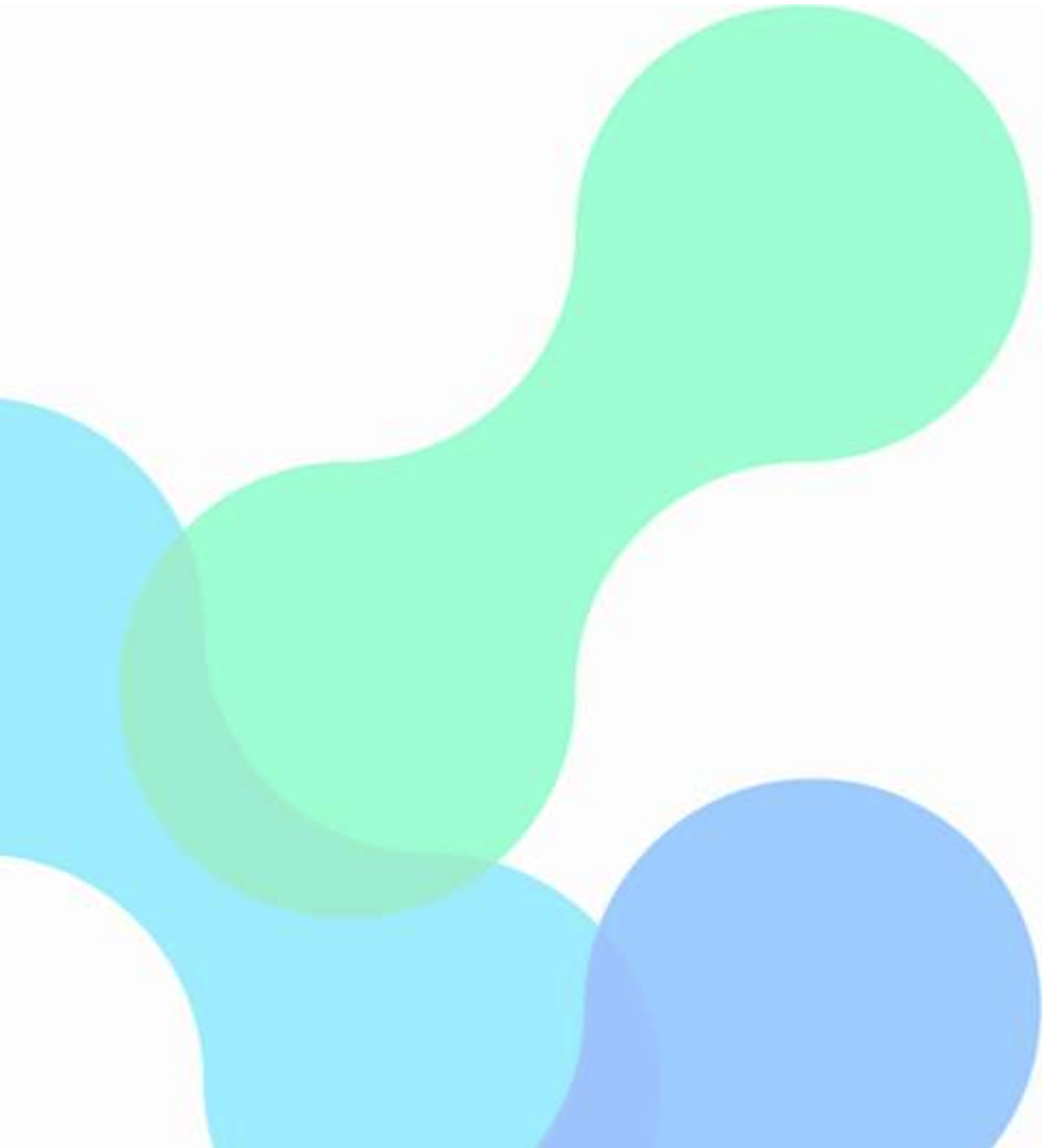
Guidelines for researchers

BASS/BSS/ORUK Spine Research Fellowship 2025



Introduction

The British Scoliosis Society (BSS) and The British Association of Spine Surgeons (BASS), in conjunction with Orthopaedic Research UK (ORUK), are pleased to announce a new, 2-year, spine research fellowship.

This spine research fellowship of up to £70k is funded between the three organisations across a period of 2 years. This will require a leave of absence from clinical roles and / or training with agreement of employers or training programme directors.

It is aimed at individuals with an interest in research into any spinal area. It is open for applications to any individual who is already a member of either BSS or BASS or would be eligible to apply for full membership commensurate to their seniority within their professional group. If in the situation that the applicant is not a member of either society but eligible to apply otherwise, the granting of the award would be conditional on attaining and maintaining full membership of either BSS or BASS throughout their grant.

Our approach is inclusive, and we would welcome applications by allied health professionals (AHPs) and nurses along with medical doctors (consultants and trainees).

It is envisioned that this role will be full time and will result in the awarding of an MD, or equivalent higher degree, in partnership with a UK university, along with high impact papers in recognised journals.

Applications will be a single stage process with those successful invited for interview. The role is planned to commence in January 2026 and no later than June 2026.

Applications will be judged on the research idea presented, the prospective research fellow and their ability to deliver the research, and the supporting mentors / supervision team.

About your research

Your research should be aimed at enhancing the quality of life for those affected by debilitating spinal conditions. The fellowship's goal is to identify challenging areas in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and management; understand the underlying mechanisms involved, and develop appropriate scientific, clinical or technological solutions to address them.

About the BASS/BSS/ORUK Spine Research Fellowship

This fellowship is designed to support the brightest and best talents interested in advancing spinal research in the UK.

- We help establish researchers' academic independence and international reputation.
- We hope to develop ambassadors for BASS, BSS and ORUK and support them to become future spine leaders.
- Must be an evidence-based research project.
- Must take place in the UK.

Who can apply?

Member of either BSS or BASS, or those who would be eligible to apply for full membership commensurate to their seniority within their professional group. This includes allied health professionals (AHPs) and nurses along with medical doctors (consultants and trainees).

How many fellowships are we going to fund?

One fellowship, to commence in January 2026 and no later than June 2026.

What is the total value of the fellowship and over how long?
£70,000 over 2 years.

When is the closing date for applications?

19 October 2025 at 23:59.

Do you need further information?

Further information can be gained via the research leads:
BSS – Adrian Gardner at adrian.gardner@nhs.net
BASS – Pal Lakshmanan at research@spinesurgeons.ac.uk
ORUK – research@oruk.org

What else is encouraged?

- Cross collaboration with other disciplines and colleagues to find more affordable, better and smarter solutions for patients with spinal disorders.
- Bringing funding from other sources such as other grant giving organisations.

Key dates*

1 September 2025	Application form submission is open
Sunday 19 October 2025 at 23:59pm	Deadline to submit applications form
October – November 2025	Peer review process
Week of 24 November/ By 1st week of December 2025	Interview shortlisted applicants by the joint review panel
By first week of December 2025	Award decision

* These dates are tentative and are subject to change

IMPORTANT

1. We sign our **Standard Research Agreement** with Universities, NHS Trusts and registered business entities in the UK, not individuals. If you're unsure about this please contact research@oruk.org.

2. Applicants are only allowed to submit one application for this research call.

Submitting your research application

The full application online form can be accessed from **here.**

All applicants are advised to use scientific language and include images where appropriate, in addition to providing the necessary references to support their claims. If these references are based on their previous work, they also need to be blinded.

The applicants are encouraged to suggest up to five names of experts in the field. The experts must not be linked to their application or the institution of the applicant. We will not guarantee that proposed experts will be invited to review the application.

Multiple experts will be invited to review the application. Reviewers will be asked to use a scoring system to rate the scientific quality of the proposals. At the end of this stage, applications will be ranked according to the scores received by the reviewers. Those qualified or rejected at this stage will be notified via e- mail.

Applicants of the rejected proposals may receive their score along with any specific feedback that may have been provided by the reviewers.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to meet with the Joint Review Panel for further evaluation. Applicants are required to appear before this committee, give a short presentation and take part in a Q&A session.

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to submit short CVs of all the collaborators involved. The format of the files can be in both PDF (.pdf) or Word (.docx). For CVs, all files should be titled as following: "**Name of researcher_CV.pdf**". Further information will be provided to shortlisted applicants in due course.