# Terms and conditions for the Research Fellowship Scheme

**Introduction**

The research fellowship provides 12 months of funding to support trainee members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England who are ideally registered for a higher degree and want to complete a dedicated year of research in support of their first significant research project.

Applicants may study any aspect of surgery or surgical care including basic science, diagnosis, treatment, surgical technology, audit or issues related to DEI in surgery or healthcare provision. The main criteria for those interested in applying are to delineate important research questions, with an appropriate study design, which can be completed within the year of the fellowship. The research can also be self-contained or part of a wider research programme. The supervisor plays a key role in helping with the writing and structure of the application, as well as offering support during the research year.

The applicant should be employed by a UK University or NHS Trust, and the research must be undertaken in the UK.

**Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in July each year and will be asked to confirm acceptance of the award terms and conditions, along with start date, within one month of the offer.**

**Eligibility**

Subscribing trainee members of the Royal College of Surgeons of England in a training post, or trainees who have passed the MCQ papers and will sit the final MRCS examination at this College, are eligible to apply. SAS Surgeon members of the College are also eligible to apply, but maximum salary point cannot exceed ST6-8, Nodal point 5 on the resident doctor pay scale.

**Period of Support**

Fellowships will normally be held for one year, and the start date must be within 6 months of the date of award. Whenever possible, the Fellowship year should be held during a year’s leave of absence from a recognised basic or higher surgical training scheme, so that the applicant has a known position to which to return afterwards. Fellowships are not renewable.

**RCS England membership status**

Membership subscription must remain up to date from application through to at least the end of the fellowship period Membership status is periodically checked, and salary recharge invoices and travel claims will not be paid where this condition is breached.

Membership subscription will need to remain up to date in order for the fellow to be considered for any other benefits, prizes or opportunities that may arise for an RCS England research fellow beyond the fellowship term.

**Financial Administration**

**Financial Provision**

The Fellowship provides a salary for the Research Fellow, within the salary scales, by means of a fixed-term contract of employment arranged with the host centre. RCS England will honour any increments and nationally agreed pay awards made during the period of the Fellowship. Some additional financial support is available for attendance at approved scientific meetings and a Consumables Grant of up to £3,000 pa. (see below).

**Please note that it is not possible to vire between funding headings.**

**Salaries**

Salaries are assessed in accordance with the standard practice of the host centre: they are normally within the NHS Resident Doctor pay scale. They will not exceed the maximum (ST6-8, Nodal point 5) of this scale. For Fellows on NHS scales it should be assumed that NHS procedures regarding grading and assimilation will be followed, the scale points are merely being used to give incrementation on a date in line with the Fellow's previous appointment or the starting date of the award. London allowance is payable where applicable. The host centre should be responsible for sending invoices quarterly in arrears.

**The fellowship award does not include banding or the apprenticeship levy.**

**Consumables Grant**

A contribution of up to £3,000 pa towards the research costs associated with the Fellowship may be awarded at the discretion of RCS England. Supervisors should complete and sign the enclosed form detailing the planned expenditure. This form should be returned to the Research Department.

The consumables grant should be spent during the period of the research fellowship. Consumables should be purchased through the employing institution and the costs included on the salary recharge invoice. **The consumables grant cannot be extended beyond the end of the fellowship.**

**Claims for Reimbursement**

Claims for reimbursement of salary and consumables expenditure should be made quarterly in arrears with back up, certificated by the finance officer (or other appropriate official) of the centre. This should be submitted without delay after the end of the period covered by the claim, to the address on the funding confirmation letter. The invoice should include the name of the research fellow and the period of charge.

**Attendance at Scientific Meetings**

The Fellowship award includes an allowance of up to £500 for expenses associated with a Fellow presenting their research at a scientific meeting

Requests for the payment of such expenses should be made well in advance of the date of the meeting to be attended, giving full details of the actual costs, and funds available from other sources; they should be accompanied by a supporting letter from the supervisor outlining the relevance of the meeting to the Fellow's work. In order to claim reimbursement the Fellow will need to complete and return the expenses claim form provided in the award pack to the Research Department.

**Alternative Funding**

Details of funding in connection with the project, from other external bodies either prior to, or subsequent to, the RCS England award must be stated in writing to the RCS England Research Department not later than six weeks of it being known.

**Employment Status**

**Conditions for Application**

Applications and Research Fellowship awards are made on the understanding that the host centre, the supervisor and the applicant agree to accept the terms and conditions relating to the scheme and any amendments issued during the course of the award.

**Contractual Status of Fellows**

An award under these regulations will normally be administered through a fixed-term contract of employment between the Fellow and the host centre, for the period of the award. The emoluments provided under the Fellowship are chargeable to income tax under Schedule E (PAYE) and Class 1 National Insurance contributions will be payable in accordance with the *Social Security Act* 1973.

Where Fellows are to be admitted to the superannuation scheme appropriate to employees of the host centre, the full cost to the employer of superannuation provision will be reimbursed by RCS England. RCS England accepts no responsibility for claims under the *Employment Protection (Consolidation) Act* 1978 and/or any subsequent employment legislation, nor will it indemnify the host centre against claims for compensation or against other claims for which the centre may be liable as an employer.

**Other awards and Emoluments**

Fellowships are awarded for full-time training and RCS England’s approval must be sought before any other work is carried out within normal working hours. It will generally be necessary to make a reduction in salary corresponding to any additional income so derived. Fellows MUST notify RCS England of any earnings from such work and of any honoraria or awards received.

**Clinical Trials**

RCS England is keen to engage more proactively in surgical trials and during the year, the Research Fellow may be asked to participate, for example, by recruiting patients to such trials.

**Private Practice**

It will be a condition of any award that Research Fellows do not engage in private practice for personal gain.

**Holidays**

Fellows must take holidays in accordance with the conditions of service of the host centre up to a maximum of six weeks during a complete year. The date and duration of any holiday proposed beyond this period should be reported to RCS England.

**Sick Leave**

Fellows will be subject to the normal conditions of service of the host centre so far as sick leave is concerned, but the Research department should be notified if a Fellow is likely to be away through illness for more than a month.

**Parental Leave**

Fellows will be subject to the normal conditions of service of the host centre for parental leave. RCS England should be notified in writing if parental leave is required, at which point further advice will be provided.

**Less than full time (LTFT) Contracts**

Trainees who are working in approved LTFT posts are welcomed, noting

* Their time working should be wholly focused on research – we cannot support a candidate wanting to undertake a split between research and clinical activity.
* The fellowship must be completed within two years.

**Honorary Clinical Contracts**

Fellows who undertake, as part of their research programme, work concerned with the care of patients are reminded that they should be in possession of an honorary clinical contract from the appropriate health authority. Responsibility for seeking such a contract will lie with the head of the department in which the Fellow is working. Should any difficulties be encountered, RCS England should be informed.

**Medical Defence Cover**

It is the responsibility of each Fellow to ensure that they hold adequate cover with a professional defence organisation for any activities undertaken which are not covered by NHS indemnity arrangements or by an additional provision which may be made by the host centre. The cost of any such cover will not be met by RCS England.

**General Administration**

**Change of Project**

The fellowship funding is awarded only for the project detailed in the application form and identified on the award letter.

**Change of Circumstance**

RCS England must be notified of any changes in a Fellow's training programme, project or supervisor (or wider circumstances) from those originally approved at which point further advice will be provided.

**Diplomates day**

Each Research Fellow will be expected to attend one of the RCS England Diplomates Day ceremonies to receive their Research Fellowship certificate – this is the only method of receiving the certificate.

**Research Methods Course**

Each Research Fellow will be expected to attend the two day research methods course run, and paid for, by RCS England.

**Interim, and Final Report and Subsequent Post**

Fellows are required to submit a report on a form which will be supplied at six months and one year of their period of research on the work undertaken and to inform RCS England of the appointment they propose to undertake on the conclusion of the award.

**Publications**

The preliminary findings and results of a Fellow's work may be published in the usual way at the discretion of the supervisor or head of department. The Royal College of Surgeons of England must be acknowledged as the source of funds in any publication dealing with the work carried out during the tenure of a Fellowship. Publications and details should be forwarded to the Research Department.

**Presentations**

From time to time the Research Fellow may be requested to make presentations on behalf of RCS England at fund raising and open evenings. The Research Fellow should make a claim for expenses to the Research Department on the appropriate claim form.

**Commercial Exploitation**

The Royal College of Surgeons of England is concerned to promote the transfer of research discoveries, ideas and techniques to industry and to those who deliver health care. Research fellows and supervisors should therefore keep under continuous review the question of whether the work has potential industrial application, taking appropriate action in accordance with the protection and exploitation of research findings.

Research fellows and supervisors are reminded that any form of ‘disclosure’ whether in journals or at learned society meetings, may prejudice subsequent filing of a patent application. If a Fellow has a successful outcome to any patent application, based on RCS England funded work, RCS England wishes its contribution to be acknowledged.