

ISN Programs

# Fellowship Program

Practical Details for ISN Fellowship Applicants

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From your first step in the application process to your return upon completion of your training, this document is meant as a guide that will help you all throughout your Fellowship.

The ISN Fellowship Program has 2 separate application rounds a year. The respective deadlines for submitting complete applications with all supporting documents are **May 1** and **October 1**.

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## Step 1 - Making sure you are eligible

### Eligibility Criteria

If you can answer positively all these questions, you are ready to proceed with your application.

- ✓ Are you an ISN full member? You can become a member by visiting <https://www.theisn.org/membership>.
- ✓ Are you below 40 years old? If you are between 40 and 45, you may only apply for a short-term targeted Fellowship.
- ✓ Are you living and working in a low or middle income country according to the World Bank?  
<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>
- ✓ Have you received basic training in nephrology in your home country?
- ✓ Are you nominated by a Home Mentor and your Home Institution guaranteeing your re-employment once training has been completed?
- ✓ Can you be recommended by two senior nephrologists in your home country?
- ✓ Are you endorsed by the national society of nephrology in your home country? If you are applying from a country where there is no nephrology practice, you can apply for a Fellowship training only if you have governmental or institutional support to set up a nephrology program upon your return.
- ✓ Have you identified an appropriate Host Mentor and Institution with whom you have agreed on a suitable training plan?
- ✓ Does your training plan reflect the skills and knowledge that are required by your Home Institution and which you can implement on your return?
- ✓ Can you understand and communicate in the host country's language?
- ✓ Are you willing to guarantee your return to your home country within three months of completing the training? (Otherwise all funds received from ISN must be refunded).

We strongly advise you to look for information about practical issues (tax, housing, transportation, security) in the host city prior to applying.

ISN can only guarantee funding for one year, even when applicants state up front that they are applying for 2 years.

Applicants with more than 6 months of previous experience outside their home country are only eligible for a short-term Fellowship.

Applications should preferably involve movement between two countries. In case there is no movement between two countries, there must at least be movement between two cities, otherwise no funding will be provided.



## Step 2 - Preparing your application file

You access the application form through the ISN Fellowship Program portal:

<http://fellowship.theisn.org>

Your application will only be considered as complete if it contains ALL the following documents:

### Application file

- ✓ The completed and duly signed application form (online).
- ✓ The completed and duly signed Host Institution ID form (to be filled out by your Host Mentor online).
- ✓ An acceptance letter from the Host Institution.
- ✓ A Curriculum vitae (CV) of maximum 3 pages.
- ✓ Applicant's letter and training plan describing the goals and objectives and how the training will benefit and impact the Home country and Institution (250 words). The letter should include the candidate aspirations and at least 5 specific goals against which the success of the Fellowship will be judged home and how the training will benefit your Home country and Host Institution. It should be countersigned by your Home Mentor and hospital director.
- ✓ A nomination letter from your Home Institution Director detailing the required type of training and explicitly stating adherence to the Declaration of Istanbul.
- ✓ A letter by relevant local society leader describing the number of nephrologists in home country, current education opportunities and how the training might impact the local nephrology standards. If there are no local society, a letter from the regional society will be fine. If you are applying from a country where there is no nephrology practice, you can apply for a Fellowship training only if you have governmental or institutional support to set up a nephrology program upon your return.
- ✓ A letter from your Home Institution guaranteeing re-employment.
- ✓ Two recommendation letters from nephrologists in your Home Institution (or country).
- ✓ A photocopy of your passport or identity document.

## General Tips and Comments

### - Application:

The application is a lengthy process and we recommend you allocate enough time for it before submission. The ISN can only fund a limited amount of Fellows each year and only candidates with a strong application file are accepted.

### - Forms:

Your application must be submitted via the [online application system](#). The Fellowship Committee will not rank your application if sent by email or fax.

### - Letters:

Make sure all letters are written under official letterheads and duly signed. They will not be considered valid otherwise.

### - Training plan:

The Committee members who score your application expect an indication from the Host Institution of the training to be provided, with sufficient details to help them judge that there is a match between your aspirations, the Host Center's offer and the strategy of the Home Center. It is highly recommended that the Host Mentor adjoins a specific training plan to his letter of acceptance. ***Do not neglect this part and make sure you allocate an appropriate amount of time with your Host Mentor to jointly establish a strong training plan.***

### - Re-employment:

Make sure the letter clearly states that your Home Institution guarantees your re-employment upon completion of your training.

### - ISN membership:

In order to be eligible you need to be an ISN full member.

Both your Home and Host Mentors must be current ISN full members as well. This is a key condition for your application to be eligible. If their membership fees are not paid, the application will not be submitted to the Fellowship Committee. If you wish us to invite them to enrol and/or wish them to have a list of the benefits of ISN membership, do not hesitate to contact ISN HQ ([fellowship@theisn.org](mailto:fellowship@theisn.org)) or visit the Membership pages on the [ISN website](#).

### - Language:

The application and all enclosed documents **must** be written in English. Documents submitted in any other language will not be submitted to the Fellowship Committee. No exception to this rule will be made.

It is the responsibility of the Host and Home Institutions to ensure that the applicant's language capabilities are sufficient to efficiently undertake the Fellowship training and meet any language proficiency requirements of the Host country. The ISN does not conduct any language tests.

### - Hands-on training versus observership:

The Fellowship Committee will prioritise applications for hands-on training, the impact of which will be greater upon return at the Home Institution. While establishing the training plan, please make sure that you will be able to have direct contact with patients. This requires a medical license from your host country that will allow you to provide direct clinical care.

In the event that only 'observership' training should be possible, please make sure to justify how this will be useful to the home country.

Funding for procedure-oriented fellowships (vascular access, PD catheter insertion, renal biopsies, interventional radiology, etc) requires evidence that direct hands-on clinical care is allowed at the Host Institution.

- Licensing requirements:

In some countries, training with a clinical emphasis is contingent upon specific licensing requirements

- Applicants for centers in the **USA** and **Canada** must be aware that the USMLE examination is necessary for clinical training and direct patient access.
- Applicants for centers in the **United Kingdom** must obtain the GMC registration for clinical training and direct patient access.
- It is also the case in **Australia** and **South Africa**, where specific licences are required.

**Kindly note that the Fellowship Committee may decide to retain the payment of a Fellowship grant in the event that the lack of licence prevents from meeting the clinical objectives of the training.**

Please make sure to initiate registration processes for these licences as soon as you are accepted at the Host Center.

- Intraregional trainings

The Fellowship Committee will prioritise applications for intraregional trainings. Over recent years, the Fellowship Program has expanded to allow and encourage opportunities for nephrologists from emerging countries to train in well-developed Host Centers in their own region, rather than exclusively in North America, Europe, or Australasia. Regional centers are more likely to guarantee hands-on training.

In this context, ISN has reached agreements with a number of partners. Applications that meet the eligibility criteria of partnerships are encouraged and more likely to be successful. More details can be found on the [ISN website](#).

- Host Institution:

A maximum number of 2 long-term Fellows can be accepted per year in the same Host Institution.

- Candidates already at Host Institutions

Fellows that are already in training at their Host Institution are not eligible to apply for a grant and their applications will not be considered by the Fellowship Committee.

- Declaration of Istanbul (DoI):

Following ISN's adherence to the Declaration of Istanbul, it has become an important requirement and a criterion of selection that all parties in a Fellowship training confirm they endorse the Declaration of Istanbul.

- Double applications:

Applications with acceptance in more than one Host Center will not be eligible.

Any other specific Host requirements that are not mandatory for ISN should be formulated by the Host Institution.

## Step 3 - Submitting your application

The ISN Fellowship Program has 2 separate application rounds a year. The respective deadlines for submitting complete applications with all supporting documents are **May 1** and **October 1**.

You can register and complete your application on our portal (it will open approximately 3 months before the deadline):

<http://fellowship.theisn.org>

All information provided is entered into a database for future reference and is verified by the ISN Headquarters. Upon receipt of the application form and check for completion by the ISN Headquarters, a confirmation will be sent to you. If your application is not complete, you will receive an email specifying the missing details and you will need to re-submit it.

The results are announced via e-mail approximately 3 months after the deadline, i.e. in August/September and December/January respectively.

No application will be accepted past the above deadlines. It is therefore highly recommended that you start the process months ahead as it can sometimes take time to gather all necessary documents.

	<b>Session 1</b>	<b>Session 2</b>
Application deadline	October 1 <sup>st</sup>	May 1 <sup>st</sup>
Announcement of results	December	August
Start of training	Within 6 months upon reception of your acceptance letter	Within 6 months upon reception of your acceptance letter
Return home	Within 3 months upon completion of your fellowship training	Within 3 months upon completion of your fellowship training

## Step 4 - Reviewing process

Each application is reviewed by members of the Fellowship Committee. The selection of the most deserving applicants is based upon an objective and fair scoring system. The scoring reflects various factors such as:

- ✓ Academic qualifications (level of training possibilities within home country and applicant's qualifications to undertake proposed training plan).
- ✓ Your past experience and achievements.
- ✓ Hands-on training vs observership.
- ✓ Detailed training plan with focused objectives.
- ✓ Adequateness of match between the training plan and training opportunities at the Host Institution.
- ✓ Host ID form.
- ✓ Relevance and need by the Home Institution as well as the potential impact of the training (contribution to the progress of local nephrology).
- ✓ Available resources at the Home Institution for practice after the training.
- ✓ The number of ISN Fellowship granted to the same home country over the past three years.
- ✓ Involvement in other ISN Programs, especially the ISN Sister Renal Centers and Clinical Research Programs.
- ✓ Age of the candidate.
- ✓ The strength and relevance of the recommendation letters.

**You should make sure that you present, as part of your application, a detailed and coherent training plan justifying the proposed training, describing your goals, ambitions and expectations, and giving cogent reasons for your choice of Host Center.**

Due to the competitive nature of the Fellowship Program, you are always compared to all other candidates and your chances of success depend very much on the number of applicants as well as their relative strengths and weaknesses. Every year we are faced with more and more applications for the program and because our procedures and budget remain the same we are obliged to also reject more candidates every year.



## Step 5 - Outcome

Approximately 3 months after the application deadline, all applicants are notified in writing about their acceptance or rejection in the Fellowship Program. The successful candidates will be informed about their grant and their names will be announced on the ISN website. You may be partially or fully sponsored by different partner organisations and this will be announced in your acceptance letter (see the ISN website for details of the various partnership fellowships for which you may be eligible).

Once you have started making your travel arrangements and applying for a visa (if necessary), you must inform the ISN Headquarters about your exact starting date.

### Concurrent Funding

You must declare any concurrent funding or funding applications to other organisations. If both your ISN and other applications are successful, then you will be encouraged to accept the other application so that more ISN funds are available for other fellows. You may be permitted to have concurrent funding up to a value of 10,000 USD pro rata - but beyond that the value of the ISN Fellowship would be reduced by the additional funding above the 10,000 USD pro rata.

### Important Notes

You have up to three chances to apply for a Fellowship training under the same Host Mentor.

## Step 6 - Living in your Host Institution

### Insurances

ISN cannot be held liable for any consequences related to travelling or staying abroad. The responsibility for procuring health/accident and travel insurances remains with the Fellow; you or your relatives cannot hold ISN responsible in the event of untoward events or experiences.

### Financial Support

ISN Fellowship grants are awarded on the condition that Fellows return to their respective home country within three months after completion of the training to actively practice nephrology, teach, and help improve the standards of medical treatment and education in your home country. Failure to do so, unless exempted in writing by the Program Chair, means you are in violation of the conditions of the Fellowship and must pay back the grant money to the ISN.

The total sum of the grant is in alignment with the length of the training and varies according to the anticipated expenses in the host country, as per World Bank data. Grants are intended to cover, or offset, all costs related to the Fellowship, including travel, accommodation and living expenses. The grant is intended to cover expenses of the fellow, not his/her family.

- For short-term training (up to 6 months), the grant is paid as one installment shortly after your arrival in the Host Institution.
- For longer Fellowship, the grant is typically paid in two installments separated by 6 months. The first installment amounts to 60% of the total grant.

In order to receive your grant or first installment (if you are on a long-term training), you must fill out the payment request form and send it to the ISN Headquarters through the online system. This document must be signed by your Host Mentor in order to be valid. If all information is in good order, you would receive your grant within the next 2 weeks. It is therefore advised that you take some spending money in order to cover your expenses upon your arrival.

You may opt to receive your payment either in the form of a wire transfer or a check (not recommended). The payment can also be sent to your Host Institution if more convenient to you.

Towards the end of the first 6 months, you must again send a "Payment Request Form" to Headquarters to obtain the second installment payment (for applicable Fellowships).

Please note that ISN does not have any information on local tax policies.

### Pictures

The ISN would be very thankful to receive pictures of your training at any time. These may be used in the ISN website and social media channels, and any publications on ISN Programs.

## Training Extension

You may apply for an extension of your training at the Host Institution if the Home and Host Mentors feel this is necessary for a successful completion of your training plan, and that the need is justified.

ISN can only guarantee funding for one year, even when applicants state up front that they are applying for 2 years.

Please note that requests for extension are reserved to ISN Fellows who have received an initial funding up to 9 months. The total training duration is limited to 12 months maximum (covering the initial training and the extension).

Fellows who are following a 24-month training curriculum are advised to seek additional sources of funding to cover the second year of the program, as this will not be supported by ISN.

As ISN cannot pay a grant retrospectively, please be aware that if you wish to apply for an extension, you have to take into account that ISN typically needs two to three months before announcing the results of the application round.

The application deadlines for a review of an extension application are the same as for a regular application: **May 1** and **October 1**.

However, a different application form has to be filled out and enclosures are slightly different.

You can register or login your current account and submit an extension the online application portal:

<http://fellowship.theisn.org>

### Extension application file

- ✓ The completed and duly signed application form.
- ✓ A report on the training achieved signed and approved by both the Home and Host Mentors. The report should mention the progress achieved against the specific goals set at the beginning of the training.
- ✓ A description of the purpose for Extension signed or written by your Host Mentor.
- ✓ A letter of approval of extension from the Host Mentor.
- ✓ Proposed training plan.
- ✓ A letter of acceptance from the Host Institution director.
- ✓ A letter of Approval of Extension from the Home Mentor.
- ✓ A letter from the applicant's Home Institution guaranteeing re-employment.

## Step 7 - Finishing your training

**You are required to return home within 3 months after completion of your training** and must work in your Home Institution for a period of at least 3 years and fill a long-term position in your home country in line with your training objectives. Failure to show proof of return home will result in you having to return all received grant money to the ISN.

By the end of the training, you must complete the end-of-training report (a form is available through the online application system). Your Host Mentor will be requested to fill out a short report about your performance. Those reports are expected within three months after the end of your training.

After verification and approval of the reports by the Fellowship Committee, ISN membership privileges will be activated (these depend on the length of the training period as shown in the table below).

Training duration	Benefits
7 - 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority to obtain a travel grant to 1 WCN</li> <li>• Use the title "ISN FELLOW"</li> </ul>
6 months or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority to obtain a travel grant to 1 WCN</li> <li>• Use the title "ISN SCHOLAR"</li> </ul>

On top of these privileges, you will receive an official ISN training certificate. You may also benefit from priority points for participation in other ISN Programs (Sister Renal Centers, Educational Ambassadors and Clinical Research Programs, and organization of CME meetings). You will also have the opportunity to present scientific materials in the special ISN Fellows' sessions in the World Congresses of Nephrology and compete for some awards (Fellowship Awards) at WCNs.

**Please note that no privilege will be awarded until your report is approved by the ISN Fellowship Committee. If you submit the report later than 3 months after completion of your training, you will lose the right to your benefits.**

You can send your training report through the online application portal:

<http://fellowship.theisn.org>

The ISN would be very thankful to receive pictures of your training at any time. These may be used in the ISN website and social media channels, and any publications on ISN Programs.

In order to monitor the Fellows' accomplishments, ISN sends out a questionnaire to past Fellows every two years, which is to be completed and submitted on-line. It is expected that you will complete these questionnaires; ISN indeed attaches great importance to maintaining a relationship with all past Fellows.