMC (SSARMC) subcommittee, the Chair of the RMC will prepare a final ranking list of Fellows. The chair of the RMC will seek the approval of the Executive Director and through the Executive Director approval of the MSRA Board for the appointment in accordance with MSRA objectives and funding available.

9. Application outcome communication

Applicants and their administering institutions will be advised about the outcome of their application. The provisional timescale is November/December 2009. The communication will be by email from the chair of the RMC Dr William Carroll sumsr@iinet.net.au

10. Post Award Administration

The successful applicant and their administering institution will be required to sign an MSRA Acceptance form. This should be returned to the sumsr@iinet.net.au email address as a PDF. This confirms acceptance and allows the MSRA Financial team to receive your invoice for payment and receipt of the financial statements.

11. Reporting

All MSRA Senior Fellows are required to submit the following reports. Reports are to be sent to sumsr@iinet.net.au unless otherwise stated.

Progress Report

A one page Lay Summary addressing achievements and progress against the aims of the MSRA Senior Fellowships Award is required by 31 March of the following year of each year of the fellowship unless this date is changes by the MSRA. Not, in completing the Lay Summary you must also state your progress in lay terms. It is not sufficient to simply re-cap the project objectives. This will be posted on the MSRA website and its purpose is to inform the reader of progress made in the area of MS Research.

The Fellow will also be required to provide a full Progress Report annually, which will be assessed by appropriately qualified members of the RMC. . Where the research is not progressing at a satisfactory level, the researcher will be contacted and offered assistance. If progress is not maintained, consideration will be given to withdrawing the funding after appropriate consultation and discussion with the researcher.

Final Report

This report enables MSRA to assess whether the objectives of the award have been achieved and also to gather information that may be useful in MSRA's internal performance measurement activities.

This report must include a summary of achievements and include a list of publications.

Failure to provide the Final Report for Research Awards is a breach of the Terms of the Deed of Agreement and may seriously prejudice consideration of further applications for MSRA funding.

Financial Reports and invoices

An annual financial statement must be submitted to MSRA for each year of funding. A final financial statement is to be submitted within six months of completion of a five year award or termination of the award.

12 How to Apply

The application form for a Senior Fellowship and the Guide to Applicants for support commencing in 2010 can be downloaded at: <http://www.msra.org.au> Submit to sumsr@iinet.net.au

Applicants are reminded that they should address the aims of the award, and be able to demonstrate that the research associated with the Senior Fellowship is designed to maximise application or transfer of outputs into practice for people with MS. They are also reminded that external assessors will be asked to comment on the relevance of the application to the aims of the Senior Fellowship Award.

13 Withdrawal of Application

Applicants may withdraw an application at any time.

14. Objections and Complaints

Applicants may contact MSRA seeking clarification on the outcome of their application for Senior Fellowship funding, or to state an objection to that outcome. The objection must be lodged in writing through the Administering Institution's Research Office and be received within 28 days of the date on the letter notifying the outcome of the application.

The objection should be directed to Chief Executive Director MSRA in the first instance.

All complaints must be addressed to the Executive Director at:

MS Research Australia

PO Box 1246

Chatswood 2057

Or via email to: info@msra.org.au

MSRA will provide a written response to all objections.

NOTES FOR ALL APPLICANTS

- **Incomplete, False or Misleading Information**

Once submitted to MSRA, the application will be considered final and no changes will be permitted. The application is the primary source of information available for assessment. As such it must contain all the information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documents. All details in the application, particularly concerning any awarded grants, must be current and accurate at the time of application.

Applications must not include omissions or misleading information, such as:

Providing fictitious track records, omitting advice of publications, that have been retracted or are to be considered for retraction, and/or falsifying claims in publications records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

- **Confidentiality**

Information contained in applications is regarded as confidential, unless otherwise stated, and will be received and treated as confidential by MSRA. It is a responsibility of all MSRA Research Management Council, and overall members and persons assisting these MSRA not to disclose any personal confidential information to which they become privy as a result of exercising of their responsibilities to MSRA. Information, which may properly be regarded as confidential commercial information, should be designated accordingly.

Information comprising the names of successful grant applicants and their administering institutions, together with the title of the project and the funding awarded, are published in reports and are available through MSRA's website. MSRA may also release information about the areas of research of the grant and a brief description of the grant provided by the applicant.

- **Privacy**

Documents containing personal information are handled and protected in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1998, which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information. Personal information is disclosed only with permission of the individual to whom it relates.