

# NECST PhD and Post-Doctoral Fellowships 2024

## Guidelines

The National Endometriosis Clinical and Scientific Trials (NECST) Network invites researchers undertaking a PhD, post-doctoral researchers or clinical fellows (up to 10-years post-doctorate conferral; taking into consideration any career disruptions as guided by [NHRMC's Relative to Opportunity Policy](#)) to apply for NECST Fellowships to support their research career. The NECST fellowships are specifically intended to enable emerging PhD candidates, post-doctoral researchers and clinical fellows to build capacity in research and improve the understanding, impact, diagnosis and treatment of endometriosis and associated conditions (e.g., adenomyosis).

### Key information

- **Total funding available: \$1.80 M**
- **Multiple awards available for PhD students, post-doctoral researchers and clinical fellows**
- **Application open: Monday, 15 April 2024**
- **Application close: Monday, 27 May 2024, 5:00 pm AEST**

### Program objective

The NECST Network's vision is to improve the quality of life for people with endometriosis. Our mission is to foster collaborative national research, supporting and driving research that improves patient-outcomes and clinical care for those with endometriosis, and to enable and foster the next generation of new and emerging researchers in endometriosis.

A central priority of the NECST Network's Capacity, Collaboration and Implementation Plan 2023 – 2026 is to support young and emerging researchers in the area of endometriosis to progress their careers and continue in the field. These fellowships are to support individuals who are currently working or wanting to work in endometriosis research. This includes access and utilisation of the Network and registry and biorepository infrastructure to develop clinical and scientific programs of study to expand into the future.

### Eligibility

#### Who can apply

If you are wanting to apply for the PhD scholarship, you must be currently enrolled or have been accepted to undertake a PhD or is eligible to undertake a PhD with a confirmed supervisory panel (either a local domestic or international student).

If you are wanting to apply for the post-doctoral scholarship you must be either within 10-years of your PhD award (taking into account career disruption) or a clinical fellow (a clinician undertaking research).

In addition, all applicants must:

- Be based at a recognised Australian tertiary institution or research organisation.
- Have at least one experienced senior researcher named as primary supervisor or mentor.
- Reside in Australia.

## Fellowship funding and award period

A total of \$1,800,000 is available for the NECST PhD and Post-doc Scholarships.

The NECST Network is offering four (4) types of award funds:

- i. Full scholarship for a PhD candidate;
- ii. Top-up of current PhD scholarship holders;
- iii. 2-years full funding for post-doctoral researchers (either Level A or Level B Academic);
- iv. 2-years funding for clinical fellows.

Award funds are for people support only and not for other research costs. Award funds will be provided on an annual basis with renewal based on evidence of satisfactory progress that may include an accepted conference abstract presentation (either oral or poster) or publication in a national or international medical or scientific journal. The maximum fellowship funding period is 3-years for PhD scholarships or PhD top ups and 2-years for post-doctoral researchers or clinical fellows.

Award funds will be based on [NHMRC Personnel and Salary Support Packages](#) or your university Research Training Program (RTP) or University International Postgraduate Award (UIPA) or academic salary scheme and [Postgraduate Scholarships](#) and may include a top-up if you currently hold an Australian Postgraduate Award.

### Types of projects funded under this grant

The research themes that will be considered under the NECST Network's research program are:

- Pathophysiology of endometriosis
- Diagnosis of endometriosis
- Management of endometriosis
- Patient-reported outcomes in endometriosis
- Conditions associated with endometriosis.

Research themes and priorities are guided by the [2018 National Action Plan for Endometriosis](#) and Armour, M., Ciccia, D., Yazdani, A., Rombauts, L., Niekerk, L.V., Schubert, R. and Abbott, J. (2023), Endometriosis research priorities in Australia. Aust N Z J Obstet Gynaecol, 63: 594-598.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/ajo.13699>.

### Use of NECST Registry data and Biorepository samples

Although not mandatory, applicants are invited and indeed encouraged to access and utilise the NECST Registry and Biorepository or from Network member groups (including the Institute of Molecular Biology, University of Queensland).

Please contact Dr Cecilia Ng ([cecilia.ng@unsw.edu.au](mailto:cecilia.ng@unsw.edu.au)) and Network member groups to discuss feasibility and possibilities prior to submission of your application.

### What can't you apply for



NECST Fellowships are funding people who are undertaking a PhD project or are an emerging post-doctoral or clinical fellow in the early stages of establishing a research career. These Fellowships are not for funding research infrastructure, travel or accommodation costs.

## How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines and the [Application and Research Plan Form](#).

Applications are to be made on the application form.

To apply, you must:

- Complete and sign the application and research plan form;
- Provide all the information requested;
- Address all eligibility criteria and assessment criteria;
- Include all necessary attachments and
- Submit your application as a single PDF file to [necst@unsw.edu.au](mailto:necst@unsw.edu.au) with the subject line "NECST Fellowships" followed by your organisation name and surname.
- Do this by the closing date and time, as specified (**Monday, 27 May 2024 at 5.00 pm AEST**). No applications will be accepted after this.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate.

## Attachments to the application

We will require the following documents with your application:

- i. 1-page personal statement describing your capacity, ability, reason(s) for being in this field of research, reason(s) for nominating your supervisor/mentor and what you would like to achieve from the fellowship;
- ii. 2-page CV for the Applicant, highlighting relevant experience, strengths and outputs overall and specific to the area of endometriosis (and/or adenomyosis) research;
- iii. Letter of Acknowledgement and Supervision from a supervisor/mentor;
- iv. Project timeline (preferable GANTT chart) to provide an overview of your proposed study/studies and output in the field of endometriosis;
- v. Signatures and certification by applicant, supervisor/mentor and administering institution (Research Office).

If you do not attach the requested documents, your application may not progress further in the process. Only attach the requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

### After the application is submitted

You must submit your application between the published opening and closing dates.

Expected timeframes for this fellowship funding.

Activity	Expected timeframe
Processing of applications	1 week
Review and selection of fellowship awards	4 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	2 weeks



Negotiations and award of fellowship agreements	Up to 4 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	1 week

## Fellowship selection process

### Assessment of applications

First review of applications will be against the eligibility criteria mentioned above.

Only eligible applications will move to panel review. Eligible applications will be reviewed through a closed competitive process. Applications will be assessed against the assessment criteria. We will consider your application on its merits based on:

- Does your personal statement and CV address:
  - Your demonstrated ability and capability to carry out high quality research;
  - Rationale for why you are in this field of research;
  - Rationale for why you chose this project and supervisor/mentor;
  - What you would like to achieve from the Fellowship.
- Does your proposed research plan:
  - Include a statement of the research problem and its significance;
  - Outline how you plan to address the research question(s);
  - Outline relevant and impactful research outputs.

Each application will receive a score out of 100 based on components of your **personal statement (25% weighting), CV (25% weighting) and research plan (50% weighting)**.

### Assessment criteria of the submission and research plan

You must address all assessment criteria in your application.

The [Application Form](#) includes text and page limits, as indicated below (attachments do not contribute towards text or page limits).

The following assessment criteria will be used to assess your suitability to be awarded a NECST Fellowship.

**Criterion 1 (50%): Personal statement (max. 1-page; 25%) and CV (max. 2-pages; 25%).**

#### **Personal statement**

The purpose of the personal statement is for us to get to know you. It is important that you demonstrate why you want a career in endometriosis/adenomyosis research and why you think you are a suitable candidate to be awarded a NECST Fellowship.

Demonstrate to us who you are, reflecting on your previous experiences, and this can include your interests and aspirations and any academic and non-academic achievements you have (e.g., any volunteer work).

Tell us why you want to receive a NECST Fellowship. What do you think the NECST Network has to offer you and in what ways will the NECST Network meet your needs? How do you see yourself fitting into the NECST Network.

What has drawn you to apply for a NECST Fellowship? What interests and personal qualities do you have that are relevant to having a career in research?



## **CV**

Outline of previous completed degrees and research experiences that you have had. This must include evidence of research experience and outputs. For example, for a coursework Masters, you might state that there was a thesis which was completed and had a resulting accepted conference abstract or journal publication.

Evidence of your capacity to carry out research at the level you are applying for. This may include research outputs and experience, awards, any other outputs that recognises your abilities.

Your reasons for why you have decided to work in this area of research and why you have chosen this project and supervisor/mentor to support/guide you.

### **Criterion 2 (50%): Research plan (max. 2 pages, size 11 Arial font).**

Outline your research plan under the following headings:

- Background (/10)
- Research aims (/10)
- Methodology (including feasibility and statistical analysis; /10)
- Project outcomes (/10)
- Impact arising from the research (/10)

Your research plan will be assessed taking the following into consideration.

- Is the clinical/scientific relevance clear in your research plan?
- Is it methodologically sound and clearly presented?
- Are the aims achievable and realistic within the project timeframe?
- Does the research plan make a clear case their question will address a knowledge gap and further research in this space?

### **Who will assess applications?**

An assessment panel will assess and review applications. The assessment panel will be made up of experienced researchers within the NECST Clinical and Scientific Steering Committee and other experienced researchers, who will review the applications and determine which applicants will be awarded.

The decision of fellowship awardees by the assessment panel will be final.

### **Notification of application outcomes**

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing, following a decision by the assessment panel. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the fellowship award.

## **Conditions of the NECST Fellowship**

NECST Fellowship Awards will be paid on an annual basis, up to a maximum of 3-years for PhD scholarships or PhD top ups and 2-years for post-doctoral researchers and clinical fellows.

As a NECST Fellow, **it is mandatory**, in any presentation, abstract or publication arising from your work, the NECST Network is to be listed as an affiliation as follows “**National Endometriosis Clinical and Scientific Trials (NECST) Network Fellow, UNSW, Sydney, Australia**”. This will be in addition to any other affiliation you have (e.g., University or Medical Research Institute).



For all research outputs from studies using NECST Registry data, the following acknowledgement **must** be included:

**“The research on which this (paper, abstract or report) is based was conducted as part of the National Endometriosis Clinical and Scientific (NECST) Registry by the University of New South Wales. We are grateful to the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care for funding and to the women, trans and gender-diverse people who provided the survey and clinical data.”**

You will also be required to present your research progress to-date or research findings at the NECST Network Symposium, to be held in 2025 or 2026. Location of symposium is still to be determined, however, if you reside interstate, your flights and accommodation will be paid for as an awardee of a NECST Fellowship.

## How we monitor your fellowship activity and fellowship renewal

### Keeping us informed

We need to know of any key/major changes to your organisation or research activities, especially if they affect your ability to complete your PhD candidature or research study.

You must also inform us of any changes to your: name, address, nominated contact details; and bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the fellowship agreement, you must contact us immediately.

### Reporting and conditions for fellowship renewal

NECST Fellowships will be paid on an annual basis, up to a maximum of 3-years for PhD Scholarships or PhD top ups and 2-years for post-doctoral researchers or clinical fellows.

To qualify for fellowship renewal, you must provide evidence of:

- Notification of an accepted conference (National or International) abstract (oral or poster) and including:
  - Copy of the submitted abstract;
  - Copy of the final oral or poster presentation, and/or:
- Notification of the submitted publication to a medical or scientific journal including:
  - Copy of the submitted publication;
  - Copy upon publication.
- For first year PhD candidates, post-doctoral researchers and clinical fellows, if you are not able to submit a conference abstract or publication, a detailed progress report outlining the past year's progress (e.g., any ethics approval, study protocol development, co-design workshops, laboratory training workshops for methodological development etc.) is to be submitted for renewal approval by the NECST Executive Committee.

## Enquiries

If you have questions relating to the clarification of information of this fellowship, or process during the application period, please contact:

Dr Cecilia Ng

Phone: 0416 807 183

Email: [necst@unsw.edu.au](mailto:necst@unsw.edu.au)

