

## Call for FOREUM International Exchange Fellowships

### Introduction

FOREUM is committed to funding and promoting scientific research into rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMD) and has a goal to foster links between rheumatology units in different countries. Consistent with these goals is the establishment of a call for international exchange fellowships that have the specific objective of facilitating the development of research capacity and training high-caliber applicants in RMD research.

### Scope

FOREUM International Exchange Fellowships are intended to fund excellent research projects in the field of RMDs that address any basic, translational or clinical aspect of these conditions.

The International Exchange Fellowship is based on two stages:

1. Initial stay in a host center to be introduced, mentored, and trained in specific techniques, models or patient data that are required to start and successfully conduct the project
2. Subsequent return to the home center to further develop and complete the research project in a protected academic time through the fellowship.

The fellow will be supported for a period of 12 months to visit the host center (first stage) and, upon successful completion, for another 24 months in the home center (second stage).

### Eligibility and Requirements

The applicant must be a rheumatologist (pediatric or adult), rheumatologist in training or health professional in rheumatology, who is appropriately linked to RMD research in one of the [EULAR member countries](#). It is anticipated that applicants develop long-term research and clinical interest in the area of the proposal that would benefit the fellow, the home and host centers as well as the patients.

The host center needs to have a high-level research profile in the field, allowing the fellow to be exposed to cutting-edge research technology and an inspiring collaborative scientific environment. The host center needs to be in a [EULAR member country](#), different from home center.

The home center needs to ascertain that the continuation of the project is guaranteed after return and should be able to demonstrate how the fellowship/project will foster the development of RMD research locally. In addition, a plan that provides insights into the research environment for the returning fellow and the creation of protected time for research must be provided.

EULAR Centres of Excellence or other high level academic institutions are not considered eligible as home center.

Participation of patient research partners from both the home and the host center is strongly encouraged in order to underline the importance of the project for the patients. In this way, the fellow would be capable of embedding patient research partners in both the host and the home center.

### **Budget**

Fellows are eligible to apply for total funding of up to € 150.000.- over 36 months. Up to € 50.000.- would be for funding to visit the host center and the remainder would be funding to support continuation and development of the project in the home center after return. Projects will be subject to an evaluation of progress after 1 year (return to home center) and 3 years (end of fellowship) with written final report. Submitted publications can be used as part of the report.

### **How to apply**

Applications should be made electronically (email to [info@foreum.org](mailto:info@foreum.org)). Necessary application forms can be downloaded at [www.foreum.org](http://www.foreum.org).

### **Letter of intent**

All applicants considering submission of a proposal are invited to send a short letter of intent (LoI) by March 15<sup>th</sup> 2018 to FOREUM (email to [info@foreum.org](mailto:info@foreum.org)). The structure and required content of the LoI are described in the 'Letter of Intent template', available from [http://www.foreum.org/apply\\_now.cfm](http://www.foreum.org/apply_now.cfm). Statements for support of the application, from the head of the host center and the head of the home center, need to be provided. LoI will be assessed by members of the FOREUM Scientific Committee. Applications deemed meritorious of full application will be selected on a competitive basis. The Secretariat will respond by April 15<sup>th</sup> 2018 as to whether the proposal meets the scope, priority and requirements of the call such that a full application will be invited.

### **Full project proposal**

Applicants selected will be invited to submit a full proposal; they will be sent the Full Project Proforma template. Full applications will need to provide clear milestones that would be assessed and linked to staged funding. In addition to covering scientific aspects of the proposal, the value of support in terms of training, transferable skills and future development of the project beyond the funding period will be important aspects of the full application together with clear evidence of support and necessary infrastructure at the host and home centers. To facilitate review by patients, additionally a Lay Summary must be completed at this stage. Both forms will be provided to applicants invited to submit a full proposal. Full research proposals must be submitted electronically by May 31<sup>st</sup> 2018 to the FOREUM Secretariat.

### **Participation of patient research partners**

Participation of patient research partners is strongly recommended for clinical research projects and should be considered for all other research projects to provide experiential knowledge, with the aim of improving the relevance, quality and validity of the research process. Participation of patient research partners would be a strength in developing the proposal to underline the importance of patients providing experiential knowledge in the research process. In this way,

after the exchange, the successful research fellow would be capable of embedding patient research partners into her/his own research center on return home. For more information, please read the material on [http://www.eular.org/pare\\_patient\\_research\\_partners.cfm](http://www.eular.org/pare_patient_research_partners.cfm).

### ***Evaluation and decision***

The proposals will be independently peer-reviewed for (i) their scientific quality, (ii) the applicant's motivation and expertise to conduct research in RMD, (iii) the location of the applicant's home centre (less developed regions of Europe will be particularly supported by this call) and (iv) the commitment of the home center to allow the fellow to continue the project after his/her return. Based on this peer review, the FOREUM Scientific Committee will make a funding recommendation to the FOREUM Executive Committee, which will make its funding decision. Decisions will be communicated to the applicants June 30<sup>th</sup> 2018.

### ***Ethical aspects***

FOREUM expects a high standard in the conduct of research it funds. For researchers this includes scientific integrity and adherence to the principles of good research practice. Patients subjected to investigation shall be included with due adherence to the declaration of Helsinki.

### ***Management of the Call***

The FOREUM call and approval processes will be administered by the FOREUM Secretariat together with the FOREUM Scientific Committee. The call schedule will be as follows:

Call issued:	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2018
Letter of intent:	15 <sup>th</sup> March, 2018
Decisions on Lol announced:	15 <sup>th</sup> April, 2018
Closing date for full proposals:	31 <sup>st</sup> May, 2018
Decisions announced:	30 <sup>th</sup> June, 2018
Projects to begin by:	November, 2018

### ***Inquiries***

For general inquiries please contact the FOREUM Secretariat at [info@foreum.org](mailto:info@foreum.org).