



Policy Name: NSA Research Scholarships

Date Approved: 26 May 2006

Revised Date: 7 May 2009

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the awarding of the NSA Research Scholarships including eligibility, selection, reporting, duration and other conditions.

2.0 BACKGROUND

NSA Research Scholarship are established with funding from companies and from the NSA Research and Education Fund for awarding to Surgical Education and Training (SET) Program trainees in neurosurgery registered with the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons. The establishment of sponsored Scholarships are governed by the Sponsorship Agreement between and the sponsor and the NSA.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Eligibility & Application Conditions

- 3.1.1 Applications must be on the application form available from the NSA website at www.nsa.org.au and must be received prior to the advertised closing date for applications. The opening date will be during 1 June in the year prior and the closing date will be during 1 July in the year prior.
- 3.1.2 Applicants must be registered Royal Australasian College of Surgeons SET Program trainees in neurosurgery and remain registered for the duration of the Scholarship.
- 3.1.3 Applicants must have approval from the SET Board of Neurosurgery to undertake a period of research for the duration of the Scholarship.
- 3.1.4 Applicants must be enrolled in, or intending to enroll in, a higher degree for the duration of the Scholarship.
- 3.1.5 The research study for which the application is submitted must be for neurosurgical research in any area. Some sponsored scholarships may be limited to specific subspecialty areas. Where such restrictions apply they will be advertised.
- 3.1.6 The research study must be full time. The maximum time that the recipient may engage in additional non research professional work is 20% of a full time equivalent, provided that approval has been received from the research supervisor in the application. Any engagement in professional work beyond this limit may result in the termination of the Scholarship.

3.2 Selection Criteria & Process

- 3.2.1 The recipient will be chosen on the basis of the merit of his/her application. An interview may take place as part of the selection process.
- 3.2.2 The selection committee will consist of a minimum of four representatives from the NSA appointed by the NSA Board.
- 3.2.3 Each member of the selection committee will score each application on an official score sheet using a pre determined scoring scale between 1 (being poor) and 5 (being excellent) for the following criteria:
 - (a) Quality of the research & research plan

- (b) Significance of the research
 - (c) Potential Impact for neurosurgery
 - (d) Support and infrastructure for the research
- 3.2.4 The scores provide by each member of the selection committee will be combined to provide an overall ranking of applicants. The highest ranking applicant(s) will be successful. If two or more applicants are equally scored the final decision will be determined by the selection committee on a majority vote.
- 3.2.5 The decision of the selection committee will be final. The scores will not be released.
- 3.2.6 The Scholarship will only be awarded if, in the opinion of the selection committee, there is an applicant of sufficient merit.

3.3 Duration & Timing

- 3.3.1 The duration of the Scholarship is for 12 months.
- 3.3.2 The commencement date for the Scholarship is February 1. Given exceptional circumstances the NSA may approve a deferment of commencement of the Scholarship for no more than one month on consideration of a written application.
- 3.3.3 Recipients may apply in open competition for a maximum of three years NSA funding.

3.4 Reporting & Sponsors Recognition

- 3.4.1 The payment of the Scholarship is conditional upon the recipient providing to the NSA with two (2) reports annually, in the requested format, on the research undertaken. The first report will be due in June and the second report (of publishable quality) will be due in February.
- 3.4.2 The reports may be published, at the discretion of the NSA, on the website www.nsa.org.au and in the NSA Newsletter. All publishing of the reports will give due recognition of the sponsors and include the sponsors logo.
- 3.4.3 Assessment reports will be sought from the supervisor nominated in the scholarship application in June and February.
- 3.4.4 Failure to provide the reports by the due dates or in the requested format will result in the recipient being ineligible for an further financial assistance from the NSA and, at the discretion of the NSA, may require the full or part refund of the Scholarship payments and the termination of the Scholarship.
- 3.4.5 Unsatisfactory supervisor reports during the Scholarship may result in the termination of the Scholarship.
- 3.4.6 The sponsor (and the NSA will be duly acknowledged in **any** advertising, publications or media related to the research study for which the Scholarship was awarded.
- 3.4.7 The receipt must present at the NSA Annual Scientific Meeting in the year following the scholarship a paper on the research undertaken. The receipt will be required to submit an abstract for the presentation through the standard mechanisms for the Meeting.

3.5 Ethics Approval

- 3.5.1 The NSA must receive documentary evidence where applicable of ethical approval from the Ethics Committee of the Institution concerned to approve that the project conforms to the general principles set out in the NH&MRC "Statement on Human Experimentation" and/or the "Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes".
- 3.5.2 No payments for the Scholarship will be paid until documentary evidence has been received.

3.6 Scholarship Termination

- 3.6.1 Failure to comply with any of the conditions of this Policy or the Scholarship Agreement may automatically result in the termination of the Scholarship.
- 3.6.2 The NSA may, at its discretion, for what is considered grave cause, suspend the tenure of the Scholarship for such time as thought fit, or deprive the recipient of the Scholarship. From the date of either of these decisions, the entitlement to the stipend and departmental maintenance will cease.
- 3.6.3 The NSA will notify the SET Board of Neurosurgery of any Scholarship termination **or** breach of any term of this Policy or the Scholarship Agreement. Depending on the ground for termination **or** the breach the SET Board of Neurosurgery may commence dismissal proceedings or disciplinary action relating to the recipient's status as a SET program trainee in neurosurgery in accordance with the applicable policies.
- 3.6.4 Upon termination or resignation for any reason the recipient may be required to refund part or all of the monies paid as part of the Scholarship within four (4) weeks of notification from the NSA.

3.7 Scholarship Acceptance

- 3.7.1 The recipient will be given a Scholarship Agreement. In signing the Agreement the recipient is certifying that:
 - (a) the information supplied in the scholarship application is true and correct;
 - (b) they understand that any information relating to the Scholarship and/or research study may be disclosed to internal and external parties who provide administrative or organisational support, or where the NSA is required to do so by law and will be disclosed to the SET Board of Neurosurgery;
 - (c) they consent to the NSA verify the information provided in relation to the Scholarship with external institutions or individuals, and gather additional information in relation to the applicant, research study or funding;
 - (d) they have read the terms of this Policy and the Scholarship Agreement in detail and understand and agreed to abide by the Policy and the Scholarship Agreement.

4.0 FINANCIAL POLICY

4.1 Value & Payment Arrangements

- 4.1.1 The Scholarship will be for a \$AUD 50,000 stipend and \$AUD5,000 departmental maintenance.
- 4.1.2 Payment of the stipend and the departmental maintenance will be made in two equal installments during February and July on receipt of a valid tax invoice, provided the conditions outlined in items 3.4 and 3.5 are satisfied. The tax invoice must be made out to the "Neurosurgical Society of Australasia".
- 4.1.3 The Scholarship payments will be made by direct credit to the institution or individuals bank account details provided on the tax invoice.
- 4.1.4 The recipient must notify the NSA in writing of any additional funding (including other grants, scholarships, fellowships, hospital funding and awards) within two (2) weeks. The NSA Scholarship amount identified in 4.1.1 will be adjusted to top up the value of the other funding to the value of the NSA Scholarship.
- 4.1.5 In the event that additional funding is received, any overpayment of the NSA Scholarship, given the adjustment outlined in item 4.1.4, must be reimbursed to the NSA within four (4) weeks.
- 4.1.6 The recipient must refer to his/her financial or taxation advisor to ascertain the taxability of the stipend. The NSA takes no responsibility for any taxation related to the Scholarship or taxation advice.

4.2 Funding Arrangements

- 4.2.1 Where the Scholarship is sponsored, the Scholarship will be funded in accordance with the Sponsorship Agreement for between the sponsoring company and the NSA.
- 4.2.2 Where the Scholarship is funded partly or wholly by the NSA, the Scholarship will be funded from the NSA Research and Education Fund.