



AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL GENETICISTS

A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP OF THE HUMAN GENETICS SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA

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The Nigel Clarke Memorial Education Bursary

Value \$AUD2,000 awarded annually

Background

In recognition of the importance and the cost of education, the AACG offers an annual bursary, open to all trainees who are financial members of the HGSA and AACG. While the bursary may be used for any educative experience, applications which have the capacity to benefit the Association as a whole will be looked upon favourably.

Trainees are asked to declare other sources of finances they have applied for and/or have received for the intended purpose. Whilst funding from other sources will not preclude a trainee from applying to the AACG bursary, the judging panel may take this into account to ensure the maximum number of trainees have the opportunity to access educational funding.

The successful applicant/s will be required to submit a brief report on their project to the AACG Executive for uploading to the AACG webpage and for presentation at the Annual General Meeting the year following their award.

Applications to the bursary will open each year at the March AACG annual meeting. Applications will remain open until 30th June that same year. The successful applicant will be announced at the AACG Annual General Meeting, normally held in August each year. If the AGM happens to be held before August, the successful applicant will be announced either at the AGM or during the first week of August, contingent on the availability of the judging panel.

Nigel Clarke (1966-2015) was outstanding both as a clinical geneticist and a scientist, taken from our community at the peak of his career by glioblastoma. He was driven by deep-rooted caring for his patients and their families, and his desire to find answers where previously there were none. Nigel completed his medical training in 1991 at Otago University. In 2006, he completed his PhD and in 2007, he was awarded a prestigious Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)/INSERM Post-doctoral Fellowship to work in Paris at the Institute de Myologie. In 2013, he succeeded Kathryn North as Head of the Institute for Neuroscience and Muscle Research. Nigel's research led to the discovery and characterisation of a plethora of muscle disease-causing genes. Nigel had an amazing skill set, including an uncanny ability to "pick the gene" from his precise analysis and understanding of the clinical phenotype of a patient. He was one of the founders and pillars of strength of the Australasian Neuromuscular Network. His friendly and unassuming manner brought people together. Nigel was also an outstanding mentor of his own students and to early career researchers more broadly in the Sydney Medical School.

Purpose of Bursary

All applications will be considered. Examples of suitable applications include, but are not limited to:

- Training/experience in an international centre
- Funding of a research project
- Attendance at an international/national conference (an abstract MUST be presented for such purposes)
- University course costs

Judging Criteria

Applications will be judged primarily on:

1. Scientific merit
2. Originality of application
3. Capacity of project to benefit the greater AACG

The judging panel may take extenuating circumstances into account (eg personal or financial hardship).

Bursary Assessment Panel

The Bursary Assessment Panel is a subcommittee of the AACG Executive, chaired by a member of the Executive. The assessment panel shall consist of three to four members, up to three appointed by the executive and who will preferentially have a strong track record in medical research. The term of appointment is two years, renewable twice (ie, maximum six consecutive years). An individual who has served six years on the panel may be reappointed after a one term (two year) period off the panel.

Terms and Conditions

The applicant must be a financial member of the Human Genetics Society of Australasia and the AACG.

The applicant must be a registered advanced trainee in clinical genetics with the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, or equivalent.

The applicant must be a registered medical practitioner with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency or the Medical Council of New Zealand.

The bursary is to the value of \$AUD2,000. The prize may be apportioned to more than one trainee each year, at the discretion of the Bursary Assessment Panel. Bursary winners will be ineligible to also receive an AACG ASM Trainee prize.

The decision to award a prize must be ratified by the AACG executive. All bursary Assessment Panel members are required to declare actual and potential conflicts of interest. A potential conflict of interest does not automatically disqualify a panel member from assessing applications, but shall be taken into account before ratification. The ratified decision of the Bursary Assessment Panel is final and may only be challenged if there is evidence of impropriety from one or more members of the panel.
