

Postdoctoral Fellowships - Application Guidelines 2019

Please note – this document updated 31st July 2019

Closing date: Friday 30 August 2019 at 6:00 pm AEST

Late or incomplete application forms will not be accepted.

Please read these instructions carefully before completing the application form.

1. Introduction

The MND Research Institute of Australia (MNDRIA) offers two three-year Postdoctoral Fellowships available to commence in 2020:

- (i) **Bill Gole MND Postdoctoral Fellowship**
- (ii) **Beryl Bayley MND Postdoctoral Fellowship.**

2. Objectives of the Postdoctoral Fellowships

- 2.1. MNDRIA's Postdoctoral Fellowships aim to encourage young researchers to focus their interest on [classical forms of MND](#). Classical MND includes amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and bulbar palsies (progressive bulbar palsy and pseudobulbar palsy), progressive muscular atrophy (PMA) and primary lateral sclerosis (PLS). Research investigating other forms of MND should demonstrate a potential benefit to the classical forms of MND.
- 2.2. The Fellowships are directed towards postdoctoral scientists with a track record in MND or areas of neuroscience related to MND.
- 2.3. MNDRIA Postdoctoral Fellowships provide a full-time salary of \$100,000 p.a. for three years.
- 2.4. Requests for less than full-time will not be considered by MNDRIA.

3. Key eligibility criteria

- 3.1. The applicant should have a track record in MND research or in areas of neuroscience related to MND.
- 3.2. The applicant must be an Australian citizen or have permanent resident status.
- 3.3. At 30 August 2019 applicants must have no more than three years research experience from the date their doctoral thesis was passed.
- 3.4. Applicants who will submit their completed doctoral thesis before the end of 2019 will be considered but the Fellowship cannot be taken up by the applicant until the thesis has been passed.

4. Application

4.1. Application process

- 4.1.1. **Applications will only be accepted through [NHMRC administering institutions](#). Applications should be submitted by the institution research office.**
Applications submitted by the applicant will not be accepted.
- 4.1.2. Applicants must use the relevant application form on the MNDRIA website.
- 4.1.3. All applications will be assessed by the [MNDRIA Research Committee](#) against the selection criteria as outlined in these guidelines. Applicants must meet all of the eligibility criteria. Applicants who fail to meet any one of the eligibility criteria will be deemed to be ineligible.
- 4.1.4. The MNDRIA Research Committee is responsible for assessing applications and making their recommendation for funding approval to the Board of MND Australia.

4.2. **Applications close at 6:00pm AEST Friday 30 August 2019.**

- 4.2.1. Proposals are to be sent to Dr Gethin Thomas, Executive Director Research by email to research@mndaustralia.org.au.
- 4.2.2. All sections of the application, including the cover sheet, must be saved and forwarded as a single PDF document.
- 4.2.3. Font must be Arial and at least 11 pt.

4.3. **Incomplete or misleading information**

- 4.3.1. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that applications are complete and accurate. If an application is incomplete or inaccuracies are identified, MNDRIA will exclude it from further consideration.
- 4.3.2. If any application is found to have been intentionally completed (or failed to be completed) in such a way as to mislead MNDRIA, or is otherwise false or misleading in any material respect, the applicant will be disqualified from the Fellowship.

5. Proposal

5.1. Applications should include the following;

- 5.1.1. **Aims and hypotheses** (maximum 1 page)
 - 5.1.1.1. List the specific aims and potential significance of the project. The aims of the research must be clear to the MNDRIA Research Committee and relevant to the development of an understanding of the causes, treatments or cures of classical MND.
 - 5.1.1.2. State clearly which hypotheses are to be tested.
- 5.1.2. **Significance** (maximum 1 page)
 - 5.1.2.1. What is new and/ or different about the proposed research plan?
 - 5.1.2.2. What is the potential to significantly contribute to the knowledge base around the causes, treatments or cure for MND?
- 5.1.3. **Background** (maximum 2 pages)
- 5.1.4. **Research plan** (maximum 3 pages)

A detailed research plan for a full-time three-year project (which will be relevant to the cause, treatment or cure of [classical forms of MND](#)).
- 5.1.5. **Reference list** (maximum 2 pages)

5.1.6. **Suitability of the candidate for the Fellowship** (maximum 1 page)

5.1.7. **Curriculum vitae** (max 2 pages).

Publications listed should not include publications 'in preparation' or 'submitted'.

5.1.8. **Referees**

Provide the names of three academic referees for the principal applicant who must provide reports (sent to Dr Gethin Thomas at research@mndaustralia.org.au) before the deadline. Referee reports should address the strengths of the candidate and application in regards to the scoring criteria i.e. (i) track record of the applicant, (ii) strength of the research plan and (iii) its relevance to MND.

5.1.9. **Details of institution where the work will be carried out**

5.1.9.1. State in which department and which institution this project will primarily be carried out.

5.1.9.2. A covering letter is required from the sponsoring institution confirming that laboratory space and consumables will be provided for the project.

5.1.10. **Completed cover sheet**

5.1.10.1. Applicants must complete all sections of the cover sheet as part of the application form.

6. Review process

6.1. Applications will be reviewed by a minimum three independent reviewers as part of a competitive, peer review process.

6.2. Applications will be scored according to (i) track record of the applicant, (ii) strength of the research plan and (iii) its relevance to MND.

6.3. Funding decisions will be made by the MNDRIA Research Committee at a Grants Allocation Meeting in October 2019. Successful applicants will be notified after this meeting.

6.4. The decision of the Research Committee is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

7. Commencement of the Postdoctoral Fellowship from 1 January 2020

7.1. Successful applicants must commence their Postdoctoral Fellowship before 30 June 2020 or the grant will lapse.

7.2. The Fellowship must be completed within 48 months from the date of commencement.

7.3. Payment and reporting

7.3.1. A full-time salary will be funded at \$100,000 per year for up to three years.

7.3.2. The grant will commence with the first payment at the beginning of 2019 on signing a contract with MNDRIA.

7.3.3. Six-monthly payments will be made following receipt of a satisfactory progress report and an annual financial report.

7.3.4. Where a recipient fails to submit satisfactory reports as required, MNDRIA may determine that funds have not been used in accordance with conditions applicable to the Fellowship and the grant may be terminated.

7.3.5. A full scientific report is required at the end of the funding period.

7.3.6. Lay reports may be included on MNDRIA's website and newsletters to members, patients, carers, the MND Associations and donors.

7.4. Alterations to the Postdoctoral Fellowship

- 7.4.1. Fellows must adhere to the approved fellowship project.
- 7.4.2. Any proposed alterations should be submitted in advance for approval by the MNDRIA Research Committee.
- 7.4.3. MNDRIA must be notified immediately if circumstances change during the tenure of a Fellowship, particularly when the ability of the fellow to undertake the roles and responsibilities of the fellowship may be affected by the change in circumstances. MNDRIA retains the right to review a Fellowship in light of these changes and reserves the right to terminate a Fellowship should this be deemed appropriate.

7.5. Publications, presentations and acknowledgements

- 7.5.1. The successful applicant will be expected to publish their findings in an appropriate scientific journal.
- 7.5.2. Publications and presentations must acknowledge MNDRIA and the name of the Fellowship.

8. Privacy of individuals/ confidentiality

- 8.1. All personal information provided in the application and assessment details will be kept by MNDRIA and only be used for the purposes of administering this application, and if successful, the Fellowship.
- 8.2. Applicant's personal information will be disclosed to reviewers as noted above.
- 8.3. Some details of successful applications will be published on the MNDRIA website, including name, location, project title and a brief description of the project.
- 8.4. Information contained in applications will be regarded as confidential except as stated in 8.1 above.