

ERS Short-Term Research Training Fellowships 2015 Rules & Regulations

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1. General description & eligibility criteria

1.1. Aims

- a. The ERS is funding a Short-Term Research Training Fellowship programme with the aims of:
 - Promoting training to be applied in research on respiratory medicine in Europe;
 - Supporting the exchange in Europe of scientists/investigators as well as clinicians actively involved in research in respiratory medicine;
 - Contributing to the transfer and implementation of new research techniques or methodologies in Europe and internationally;
 - Stimulating Fellows' career development in the area of respiratory research and practice;
 - Supporting junior candidates in the early-stages of their research career in respiratory medicine;
 - Supporting new capacity and knowledge building in European and non-European countries who have a scientific gap (clinical and scientific).
- b. Fellowships are funded by the ERS with the objectives of enabling scientists, investigators, clinicians and allied healthcare professionals in the early-stages of their research career, to carry out basic, translational or clinical research projects and to develop, acquire and apply new skills, advanced research procedures and techniques in the area of respiratory medicine. At the current level of funding, the ERS Scientific Committee selects about 20 grants annually.
- c. Fellowships are established to advance respiratory medicine and science by helping scientists and clinicians to visit another research laboratory or clinical unit in a different country with the aim of learning a research technique not available in the Home Institute, and to which they did not have access before. The project may involve basic experimental studies, clinical investigations, epidemiology or any other research area with relevance to respiratory medicine.
- d. Fellowships are intended to foster basic and advanced research as well as to support applications which are presented as a training component of a central robust research project (e.g. apply advanced research, test a hypothesis in pilot study, innovate a clinical technique, set up methods to be applied for clinical research at the Home Institute).
- e. ERS Fellowships are not granted for purely clinical and educative training (clinical diagnostic procedures, therapeutic interventional procedures, treatment, etc.), thus it is a mandatory requirement that the projects include major "research components". Accordingly, research training projects should lead to research activities and developments during the Fellowship, and after the training period when returning to the Home Institute, which need to be outlined in the project description.
- f. The ERS Short-Term Research Training Fellowships schemes offer the opportunity for the exchange of a candidate between two groups, from a Home Unit of origin to a receiving Host Unit, collaborating with an individual research project which is to be carried out in a hosting centre located in a different country in Europe. Therefore when applying, applications must already involve an agreement with the Host Unit.
- g. ERS Fellowships are not granted for undergraduate studies, workshops, courses, lectures, meetings, conferences, congresses or for visiting institutions without a clear research project to be completed.

Please note that the following eligibility criteria which apply under articles 1.2. to 1.8. for the standard ERS Short-Term Research Fellowships may differ or be completed by other additional criteria for the Specific Fellowships under section 2:

- 2.2. International Short-Term Research Training Fellowship
- 2.3. ERS Fellowship for "Scientifically Developing Countries" (priority to WHO low-medium income countries)
- 2.4. ERS Fellowship in memory of Walther Guerrero Ciquero
- 2.5. Joint Fellowship with the Italian National Society AIMAR
- 2.6. ERS PAH Fellowship Programme in the broad field of pulmonary circulation (*GlaxoSmithKline*) (supported by an unrestricted grant by *GlaxoSmithKline*)
- 2.7. Joint Fellowship with EMBO in the respiratory and broad field of molecular biology

1.2. Recipients' profile

a. Qualifications & Experience

- a. Candidates should be currently engaged in respiratory research/science/practice that is relevant to respiratory medicine; they must possess appropriate scientific, medical and/or professional qualifications and experience according to the specific Fellowship applied for.
- b. Applicants must be postgraduates holding a university degree in any field related to respiratory medicine (MD, MSc, PhD, MD-PhD). As a minimum requirement, applicants need to have graduated with an MD, MSc or equivalent at the time of application.
- c. Postgraduate scientists active in any field related to respiratory science such as immunologists, biologists, geneticists, pharmacologists, biophysicists, chemists, etc. involved in respiratory science, are entitled to apply for an ERS Short-Term Fellowships. As a minimum requirement, applicants should hold a university degree and have graduated with an MSc or equivalent at the time of application.
- d. Applicants who are qualified healthcare professionals (non-MD) working in respiratory health/medicine (nurses, physiotherapists, respiratory function technologists, allied respiratory professionals, etc.) are entitled to apply for an ERS Short-Term Fellowship. As a minimum requirement, applicants need to have graduated with an MSc or equivalent at the time of application.
- e. Candidates with confirmed research experience in respiratory medicine will be rejected on administrative grounds. The ERS Short-Term Research Training Fellowship Programme is to support early-stage researchers essentially;
- f. Candidates must have adequate fluency in a language that permits effective communication at the Host Institute.

b. Age & Career

The ERS does not apply an upper age-limit on candidates. Instead, priority is given to applicants in the early-stage of their research career.

c. Geographic origin

The programme is open to both European and non-European based candidates to apply for a fellowship in a foreign country in Europe (except for the International Research Training Fellowship, which enables Europe-based scientists to go into a non-European country).

d. Membership

Candidates must have an ERS membership when applying for an ERS Short-Term Fellowship. Find out more about how to become an ERS member: www.ersnet.org/membership

1.3. 3Rs (replacement, reduction, refinement)

ERS promote research into alternatives and support 3Rs guiding principles for ethical use of animal testing (replacement, reduction, refinement). Applicants' researchers are encouraged to integrate a 3Rs component and demonstrate the use of replacement, reduction and refinement techniques in their research proposal involving animals.

Where applicable and appropriate, a project proposal could include a 3Rs approach, strategy and plan.

Further information and definitions are available on the following websites. Please note that ERS has no link with those organisations:

<http://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/how/the-three-Rs>

<https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs>

1.4. Mobility scheme

- a. The Host Supervisor must be located in a foreign European country other than the candidate's own (except for the International Fellowship – please refer to section 2.2).

- b. Mobility is crucial, as ERS fellowships aim at promoting knowledge's exchange between countries. Exchanges between two units within the same country are not allowed unless with a strong mobility justification (i.e. distance factor). The ERS will make a decision on a case by case basis.
- c. On completion of the Fellowship applicants must return to their Home laboratory; the goal being to directly apply the acquired skills back at the Home Unit. A robust research plan back Home/project details and work plan to be outlined in the project description will be a pre-requisite.
- d. Candidates should not have been already at the host institute for more than 6 months at the time of application. Candidates who have already been in the Host Institute for less than 6 months at the time of application will be judged more severely. In general, ERS Fellowships should not be used to extend a previous stay at the same Host Unit or in the same Host Country. The aim is to generate opportunities enabling the candidate to learn new techniques in order to develop a career, to have access to a new working environment, and not to continue an established collaboration.

1.5. Mandatory return to the Home Institute

- a. In order to enable such knowledge transfer, the awards are conditional on the return of the Fellow to the Home Institute at the end of the Fellowship and completion of project. The Fellowships are also conditional on the availability of appropriate facilities, resources and funds at the Home Institute to apply and implement the newly acquired research techniques or research results.
- b. Candidates must have a clear formal connection/link to the Home Institute, to which they will return to at the end of the Fellowship. This connection (employment, under staff payroll, PhD studentship, etc.) will be testified in the Home Supervisor's release form.
- c. The ERS will accept applications pending that the research competences to be acquired in the Host Institute are not available in the Home Institute.
- d. A statement of the Home Supervisor confirming that facilities, funds and resources will be made available to the Fellow upon return; in order to enable him/her to conduct research activities/projects back at the Home Unit will be requested. A clear research plan back at the Home Unit will need to be outlined in the project description.

1.6. Selection of the Host Institute

- a. All applications must involve a Home Institute of origin and a receiving Host Institute. When applying, the applications must already involve an agreement with the hosting/receiving Institute where the fellowship will be carried out. A fellowship project should normally specify only one Institute as Host unit and only one project title.
- b. It is the responsibility of the Fellow to find a Host Supervisor willing to Host him/her and to find an adequate research project description (ERS does not prospect for these).
- c. Fellowships are conditional on the availability of appropriate infrastructures, facilities, resources and funds to carry out the research project at the Host Unit.
- d. The quality of the selected Host Institute and its adequacy in relation to the suggested research project are important criteria which will be assessed during the reviewing and selection procedure of applications.
- e. The proposal should elaborate on how the partnership between the Host and the candidate would take full advantage of the unique facilities, resources, and materials available in their respective Host and Home Units. It should also be indicated in the project description how the new research techniques will be relevant to the career of the applicant and to research in respiratory medicine in the Home Institute. The initiation or development of collaborative projects between the Host and Home Institutes are encouraged.
- f. The project description needs to be worked out with the contribution of all three parties involved (applicant, Home Supervisor, Host Supervisor). In order to ensure that the application carries the endorsement of the Home/Host Supervisor, the latter will need to provide their CV (including supporting grants) and publication list as indicated in the mandatory application files. A statement of the Host Supervisors' interest in the candidate and confirmation that he/she is qualified to carry out the project will be requested.

- g. ERS Fellows are encouraged to engage in teaching, discussion and similar activities of the institution they visit. They may not, however, engage in any paid or salaried activities, which are not related to the ERS research training project, during the course of their fellowships.

1.7. Time constraints

a. Start date

- a. The start date of the Fellowship cannot be set earlier than August 2015 for applications submitted in April since a granting decision can only be expected in July 2015. For applications submitted in October the start date of the Fellowship cannot be set earlier than March 2016 since a granting decision can only be expected in February 2016.
- b. The start date should allow for sufficient time after the expected date of the funding decision for the Fellow to complete travel, visa, passport and housing formalities
- c. The Fellowships are not granted in retrospect for already fully or partly carried out projects.

b. Length of fellowship

- a. ERS Short-Term Research Training Fellowships are intended for work periods between 1 and 3 months in a foreign country in Europe (except for the International Research Training Fellowship, which enables Europe-based scientists to go into a non-European country – please refer to 2.2).
- b. The research training project outlined in the Fellowship application is to be carried out in a continuous time period and may not be split nor reduced.
- c. It is critical that the research project's plan is realistic and that the research project is feasible to be completed within the projected time frame.
- d. The ERS Scientific Committee reserves the right to reduce this period depending on the content of the submitted project.
- e. The Fellowship is to be carried out in a full time basis (100% working time appointment at the Host Unit dedicated to work on the suggested fellowship research project). The Fellows may not be engaged in any paid or salaried activities other than those related to the ERS research project during the course of their fellowship.

c. Postponement of start date or modification of duration

- a. The Fellowship should be started within 1 year from the positive notification date at the latest.
- b. Once the duration has been agreed between the Host and the Home Institute (set in the application files), it should normally not be changed without approval of the ERS; indeed the outlined project may not be amended once the applications are submitted (if any reduction is accepted by ERS, the grant amount to the Fellow will be reduced accordingly).

d. Selection notification

Applicants can usually expect a decision as from the second week of July 2014 for the STRTF submitted in April and as from the second week of February 2015 for the STRTF submitted in October.

1.8. Previous ERS Fellowship(s) recipients

- a. Applicants who have already been awarded a standard or specific ERS Long-Term Fellowship or two standard/specific ERS Short-Term Fellowships in the past, are not eligible.
- b. Candidates having received only once a standard/specific ERS Short-Term Fellowship in the past are eligible to reapply for this programme provided that they are members of the Association of ERS Fellows and that they have provided the ERS with the requested follow-up reports at the end of their fellowship.
- c. Their application for this ERS Short-Term Research Training Fellowship programme will be considered in competition as any other new application on the basis of scientific merit. These should not be too closely similar to the previously granted ERS fellowship. They will undergo a new selection procedure and no guarantee for funding is available. Applications will have to be submitted by the official fellowship application deadlines.

1.9. Extension of a previous project supported by other funds

- a. Applications for the extension of a previous project supported from other sources will be considered in competition as any other application on the basis of scientific merit.
- b. Applicants should inform the ERS about the success or challenges/failure of the earlier project. A description of the new added value in terms of skills, techniques, results should be included, as well as the a clear statement of the expected new benefits.
- c. Candidates should not have already been at the Host Institute for over 6 months at the time of application deadline.
- d. Any continuation of an ERS fellowship or extension of previous funding sources are required to **return to the Home Institution** at the end of the fellowship.

1.10. Requirements for Host Institute

Host Institute will be requested to ensure the fulfillment of both practical and scientific aspects which are relevant in the beginning (housing, safety), during the completion (regular meetings, evaluations) and at the end/during the follow-up of the Fellowship (please refer to section 5).

- a. The Host Supervisor will be required, before the beginning of the project, to confirm in writing that he/she is prepared to receive the Fellow and to provide the necessary facilities to carry out the research. Written confirmation by the Host should include a starting date of the Fellowship, and a confirmation of the Host Institute's responsibilities which include availability of laboratory and office space; ability to conduct the projected research; and verification that health & safety issues are taken care of. The Host will also be asked to assist the Fellow in housing and other practical issues (e.g. he/she will be directed to the university's housing department).
- b. An important aspect of this written confirmation will be that the Host is requested to assign named persons as scientific and administrative mentors for the Fellow. The first one being responsible for the scientific part of the Fellow's project, whereas the second mentor will be responsible for coaching the Fellow in all matters related to visa requirements, registration with the university, opening a bank account, housing, taxation issues, finding appropriate schools for the Fellow's children, etc.
- c. The Host Supervisor will be entitled to accept only one Fellow per round.

1.11. Unexpected event or project change after selection

- a. The implementation of the Fellowship (duration, research project, supervision, location, etc.) should be carried out exclusively as outlined in the submitted fellowship application and may not be amended.
- b. Any event or circumstance which might affect the implementation of the Fellowship or are likely to have an effect on the performance of the Fellowship need to be notified to the ERS at the earliest. Fellowships that are terminated prematurely, must be notified promptly to the ERS and appropriate funds reimbursed.
- c. If there are any problems, the Fellow has the possibility of reporting these to the ERS, who in such cases will contact the Host in order to try to solve the problems. In extreme circumstances the ERS may decide to prematurely terminate the Fellowship.

Any infringement of the above conditions will result in the withdrawal of an application from the selection process or the cancellation of an award already made.

2. Eligibility criteria for Specific Fellowships

Please note that if there are no different or additional criteria required, the eligibility criteria outlined in section 1 (pages 2-6) prevail and supersede this section.

2.1. General information on the Specific Fellowships

- a. The Specific Fellowships follow the same rules and regulation and will undergo the same reviewing and selection process as any other application for ERS fellowships.
- b. The application process does not differ from any ERS Short-Term Research Training Fellowship. Applicants should follow the instructions provided on the ERS' web-based application platform, and submit all required documents within the set deadline.
- c. The selection will be processed in competition with any other ERS STTRTF application and will as such need to pass the threshold of the cut off score in the same way as any other application. In case no submitted applications make it to the top ranking on the basis of scientific merit, no Specific Fellowship will be granted that year/round.
- d. The application will be reviewed by the ERS just as any other application. Applications that have been ranked for support from ERS and are eligible for a specific Fellowship will be selected in competition with the other specific Fellowships.
- e. In case the candidate does not succeed for the Specific Fellowship and if top-ranked by the ERS reviewers for funding, he/she will be granted a standard ERS Fellowship.
- f. Financial support, grant amount settlements and performance obligations of Specific Fellowships will be the same as for standard ERS fellowships. The only difference will be in the title and acknowledgment of endorsement that they will need to include.

2.2. ERS International Fellowship

- a. Candidates should be postgraduate in any field related to respiratory medicine/science with appropriate scientific, medical and/or professional qualifications and experience. Applicants are early-career physicians, scientists (MS, MSc, PhD, MD-PhD) or qualified health professionals (non-MD).
- b. International Research Fellowships are designed for all nationalities, but candidates should be **Europe-based** with a **Host Unit outside of Europe**, provided that the objectives of the research project are not available or attainable in Europe.
- c. Applicants shall justify in the project description why the research project cannot be completed or attained within a European Institute, and why going abroad is essential.
- d. Applicants shall indicate how the new research techniques/knowledge will be relevant to the Home Unit.
- e. A research project plan shall be included with the project description, detailing activities, timing, and resources for transferring the acquired knowledge at the Home Unit's level.
- f. Conversely, the Home Unit shall demonstrate that facilities, resources, material etc. will be available to the Fellow upon return for knowledge transfer.
- g. Two International Short-Term Research Training Fellowships can be granted per application deadline.

2.3. ERS Fellowship for Scientifically Developing Countries

- a. This unique capacity building fellowship scheme is for all nationalities, European and non-European based postgraduates and early-career physicians, scientists (MD, MSc, PhD) and allied health professionals (non-MD) active in any field related to respiratory medicine/science. Applicants have less grounding in research methods but wish to develop new research skills in a Host Institute in Europe/in another European country.
- b. This fellowship is designed for candidates from countries with specific needs such as research gaps, needs, and/or specific topics in respiratory medicine or science, which can thus be considered as developing from a scientific perspective.
- c. Eligible applicants are those who do not have the opportunity to receive education or training in scientific developed countries.
- d. The research project may involve basic experimental study, clinical investigation, epidemiology or any other research area(s) with relevance to respiratory medicine. It can be of a more clinical and/or training nature pending that a valid rationale is put forward in the project description.

- e. The application should include a valid rationale explaining on what basis the Home Unit and Country in which the applicant is based can be considered in need in specific area(s) within the respiratory field (e.g. specific illnesses, research gap, specific technique/skillset missing); the ERS recommend applicants to use the ERS Roadmap (<http://www.ersroadmap.org>) as a broad reference. The rationale should be backed up by solid data/research as well as other key documents (e.g. policy papers, etc), demonstrating a recognised gap/need at national level.
- f. Applicants should justify in the project description why the research project cannot be completed or attained within their Home country and why going to a country in Europe is essential. Candidates should explain how the acquired skills/experience will benefit the Country in need and where they are based, and how they propose to share/disseminate the knowledge gained upon return (e.g. if training in specific technology, then relevant equipment would need to be available in Home Country or to be acquired in future).
- g. Return to the applicant's Home Unit is mandatory on completion of the fellowship. The aim being to learn, implement and apply back research techniques not already available in the Home Unit. Applications should demonstrate a formal and robust link with the Home Unit and already involve an agreement with the Host Unit. The proposal should elaborate on how the partnership between the two centres and the candidate will take full advantage of the facilities, resources, know-how and materials available in the respective host and Home Units. Additionally, ERS reviewers will pay particular attention to the applicants' research plan detailing the actions taken upon return to the Home Unit.
- h. Fellows will receive a one off travel flat rate for travel costs: €400 for travel up to 5,000km between the Host and Home units, or €1200 for travel above 5,000km.
- i. Depending on the number of applications received, priority will be given to applicants based in low-income countries (WHO list – available on the application portal).

2.4. ERS Fellowship in memory of Dr Valia Kechagia

Dr Valia Kechagia was a speciality doctor in adult cystic fibrosis. She qualified from Athens Medical University in 1998, and worked for different aspects of the respiratory department at a prestigious UK hospital from 2004. Her contribution to adult cystic fibrosis included an extensive research into the mechanism underlying exacerbations of asthma associated with viral infections. The aim of this fellowship is to support the training and education in research techniques of a young MD or an allied health professional at the beginning of his/her career in the field of adult cystic fibrosis.

Dr Valia Kechagia died in summer 2014. This fellowship has been initiated by her colleagues and family in her memory.

- a. This fellowship is for a project in the field of adult cystic fibrosis.
- b. One ERS Short-Term Research Training Fellowship in memory of Dr Vala Kechagia can be granted per year and will be awarded to a project which carries on in the spirit of Dr Valia Kechagia's work.
- c. It is designed for candidates based in Greece to do a research training at a host unit in another European country (Greece to another European country).
- d. Candidates coming from another European country are not eligible. Candidates going to Greece are not eligible.
- e. A return to the home unit in Greece is mandatory upon fellowship completion.
- f. In order for the applicant to show his/her agreement for the application to be selected as an "ERS Valia Kechagia CF Fellowship", applicants should tick on the box "I apply for the ERS Valia Kechagia CF Fellowship" when applying online.

2.5. ERS Fellowship in memory of Walther Guerrero Ciquero

- a. The Short-Term Research Training Fellowship for a research project in the field of tuberculosis, in tribute to the life and work of Dr. Walther Guerrero Ciquero, ERS President's Awardee 2010, is designed for candidates coming from low-medium income countries (WHO) to work in Europe. The aim of this Fellowship is to support the training and education in research techniques of a young doctor in the field of tuberculosis.
- b. One ERS Short-Term Research Training Fellowship in memory of Dr. Walther Guerrero Ciquero can be granted per year and will be awarded to a project which carries on in the spirit of Walther Guerrero Ciquero's work.

- c. The only difference with other ERS STRTF application will be in the title and acknowledgment of endorsement that they will need to include (“ERS Walther Guerrero Ciquero Fellowship” instead of simply “ERS Fellowship”).
- d. In order for the applicant to show his/her agreement for the application to be selected as an “ERS Walther Guerrero Ciquero Fellowship”, the applicant should tick on the box “I apply for the ERS Walther Guerrero Ciquero Fellowship”.

2.6. Joint Fellowship with the Italian National Society AIMAR

- a. Fellowships jointly funded by the ERS and national societies are possible in the case of an agreement between the national society and the ERS. An agreement exists with AIMAR (Italy, www.aimarnet.it) for four Short-Term Fellowships a year.
- b. **The candidate may be from Italy going to another European country, or from Europe and overseas going to Italy.** Applicants who are resident in Italy must be members of AIMAR.
- c. The selected applicants will be both ERS Fellows and AIMAR Fellows. They will have to use the title and acknowledgment of endorsement “ERS/AIMAR Joint Fellowship” instead of simply “ERS Fellowship”.
- d. In order for the applicant to show his/her agreement for the application to be selected as a joint Fellowship with the national society AIMAR, the applicant should tick on the box “I accept that my Fellowship is co-funded by AIMAR and carries the title ERS/AIMAR Joint Fellowship”.
- e. Applications that have been ranked for support from ERS and are eligible for AIMAR support may become co-funded Fellowships if they are also approved by AIMAR.

2.7. ERS PAH Fellowships Programme (supported by an unrestricted grant by GlaxoSmithKline)

- a. ERS PAH Long-Term Research Fellowship opportunities are awarded to address research in the broad field of pulmonary circulation (immunology, cardiology, vascular disease, etc.). ERS PAH Fellowships are intended to support clinical research, translational research, basic science and advanced research.
- b. Clinical research projects and translational research projects will be favoured.
- c. All nationalities as well as European based and non-European based candidates are eligible. The candidate must be going to a European country to carry out the research fellowship project.
- d. Candidates must be postgraduates holding a university degree in any field such as respiratory medicine/science, immunology, biology, genetics, pharmacology, biophysics, chemistry, etc., as long as relevant to the application’s project (MD, MSc, PhD, or equivalent). As a minimum requirement applicants need to have graduated with an MD, MSc or equivalent at the time of application. In addition candidates may also be qualified healthcare professionals (non-MD) working in respiratory medicine/health (nurses, physiotherapists, respiratory function technologists, allied respiratory professionals).
- e. On completion of the fellowship applicants **must return to their Home Unit**, the aim being to learn, implement and apply back research techniques not already available in the Home Unit. Therefore when applying, applications must have a formal robust link with the Home Unit and already involve an agreement with the Host Unit. The proposal should thus elaborate on how the partnership between the two centres and the candidate will take full advantage of the facilities, resources, know-how and materials available in the respective host and Home Units. In particular the research project should indicate how the new research techniques will be relevant to research back in the Home Unit outlining a clear research plan upon return.
- f. The ERS PAH Fellowships should evolve around a robust research project which needs to be realistically carried out in the suggested time frame (1 to 3 months projects), and will be outlined in the project description (needs, aim, objectives, hypothesis, methods, workplan, timelines, research plan back home). Detail of eventual clinical training that will be attended, associated and relevant to the research project’s needs should be outlined too. This can in particular be achieved when joining an already running project at the Host Unit, as the submitted project by the candidate would be sold in an existing environment with available research structures offering the opportunity to learn research techniques. The research projects should lead to research activities and developments after the training period when returning to the Home Unit.

- g. Host Units based in Europe should be active in the broad field of pulmonary circulation (eg. cardiology, immunology, vascular science) and conduct fundamental/basic science research, clinical medical or clinical and translational science.
- h. This Fellowship aims at improving candidates' clinical techniques. Applicants should demonstrate the Host Unit strengths, and educational/clinical programme on offer in the area of pulmonary hypertension. Additionally, applicants should detail what clinical techniques and training will be relevant and learned/improved during the research project, as well as how they will acquired them, and mention the performance indicators for measuring progress. Please note that the clinical educational requirement is not mandatory for basic science projects or when Host Units are specialised in basic science.
- i. Additional ERS PAH Experts will join the ERS panel for the selection process (see section 3.2.d, e, and f) to provide additional expertise based on the research topics. The panel's emphasis will also be on assessing the quality of the research plan upon return to the Home Unit after the fellowship. Applicants should detail how the new research techniques/knowledge will be relevant and used back at the Home Unit, how the Home Unit will commit budget and other resources for implementing/transferring this new knowledge; the timeline for completing the transfer and to whom; and the mechanism with timeline for regular quality checks.
- j. The funds for the ERS PAH Fellowships programme are provided by GRS to ERS. Selected candidates remain ERS Fellows but will use the title and acknowledgment of endorsement "ERS PAH Fellowship *supported by an unrestricted grant by GSK*".
- k. In order for the applicant to show his/her agreement for the application to be selected as an ERS PAH Fellowship, the applicant should tick the box "*I understand that the ERS PAH Fellowships are supported by an unrestricted grant by GSK*".
- l. Applications that have been ranked for support from ERS and are eligible for support through the ERS PAH Fellowships Programme scheme will become ERS PAH Fellowships.

2.8. Joint Fellowships with EMBO in the respiratory and broad field of molecular biology

- a. An agreement exists with EMBO (www.embo.org) for up to four Short-Term Research Fellowships a year for a work periods of 1 to 3 months.
- b. The ERS/EMBO joint fellowships should be basic science in respiratory science/health with a research project in the field of molecular biology. Therefore, this joint fellowship aims at bringing clinicians to perform basic science in the field of respiratory molecular biology. Candidates with a strong clinical background (MD and MD-PhD) will be favoured and prioritised during the selection process.
- c. Candidates should be based in Europe, going to a European country. However, the Home or the Host Country must be an EMBC member state (*Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom*).
- d. Candidates should be actively engaged in research/science/practice that is relevant to respiratory medicine, and have appropriate scientific or medical qualifications. Candidates must possess appropriate professional qualifications and experience according to the specific fellowship applied for.
- e. Applicants must be postgraduates holding a university degree in medicine/ science (MD, MSc, PhD, MD-PhD) that is relevant to the project applied for. As a minimum requirement, applicants need to have graduated with an MD, MSc or equivalent at the time of application. In addition candidates may also be qualified healthcare professionals (non-MD) working in respiratory medicine/health (nurses, physiotherapists, respiratory function technologists, allied respiratory professionals).
- f. Candidates should not have been already at the Host Institute for more than 7 months at the time of application.
- g. Candidates will have to provide supplementary reference forms by the Home Supervisor and by a referee in their home country during the application process.
- h. Candidates should have an ERS membership. The selected applicants will be both ERS and EMBO Fellows. They will have to use the title and acknowledgment of endorsement "ERS/EMBO Joint Fellowship" instead of "ERS Fellowship".

- i. In order for the applicants to show his/her agreement for the application to be selected as a joint fellowship with the organization EMBO, the applicant should tick on the box “I accept that my fellowship is co-funded by EMBO and carries the title ERS/EMBO Joint Fellowship”.
- j. Applications that have been ranked for support from ERS and are eligible for EMBO support may become co-funded fellowships if they are also approved by EMBO.

2.9. Snapshot of requirements

Fellowship	Number of Fellowships yearly	ERS membership	Required University degree in respiratory field	Profile	Open to all nationalities , European & non-European based	Going to Europe	Going outside of Europe	Mandatory return to Home Unit
Standard*	Varies	Required	MD, MSc, PhD, MD-PhD or equivalent	Scientific, Medical, Qualified healthcare professionals	YES	YES	NO	YES
International	4 (2x2)	Required	MD, MSc, PhD, MD-PhD or equivalent	Scientific, Medical, Qualified healthcare professionals	YES but see section 2.2.b	NO	YES	YES
Research for Scientifically developing countries	2 (1x1)	Required	MSc, MD, PhD or equivalent	Scientific, Medical, Qualified healthcare professionals	YES but see section 2.3.i	YES	NO	YES
Valia Kechagia (Greece)	1	Required	MD or equivalent	Medical, Qualified healthcare professionals	Candidates based in Greece only	YES	NO	YES
Walther Guerrero Ciquero	1	Required	MD, MSc, PhD, MD-PhD or equivalent	Scientific, Medical, Qualified healthcare professionals	YES	YES	NO	YES
AIMAR (Italy)	4 (2x2)	Required	MD, MSc, PhD, MD-PhD or equivalent	Scientific, Medical, Qualified healthcare professionals	YES	Going to, or coming from Italy ONLY	NO	YES
PAH – GSK fund	Varies	Required	MD, MSc, PhD, MD-PhD or equivalent	Scientific, Medical, Qualified healthcare professionals	YES	YES	NO	YES
EMBO (Germany)	4 (2x2)	Required	MD, MSc, PhD, MD-PhD or equivalent	Scientific, Medical, Qualified healthcare professionals	N/A. Home or Host Unit must be EMBC member state	YES (incl. Israel and Turkey)	NO	YES

3. Guidelines for completing an ERS Fellowship application

3.1. General information on submission

- a. Applications and all supporting documents must be submitted in English and online using the following link <http://www.ersnet.org/ers-funding/fellowships/short-term.html>. The deadline for submission of applications is April 1 and October 1.
- b. Applications will be acknowledged in due time; they are accepted and processed twice a year.
- c. The allocation of the fellowship grant is based on a complete and detailed project description (including work plan & timelines) and application files to be submitted by the candidate, the Home and the Host Supervisors.
- d. Applications having been previously rejected may be resubmitted; they should where possible be improved.

3.2. Selection process

- a. Funding programmes are under the responsibility of the ERS Science Council and final decision is the responsibility of the ERS Executive Committee following the recommendations of the Science Council. In order to keep a high standard of applications and quality of the proposed research project, the ERS is strictly enforcing these fellowships management rules.
- b. ERS award fellowships to applicants based on scientific merit. To achieve this, selection is made after careful and in-depth evaluation of applications by two distinct groups of experts.
- c. Applications will be reviewed by the ERS College of Experts selected by the ERS Science Council in a two step process. In a first step, each application will be graded by a panel of at least 5 experts who are selected by the Research Director as being experienced in their respective fields and none of whom have any conflicts of interest. In a second step, the results of all reviewing groups will be normalised and the results and applications sent to all reviewers. In a phone conference the final ranking will be discussed.
- d. Experts are selected on the basis of excellence in their respective fields (expertise and experience). To prevent any conflict of interest, ERS ensure that experts who take part to the review process do not participate to the interview process and vice versa. For jointly funded fellowships, requirements may include experts selected by the co-funding organisation, either for the whole two-steps process or for one of the two processes, in agreement with ERS Research Director.
- e. Experts' task and responsibility are to judge the quality, scientific value, feasibility, etc. of the submitted research project and supporting documents, based on criteria set in 3.2.f.
- f. Experts evaluate and grade applications based on the following criteria:
 - i. Scientific merit of candidate
 - ii. Relevance & innovativeness of the project (*originality/innovativeness, relevance to the respiratory field and added value to research, relation to the previous background and relevance to the career development, qualifications, news value*)
 - iii. Quality of research project (*needs, aims, objectives, hypothesis, methodology, workplan with schedule/timelines, deliverables, milestones, realistic timeframe, etc.*)
 - iv. Quality of Host Supervisor/unit for the project
 - v. Quality of Home Unit and research plan upon return (*quality of research project/development plan upon return, availability of funds/facilities/resources to implement research developments back, projected value/benefits for the Home Institute, added value and feasibility of the transfer of the newly acquired research skills etc.*)
 - vi. For the ERS PAH Fellowships Programme *supported by an unrestricted grant by GSK* detail of eventual clinical training that will be attended, associated and relevant to the research project's needs should be outlined too.
 - vii. The realism and feasibility for achieving the project within the set time period (1-3 months) is particularly important.
- g. Experts grade each individual criterion using the following grading:
10 – Excellent, should be automatically funded

- 9 – Very good, should be funded with highest priority
- 8 – Very good, should be funded with priority
- 7 – Good, should be funded with priority
- 6 – Good, should be funded
- 5 – Good, could be funded with lesser priority. Put on reserve list
- 4 – Average, put on the reserve list
- 3 – Average, probably not funded
- 2 – Poor, probably not funded
- 1 – Poor, should not be funded

An average grade for all criteria is calculated, which scores provide the review ranking list. From this list, the review short list is established and used for interviews. Interviews are scored based on all criterion including soft skills. The final ranking is then established and submitted to ERS leadership for endorsement (see 3.2.a).

- h. No distinction will be made between candidates on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs.
- i. The assessments are strictly confidential and cannot be divulged outside the ERS, or to the candidates themselves.
- j. Appeals are not considered unless formal mistakes have been made by the ERS.

3.3. Project description

- a. This is the most important component of the application. It should be prepared by yourself and have the approval of your Home and Host Supervisors, as they will indicate it in their respective forms.
- b. Based on the information provided online, an automated abstract will summarise your application and research project.
- c. The project description must not exceed 5 pages (font size 12pts Times New Roman or Arial) including references. They should provide details and expand on the factors outlined in the abstract form, and in particular to provide the scientific rationale for the project with key references. It is crucial to provide a clear work-plan with a project duration between 1 to 3 months maximum and a description of the research project plan back home outlining also evidence of resources enabling the direct transfer of your newly acquired skills. Likewise, evidence regarding resource and fund availability at the host and Home Units should be provided, see 3.2.f.

3.4. Home & Host Supervisors' files

- a. Your Home Supervisor needs to provide the ERS with a signed Form, which you can download from the online application system. Therefore you should send the form to your Home Supervisor in order for him/her to complete and sign it. Your Home Supervisor's Release Form should confirm the relevance of and the support of your proposed work. It should attest your proficiency in the working language at the proposed Host Institute. It should authorize your leave of absence during the planned project period and indicate that, if successful, a position will be open to you upon completion of the Fellowship. A statement confirming that facilities, funds and resources will be made available to the Fellow upon return, in order to enable him/her to conduct research activities/projects/developments back at the Home Unit will be required.
- b. The Home Supervisor will be requested to return the form to you, with supporting documents, which include the Home Supervisor's CV and list of publications, as well as a statement on the candidate's salary status during the ERS Fellowship.
- c. Your Host Supervisor needs to provide the ERS with a signed Host Supervisor's Acceptance Form, which you can download from the online application system. Therefore you should send the form to your Host in order for him/her to complete and sign it. Your Host Supervisor's Acceptance Form should confirm that operational funds, facilities and resources are available for the project. It should also attest the Host Supervisor's commitment to the research project as outlined in the application and provide recommendation for the candidate, as well as ensure supervision.
- d. The Host Supervisor will be requested to return the form to you with supporting documents, which include the Host Supervisor's CV and list of publications, as well as a statement on the candidate's salary status during the ERS Fellowship.

3.5. Application process and documents for STRTF

- a. Application files to be uploaded online:
 1. Candidate's short curriculum vitae (2 pages maximum)
 2. Candidate's list of publications, sorted out in the following order: 1) original peer-reviewed papers, 2) review articles and 3) any other relevant publication (e.g. meeting abstract with relevance to the application)
 3. Project description (5 pages max) including references
 4. Host Supervisor's short curriculum vitae (2 pages maximum, including up to 10 major supporting grants in the 5 past years and/or those being of specific interest for the support of the candidate's project)
 5. Host Supervisor's list of publications (3 pages maximum, with the 10 most important/relevant for this application listed first - abstracts should not be included)
 6. Home Supervisor's short curriculum vitae (2 pages maximum, including up to 10 major supporting grants in the 5 past years and/or those of specific interest for the support of the candidate's project)
 7. Home Supervisor's list of publications (3 pages maximum, with the 10 most important/relevant for this application listed first - abstracts should not be included)

Compliance with the required length of supporting files is mandatory. Any document longer than the outlined requirements will be truncated at random by the ERS. Applicants are responsible for verifying that the home and Host Supervisors' files are in compliance with the above. If not, applicants either follow-up with the Supervisors and/or truncate/compile the files until compliance is met.

- b. The information provided by applicants in the online application form will automatically be compiled into a short abstract and transmitted to ERS Experts (reviewers and interviewers) as a synopsis. Therefore, applicants should be aware that fellowship are awarded based on the quality of information provided, such as a self-written and well-argued research project description, endorsed by both the Home and Host Supervisors.
- c. Supporting documents should be downloaded online and sent to the home and Host Supervisors and Referee for completion. Please ensure that all of them complete, sign (mandatory) and return all documents to you in a scanned pdf/jpeg or word format with electronic signature, if possible.
 - Home Supervisor's signed release form + supporting documents.
 - Host Supervisor's signed acceptance form + supporting documents.

For the ERS/EMBO Joint Fellowship only, two supplementary supporting recommendation documents will be requested:

- Home Supervisor's reference letter.
 - Reference letter by an additional referee from home country.
- d. Supporting documents to be uploaded online:
 - Statement on salary status during the ERS fellowship by the Host Supervisor.
 - Statement on salary status during the ERS fellowship by the Home Supervisor.
 - ID digital photo in high resolution (300 dpi).
 - Scanned copy of candidate's highest degree (PhD, MD, MSc, etc.).
 - Scanned copy of candidate's passport or ID
 - Scanned copies of children's (under 16 years of age) birth certificates or candidate's family record book.

4. Grant amounts

4.1. Calculation

- a. Grants are funded according to the personal (number of children under 16 years of age) and professional circumstances of the Fellow and the Host country.
- b. The grant amounts are indicated **per month in EURO** (depending on the Host country), for a Fellow not receiving any other sources of income (salary, funding, travel grant, etc.).

- c. A fixed amount per Fellow is calculated for their Fellowship and is set as an ERS Grant amount at the beginning of the research training project. The Fellowship provides the recipient with a subsistence allowance to cover the Fellow's living costs and a flat rate for travelling expenses to the host Institute.
- d. The total ERS grant amount should cover travel and accommodation costs and provide enough money to live on during the Fellowship. Therefore only subsistence rates are supported by the ERS grant. The ERS Fellowship is not intended to cover any expenses other than the ones related to the living expenses in the Host country during the stay.
- e. A one off travel flat rate of €200 will be granted for distances between Host and Home unit below 5,000km. For distances above 5,000km the one off travel flat rate will be €700.
- f. The Fellowship does not provide the travel costs for the Fellow's family.

4.2. Deductions on grant amount

- a. The standard calculation foresees deducting from the ERS monthly subsistence rate the monthly salary of the Fellow should he/she still be receiving income from the Home/Host Institutes during his/her Fellowship. Whether the amount is transferrable to the Host country or not, is not a determining factor in the calculation. When a salary is provided during the Fellowship, the ERS considers that the Fellow already has a source of funding while completing the Fellowship. Most Fellows do not receive any salary during their leave from the Home Unit and it is their responsibility to manage expenses in their Home country (rent, etc.). The grant amount is set in order to enable the stay in the Host country only.
- b. If the applicant is already at the receiving Institute or in the Host country, the travel flat rate is not granted.
- c. The ERS does not provide the Fellows with bench fees, any other contribution to the costs of the research or any other financial support to the social security and safety schemes during the Fellowship.
- d. In order to avoid duplication of expenditure, particularly with national sources, it is a condition of any award by the ERS that a full declaration be made to the organization of all other grants, awards and contributions applied for towards the same travel and subsistence expenditures. Continuation in whole or in part of existing salary and income must also be declared. It will be separately considered by the ERS in the light of any explanations furnished by the fellow of the necessity of continuing expenses not connected with the ERS fellowship. The ERS will usually reduce its normal financial intervention by a corresponding sum or, where appropriate, annul it entirely.
- e. The Fellowships may not be financially supplemented by agencies other than the Home or Host Institutes, or the Fellows personally. Therefore they may not run concurrently with other awards, funds, grants, fellowships, etc. during the same time period and in relation with the same project.
- f. The financial supplements that are permitted to Fellows, to be supplied with by Home and/or Host Institutes without deduction on the ERS grant amount; are financial aid to cover the Fellows' obligatory health and safety insurances, legal and social security insurances, pension schemes and child support in Home and Host country.

4.3. Fellow's responsibility (insurance, taxes, etc.)

- a. The ERS does not recognize recipients of its Fellowships as agents or employees of the ERS and accepts no liability in respect of any of their actions or activities or in respect to the health or safety of their persons. It is the Fellow's and Host Supervisor's responsibility to find a mutual agreement on the nature, in terms of status, of the Fellow's appointment during the Fellowship at the Host unit.
- b. ERS Fellows are not insured by the ERS against medical expenses for themselves or their families; neither are they insured for accidents during their travel to and from the Host Institution. In their own interest, recipients of Fellowships are, therefore, urged to make sure that they, their families and the institutions which receive them, are fully covered by the necessary insurances. **It is the sole responsibility of the recipient of an award to ensure that he/she is covered under a social security scheme providing protection at least equivalent to those of local researchers holding a similar position.**

- c. The ERS is a non-governmental international organization whose awards are not automatically endowed with any particular tax privileges. **It is the sole responsibility of the recipient of an award to pay any tax which may be levied upon him/her by the appropriate national authority.** The ERS is not responsible for any tax issue that may arise either in the Home or in the Host country and any taxes have to come out of the Fellowship award.

4.4. Subsistence rates

Subsistence rates mentioned are indicative and subject to change. The subsistence rates depend on the available yearly ERS fellowship budget and the variable inflation, exchange rates and the cost of living in the host country.

Table 1 - Subsistence rates 2015

	Australia	Austria	Belgium	Canada	Denmark	Finland	France	Germany	Greece	Ireland
fellow	3400	2800	2800	2900	3400	3200	2800	2800	2374	3000
for each dependent	280	290	260	280	285	248	263	280	253	275
currency	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO

	Italy	Netherlands	Portugal	Sweden	Spain	Switzerland	UK	USA	Other
fellow	2750	2850	2500	3200	2500	3800	3000	2401	2200
for each dependent	280	270	260	280	260	390	280	263	220
currency	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO	EURO

A one off travel grant/flat rate for covering travel costs between the home and Host Units may be granted. All ERS fellowship programmes, except for Scientifically Developing Countries, have a one off travel flat rate of €200 (two hundred) for distances between host and Home Unit below 5,000km. For distances above 5,000km the one off travel flat rate will be of €700 (seven hundred), see 4.1.e.

Fees for Research Fellowship For Scientifically Developing Countries: Fellows will receive a one off travel flat rate for travel costs: €400 for travel up to 5,000km between the host and Home Units; or €1200 for travel above 5,000km.

5. Reporting requirements & ERS Fellows

5.1. Fellowship reporting

- Once the Fellow has completed the Fellowship, both the Fellow and the Host Supervisor are expected to submit within 3 months of the end of the Fellowship, an administrative and scientific end-of-project report and a completed ERS Fellowship questionnaire.
- Both the Fellow and the Host Supervisor will be requested, to separately provide two years and five years after the end of the Fellowship, a completed questionnaire and a report on any outcomes related to the Fellowship (career opportunities, papers published, grants & awards received, patents, etc.)

5.2. Publications

- Both the Fellow and Host Supervisor will ensure that any publication or outcome related to the Fellowship will acknowledge the ERS support.
- Both the Fellow and Host Supervisor will record and update the ERS on any publication activity and other outcome resulting from the Fellowship, within two months of the said publication being made public.
- Publication of results in the official journals of the society, in particular in the ERJ, is encouraged.

5.3. Association of ERS Fellows

- a. Successful candidates will be recognised through the Association of ERS Fellows. Upon submission of a satisfactory end-of-project report, which must carry the endorsement of the Host Supervisor, Fellows are eligible to join the Association of ERS Fellows. This Association brings together the exclusive group of ERS Fellows who, after an international evaluation process, were selected from a large number of candidates to receive ERS Fellowships.
- b. The Association of ERS Fellows directory provides a unique and invaluable resource of addresses, current professional activities, Fellowship subjects and Host Institutes. It permits members to identify and contact colleagues. It may also serve as a useful recruitment pool.
- c. A short resumé on the Fellowship experience will be requested from the Fellow within 3 months of the end of the project and will be posted on the ERS Website (<http://dev.ersnet.org/502>). Fellows will automatically become members of the Association of ERS Fellows.
- d. ERS Fellows are encouraged to attend the Fellows' Lunchtime Session organised at the ERS Annual Congress.