

ISN Fellowship Program

Practical Details for ISN Fellowship Applicants
2022 edition

<http://fellowship.theisn.org>

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

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1. INTRODUCTION

The International Society of Nephrology has been offering Fellowship grants to young nephrologists around the world for over 30 years, with more than 800 Fellows having graduated from the program. ISN Fellowships are a unique opportunity for doctors working in low-resource settings to access high-quality, in-person training that is not otherwise available to them in their home institution or country.

The Fellowship program is a capacity-building program, with a strong focus on identifying and filling unmet needs in low- and middle-income countries. Grant recipients are required to return home at the end of their training, to put their newfound skills to good use and advance kidney care in their home region. Many Fellows go on to become leaders of nephrology in their home country, as well as active members and ambassadors of the ISN.

The Fellowship application process requires that you demonstrate not only that you are qualified to complete your proposed training, but also that there is a real need in your home country and, crucially, that your training plan will help address that need. We strongly recommend that you begin your application at least one month before the deadline so you have time to gather all the required documents to demonstrate these points.

2. MAKING SURE YOU ARE ELIGIBLE

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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

- Are you an ISN full or trainee member? You can become a member by visiting <https://www.theisn.org/join-the-isn/become-a-member/>.
- Are you 40 years old or younger? If you are between 41 and 45, you may only apply for a short-term (6 months or less) targeted Fellowship. Those older than 45 are ineligible for ISN fellowship application
- Are you living and working in a lower, lower-middle, or upper-middle income country according to the World Bank?
<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>
- Have you completed training in post-graduate Internal Medicine in your home country?
- Are you nominated by a home mentor and your home institution guaranteeing your re-employment once your fellowship 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 and report back your progress in home institute for the next three years? (Otherwise, all funds received from ISN must and will be refunded).
- For applicants interested in a 12-month clinical training, have you completed the Foundation course on the ISN Academy? (more details below).

POINTS TO CONSIDER

- We strongly advise you to look for information about practical issues (tax, housing, transportation, security) in the host city prior to applying, as well as ensuring you will be able to get a visa to travel to the host country.
- **The ISN funds a maximum of 12 months of training for each Fellow.** If your host center offers a two-year training program, you will be permitted to complete the program, but you will need to find an alternative source of funding for the second year. You must also inform the ISN and request an exemption from returning home within three months of finishing your ISN Fellowship. Instead, you will be required to return home within three months of completing the two-year program.
- In most cases, applications should be to train at a center outside of your home country. However, the ISN will consider applications for same-country Fellowships in certain circumstances:
 - You must be planning to travel to a different city for your Fellowship, and ideally you should be coming from a part of the country that has fewer resources for kidney care.
 - If your country has a local society of nephrology, you must verify with them if they can assist with local training opportunities, and only apply to the ISN as a last option.

Like all ISN Fellows, you must return home within three months of completing your training to benefit your local community.

- If you have already done an ISN Fellowship in the past, you are only eligible to apply for a short-term (6 months or less) training.

3. PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION FILE

You can 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 that includes a detailed and customised training plan.
- A Curriculum vitae (CV) of maximum 3 pages.
- Applicant's letter 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 mentor 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, you will need a letter from your regional society instead. Please contact the ISN if you need help contacting your regional society. 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.
- For those applying for a 12-month clinical training, the certificate of completion of the 5 modules of the Foundation Course available on the ISN Academy.

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 number of Fellows each year and only candidates with a strong application file are accepted. If you have any questions that are not covered in these guidelines,

please do not hesitate to contact ISN Staff at fellowship@theisn.org. It is advisable to do so well before the application deadline.

FORMS:

Your application must be submitted via the [online application system](#). The ISN Fellowship Committee will not consider 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. All documents must be uploaded in pdf format.

FINDING A HOST INSTITUTION/MENTOR

As an applicant you are responsible for finding a mentor who agrees to host you at their center and be responsible for your training. You are free to select any host that you feel would be a good fit for your needs, although they of course must accept to train you and they will have to fill out the Host ID form as part of your application.

The ISN has selected [21 ISN Regional Training Centers](#) to provide in-depth specialized training to improve patient care in different regions of the world. While we accept applications to train at any center of the candidate's choice, applications to train at one of the ISN Regional Training Centers will be given priority consideration by the ISN Fellowship Committee. Therefore, contacting a Regional Training Center is often a good first step if you have difficulty finding a host mentor.

Center	City	Country	Region	Liaison Officer	Email Address
Cairo Kidney Center	Cairo	Egypt	Africa	Rashad Barsoum	rashad.barsoum@gmail.com
East African Kidney Institute	Nairobi	Kenya	Africa	Bashir Admani	pedbashir@yahoo.com
Charlotte Maxeke Academic Hospital	Johannesburg	South Africa	Africa	Graham Paget	graham.paget@wits.ac.za
Red Cross Children's Hospital	Cape Town	South Africa	Africa	Mignon McCulloch	mignon.mcculloch@uct.ac.za
Stellenbosch Uni., Tygerberg Hospital	Cape Town	South Africa	Africa	Razeen Davids	mrd@sun.ac.za
UCT, Groote Schuur Hospital	Cape Town	South Africa	Africa	Kwazi Ndlovu	kczendlovu@gmail.com
Sahloul Hospital	Sousse	Tunisia	Africa	Abdellatif Achour	abdellatif.achour@rns.tn

Fundación Valle del Lili	Cali	Colombia	Latin America	Jaime Restrepo	restrepojaime@hotmail.com
FUNDANIER	Guatemala City	Guatemala	Latin America	Randall Lou-Meda	randall_lou@yahoo.com
Hasheminejad Kidney Center	Tehran	Iran	Middle East	Shahrzad Ossareh	ossareh_s@hotmail.com
City Clinical Hospital	Moscow	Russia	NIS & Russia	Elena Zakharova	helena.zakharova@gmail.com
Nanjing University	Nanjing	China	NE Asia	Xianghua Huang	hxhszb@163.com
Peking University	Beijing	China	NE Asia	Yuqing Chen	chenyuqing112@hotmail.com
Sun Yat-sen University	Guangzhou	China	NE Asia	Xueqing Yu	yuxq@mail.sysu.edu.cn
Hospital Kuala Lumpur	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	OSEA	Nurul Z. Nordin	nurulzaynah@gmail.com
King Chulalongkorn Hospital	Bangkok	Thailand	OSEA	Yingyos Avihingsanon	yingyos.a@gmail.com
Cho Ray Hospital	Ho Chi Minh	Vietnam	OSEA	Huong Thi Bich Tran	huongtrandr@yahoo.com
Osmania General Hospital	Hyderabad	India	South Asia	Maanisha Sahay	drmanishasahay@gmail.com
PGIMER	Chandigarh	India	South Asia	Harbir S. Kohli	kohlihs2009@gmail.com
Sanjay Gandhi Institute	Lucknow	India	South Asia	Narayan Prasad	narayan.nephro@gmail.com
St. John's Hospital	Bengaluru	India	South Asia	Arpana Iyengar	arpanaiyengar@gmail.com

HOST INSTITUTION:

- A maximum number of 2 long-term ISN Fellows can be accepted per year in the same host institution.
- Applicants 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 ISN Fellowship Committee.

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. The host mentor must adjoin a specific training plan to the letter of acceptance in order for it to be valid. **Do not neglect this part and make sure you allocate an appropriate amount of time with your host mentor to establish jointly a strong training plan.**

HOME INSTITUTION:

- Your home institution is where you will be employed in your home country following your Fellowship. As such, the training plan should directly address the needs of that institution. Those needs should be detailed in the nomination letter from your home mentor.
- In order to ensure that your training will have the most benefit to patients in your home country, your home institution must be a public institution. Doctors working in private settings are not eligible to apply for a Fellowship.
- You must upload a letter from your home institution clearly stating that your re-employment there is guaranteed upon completion of your training.

ISN MEMBERSHIP:

In order to be eligible, you need to be an ISN full or trainee 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 ISN 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 (membership@theisn.org) or visit the ISN Membership pages on the [ISN website](#).

START DATE AND DURATION:

ISN Fellowships are between three and twelve months in duration. The date when you plan to start your training should be agreed with your home and host mentors. You must start your training within six months of being informed of the outcome, which is usually 3-4 months after the deadline.

If you are applying by May 1st: Your start date should be between September of this year and March of next year

If you are applying by October 1st: Your start date should be February and September of next year

Remember to keep in mind processing time for travel visas and licensing when choosing a start date.

LANGUAGE:

The application and all enclosed documents **must** be written in English. Documents submitted in any other language will not be submitted to the ISN 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 ISN 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 ISN 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 training (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 ISN Fellowship Committee may decide to retain the payment of an ISN 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 ISN Fellowship Committee will prioritise applications for intraregional trainings. Over recent years, the ISN 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](#).

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 an ISN 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.

TUITION FEE FROM HOST INSTITUTION:

No tuition fees should be paid by an ISN Fellow, and in the event that the host institution is charging academic costs, the applicant should declare them on the application form.

FELLOWSHIP FOUNDATION COURSE:

Candidates applying for a **12-month clinical training** are required to complete the [ISN Fellowship Foundation Course](#) on the ISN Academy and get the certificates of completion BEFORE they apply to the ISN Fellowship Program.

The Foundation course includes five modules on AKI, GFR, Glomerular Diseases, Dialysis and CKD. It is only accessible on the ISN Academy for subscribers and ISN members. Therefore, if you are getting or renewing your ISN membership in order to apply for a Fellowship, you will need to do so before you can take the Foundation Course.

At the end of each module, you will need to answer two short-response questions. Your will be saved and appended to your Fellowship application after it is submitted.

4. SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

The ISN Fellowship Program has two 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.

	Session 1	Session 2
Application deadline	October 1	May 1

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 ISN Fellowship training	Within 3 months upon completion of your ISN Fellowship training

5. REVIEWING PROCESS

Each application is reviewed by members of the ISN 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 ISN 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.

6. OUTCOME

Approximately 3 months after the application deadline, all applicants are notified in writing about their acceptance or rejection in the ISN 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 co-sponsored training 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 trainees. 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.

REAPPLYING

If your application is ultimately unsuccessful, you will receive a letter that includes feedback from the reviewers. You are permitted to apply for an ISN Fellowship training under the same Host Mentor up to three times.

7. 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 ISN 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. The progress report for the next three years of each year in home institute is expected. 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 ISN Fellowship, including travel, accommodation and living expenses. The grant is intended to cover expenses of the ISN Fellow, not his/her family.

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

In order to receive your grant or first instalment (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 will 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 instalment payment (for applicable ISN Fellowships).

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

ONLINE COURSES DURING HANDS-ON TRAINING

Accepted ISN Fellows will be expected to participate in courses on the ISN Academy during their hands-on training at their host center, to complement their learning.

A curriculum of shortlisted ISN Academy resources will be provided to successful ISN Fellows that will need to complete during their hands-on training, depending on their area of interest (i.e., clinical nephrology, hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, transplantation, pediatric nephrology, renal pathology, etc).

Each curriculum will contain resources to complete every fortnight on average (i.e., 26 modules for a 12-month training or 13 modules for a specialized 6-month training).

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 with your permission.

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 a maximum of one year and will turn down applications longer than this duration.

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).

ISN 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.

8. 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 and submission of yearly progress reports 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 required to be submitted to the ISN within three months after the end of your training.

After verification and approval of the reports by the ISN 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"> • Priority to obtain a travel grant to 1 WCN • Use the title "ISN FELLOW"
6 months or less	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority to obtain a travel grant to 1 WCN • Use the title "ISN SCHOLAR"

In addition to 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 (ISN 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>.

In order to monitor the ISN Fellows' accomplishments, ISN sends out a questionnaire to past ISN 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 ISN Fellows.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS NOT COVERED IN THESE GUIDELINES, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT US AT FELLOWSHIP@THEISN.ORG.