



AANEM Foundation for Research & Education Autoimmune Neuromuscular Disorders Research Fellowship Fellowship and Application Overview

Background

The American Association of Neuromuscular & Electrodiagnostic Medicine (AANEM) Foundation for Research and Education's mission is to advance research and science related to muscle and nerve disorders. Clinical research is important to enhance patient health, lengthen life, and reduce the burdens of neuromuscular disease and the disabilities that can result from the diseases.

There is a need to recruit and train clinical researchers in neuromuscular medicine however there is a shortage of clinical investigators because funding is limited. National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding for neurologic research has remained the same making it difficult to obtain NIH funding. Recognizing this critical need for neuromuscular research, the AANEM Foundation now offers 1-year awards to institutions and mentors to provide clinical research training for neurologists, physiatrists, or clinical neurophysiologists who are primary board-certified or meet the primary board certification requirements. The fellowship award fund will support clinical research training related to autoimmune disorders that primarily target the neuromuscular system. Examples are acute and chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy, myasthenia gravis, and Eaton Lambert syndrome. This program was established to encourage and support physicians who are interested in pursuing careers in clinical research related to nerve and muscle disorders.

Institution Applications

- During the interview process for a traditional 1-year neuromuscular medicine, neurology, clinical neurophysiology, or physical medicine and rehabilitation fellowships, the training institution will identify and nominate candidates who are and interested in a second year research fellowship. Such Fellows will be interested in pursuing an academic research career.
- Institutions with established neurology, neuromuscular medicine, clinical neurophysiology, or physical medicine and rehabilitation fellowship training programs are responsible for the recruitment, selection, nomination, and training of the postdoctoral fellows.
- The institution awarded the fellowship will teach the nominated Fellow how to conduct research and study quantitative clinical epidemiology, biostatistics, study design, data analysis, and ethics.

Fellowship Award

The Fellowship award criteria include:

- \$60,000 for 1 year plus \$10,000 for Fellow tuition to support formal education in clinical research methodology at the applicant's institution or elsewhere after completion of the Fellow's initial first year fellowship.
- Supplementation of the stipend with other grants or by the fellowship institution is permissible, but fellows may not accept other fellowships, similar awards, or have another source of support for more than 50% of their research salary during the first year of AANEM Foundation Clinical Research Training Fellowship.
- If similar awards are obtained after completion of the first year of the Clinical Research Training Fellowship, fellows are required to submit a revised application for review the Foundation Research Committee or may need to forfeit the remaining award.
- Only direct costs will be funded by this award.
- The applicant cannot already be receiving funding from the supporting grantors.
- Upon completion, the research must be presented at the AANEM Annual Meeting. The AANEM will provide free meeting registration plus \$1,500 for the Fellow to attend this meeting when the research is presented.
- Application deadline is December 14, 2018.
- The grant period begins on July 1, 2019, with the first round of selection for 2019-2020 fellows.

Fellowship Eligibility

1. For the purpose of this fellowship, clinical research is defined as "patient-oriented research conducted with human subjects, or translational research specifically designed to develop treatments or enhance diagnosis of neuromuscular disease. These areas of research include epidemiologic or behavioral studies, clinical trials, studies of disease mechanisms, the development of new technologies, and health services and outcomes research." Disease-related studies not directly involving humans or human tissue also are encouraged if the primary goal is the development of therapies, diagnostic tests, or other tools to prevent or mitigate neuromuscular diseases.
2. The training program agrees that during the initial fellowship the institution will work with the Fellow to:
 - Identify a mentor
 - Create a research plan
 - Seek IRB approval
 - Begin work on the research during the first (standard fellowship) year, and then carry it on "full-time" during the second (clinical research) year.

Application

The training institution and fellow mentor are considered the joint applicant for fellowship awards and must submit one complete set of the following application materials to the AANEM Foundation:

1. Outline of how the institution will address the needs of the research fellowship during the traditional neuromuscular medicine, neurology, physicians medicine and rehabilitation, or clinical neurophysiology fellowship.
2. Letter of nomination from the chair of the department, including assurance that clinical service responsibilities will be restricted to no more than 20% of the Fellow's time.
3. Three-page research plan, including brief statements of aims, background, and the contemplated approaches to methodology and data. The research plan should be written by the applicant institution and should represent original work. It is appropriate for the proposed work to be specifically related to the mentor's ongoing research, but not required.
4. Current curriculum vitae of the nominated Fellow.
5. Two letters of reference supporting the Fellow nominee's potential for a clinical, academic research career, and qualifications for the fellowship. Letters of reference are in addition to the three-page research plan.
6. Listing of the nominee's and mentor's current and pending support, other than this fellowship, using NIH format.
7. Letter from proposed mentor detailing his/her support of and commitment to the nominee and the proposed research and training plan. The letter should specifically indicate the mentor's role in the development and preparation of the applicant's research plan.
8. Letter should describe:
 - How the proposed research fits into the mentor's research program.
 - Expertise and experience in the area of research proposed and the nature of the mentor's proposed time commitment to the supervision and training of the applicant.
 - Mentor's prior experience in the supervision, training, and successful mentoring of clinician scientists.
 - Potential for applicant's future research career and comparison of applicant amongst other residents.
 - More than one mentor is permitted. One mentor should be designated as primary and be responsible for administrative issues.
9. Proposed mentor's NIH Biosketch.
10. Document describing arrangements for formal course work including: quantitative clinical epidemiology, biostatistics, study design, data analysis, and ethics.
11. Training institutions will only supply one application. The AANEM Foundation Research Committee will consider the application for all of the applicable fellowships.

Application Evaluation and Selection

It is the responsibility of the mentor and institution to identify and recruit the postdoctoral fellow and to submit the fellow's qualifications to the AANEM Foundation for review. Applications are evaluated by members of the AANEM Foundation Research Committee based on the following criteria:

- Fellow nominee's ability and promise as a clinician-scientist based on prior record of achievement and career plan, letters of reference, and curriculum vitae (30%)
- Quality and nature of the training to be provided and the institutional, departmental, and mentor-specific training environment (30%)
- Quality and originality of the research plan (40%)

Evaluations will be forwarded to the AANEM Foundation Research Committee and a recommendation for final determination of the award made to the Foundation Board. Funding begins within 30 days after executing a signed agreement with the AANEM Foundation and the institution.

Annual and Final Progress Reports

A progress report is due in May of the first year. A final research report and a final expenditure report are due within 60 days following the close of the grant term. The institution must prepare the final expenditure report. The awardee is required to notify AANEM of any publications that are based off the funded fellowship.

DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION

All applications and supporting materials must be received by December 14, 2018. Fellowship recipient(s) will be notified by February 15, 2019 for a start date of July 1, 2019.