

The Alan Mackay-Sim Spinal Cord Injury Travelling Fellowship

2026 Application Guidelines



FACULTY OF HEALTH

Objective

To achieve improved clinical outcomes and quality of life for people with a spinal cord injury (SCI).

Scope

The Alan Mackay-Sim Spinal Cord Injury Travelling Fellowship (the Fellowship) is available for overseas travel that is aimed at improving clinical management, rehabilitation or social support for people with a SCI. Fellowships will fund overseas travel to centres of best practice for spinal cord injury to pursue a project that is not readily achievable in Australia. Support for travel to benefit basic research on biological mechanisms or novel treatment strategies (e.g. clinical drug trials), etc. is specifically excluded.

Value

The value of the Fellowship will differ each year, depending on the proposed study program. The maximum value is \$35,000. It is not anticipated that the Fellowship will cover all expenses incurred during the study program, and applicants are encouraged to apply for supporting funds from external sources and from their own or host institution(s). Salaries of applicants and some other costs should be funded by the home institution, e.g. via professional development leave.

Duration and Dates

The duration of the Fellowship will depend on the proposed study tour itinerary. A Fellowship must be a minimum of four (4) weeks, and a maximum of six (6) months in duration. Additional time outside of the approved Fellowship itinerary will be entirely at the Fellow's own expense.

It is anticipated that the study program will be completed in 2027, but applications for travel beyond the end of 2027 will be considered.

The Fellowship must be taken as one continuous journey. An itinerary split over significant time that includes multiple departures from Australia will not be considered.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Applicants must be an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident, residing in any Australian State or Territory.
2. Applicants must be over the age of 18 years, with no upper age limit.
3. Applicants do not need a specific qualification to apply. Applications are encouraged from a range of disciplines including nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, social work, and psychology. Applicants may be enrolled in an undergraduate or postgraduate course, and the Fellowship may form part of the studies in that course.

Application Process

1. Applicants are encouraged to plan and prepare their application well in advance of the closing date, but applications cannot be received before the opening date as advertised on the QUT website.
2. Applications must be lodged electronically in one PDF document via email to health.engage@qut.edu.au prior to the advertised closing date and time. Late applications will not be accepted.

3. There is no formal application form. Applicants will submit a free-form application including:
 - a. Details of the Applicant;
 - b. Responses to the Assessment Criteria (outlined below);
 - c. The proposed study tour itinerary;
 - d. A detailed proposed budget;
 - e. Written referee reports from a Project Reference and Professional Reference;
 - f. Current Curriculum Vitae;
 - g. A detailed supporting statement outlining how the study tour will achieve the Objective of the Fellowship; and
 - h. Other supporting documents may be attached as an appendix if desired., such as letters of support from host institutions.
4. There is no limit on the length of the application, but brevity is encouraged.
5. The purpose of the application is to enable the Selection Panel to assess the applicant and the outline of the proposed project, to select a successful Fellow or identify applicant/s who may be invited to interview.
6. All documentation forming part of a Fellowship application becomes the property of QUT upon submission, and will be archived electronically.

Assessment Criteria

1. Project Assessment Criteria may include:
 - 1.1 The need for the project in the management or rehabilitation of people with SCI.
 - 1.2 The benefits of the project to people with SCI and their families.
 - 1.3 The itinerary and places selected to visit.
 - 1.4 The necessity to travel overseas.
 - 1.5 The achievability of the project.
2. Applicant Assessment Criteria may include:
 - 2.1 The applicant's ability to maximise the opportunity of a Fellowship (current standing and experience, skills, and expertise).
 - 2.2 The applicant's ability and commitment to make a difference after the study tour (ongoing involvement in the field, leadership qualities, strategic approach, and networks)
 - 2.3 The applicant's ability and commitment to widely disseminate findings.
 - 2.4 The applicant's ability and commitment to implement changes in clinical practice.

Selection Process

1. After applications have closed, all applicants will be sent an official acknowledgement of receipt via email.
2. Applications will be assessed by an internal Selection Panel, the composition of which may vary from year to year. External advice may be sought on an applicant's proposed project, if the Selection Panel determines there is need to obtain an additional technical perspective.
3. Every application received will be assessed on the merit of the proposed likelihood of achieving the Objective of the Fellowship. In making this assessment, the Selection Panel will consider the Assessment Criteria listed above.
4. Shortlisted applicants may be required to attend an interview either by telephone, online, or in person.
5. The awarding of the Fellowship is a competitive process. A maximum of one award will be made in any year. In the event that QUT considers that no worthy applications have been received, no award will be made that year.
6. Unsuccessful applications will be notified by email at the completion of the selection process.

Conditions

1. The award of a Fellowship is subject to the Fellow agreeing to be bound by the conditions laid down in a contract document signed between QUT and the Fellow or between QUT, an employer of the Fellow and acknowledged by the Fellow. A Fellowship cannot commence until QUT receives a fully executed copy of the contract document.

2. The Fellow must comply substantially with the contents of their Fellowship application. Deviations from the travel plan outlined in the Fellowship application must be approved by QUT prior to travel.
3. The Fellow must make all travel arrangements including airfares (economy class), ground transportation, accommodation bookings, conference registration, and travel insurance policy. The Fellow must acquit all Fellowship payments received with evidence of eligible expenditure.
4. At the completion of the study tour, Fellows are required to submit a written report to QUT outlining the achievements of the study tour and any proposed changes to management of SCI as a result of the study tour. The written report should be submitted to QUT within 60 days of completion of the study tour.
5. Fellows are also strongly encouraged to present the results of their study tour at a significant national conference such as the Australian & New Zealand Spinal Cord Society Annual Scientific Meeting (ANZSCoS ASM).

Funding

1. Applicants can apply for up to \$35,000 to continue toward the cost of the Fellowship.
2. Eligible expenses that Applicants should consider in developing their budget include:
 - 2.1 Air and Surface Travel (All major air travel will be by economy class. Travel will begin and terminate at the major airport nearest to the Fellow's home address. The route and/or sequence of places to be visited may vary to reduce costs).
 - 2.2 Accommodation Costs.
 - 2.3 Communication Costs.
 - 2.4 Conference/Workshop Registration Fees.
 - 2.5 Living Allowance (daily meal and incidental expenses).
 - 2.6 Travel Insurance.
3. It is not anticipated that the Fellowship will cover all expenses incurred during the study program, and applicants are encouraged to apply for supporting funds from external sources and from their own or host institution(s).
4. Salaries of applicants and some other costs should be funded by the home institution, e.g. via professional development leave.
5. The allowances paid to a Fellow by QUT may be abated by the amount received under an award from another source, excluding salary. Generally, it is not anticipated that an award will be made to applicants who already hold similar substantial awards that support a study tour.
6. Unexpected amounts for an allowance granted for one purpose are not transferable to another purpose.
7. Once the Fellowship has been awarded, and a contract executed, no further funds will be committed by QUT to the Fellow for the cost of the study tour.
8. Tax Implications
 - 8.1 The liability of a Fellow for income tax is a matter for decision by the Commissioner of Taxation, and QUT has no responsibility or authority in the matter. Any allowances paid to the Fellow are likely to be treated as accessible income. QUT recommends that Fellows keep receipts for all expenditure during their Fellowship and seek independent advice with respect to the eligibility for claiming any tax deductions.
 - 8.2 There may be GST implications for allowances paid to some Fellows who are self-employed or hold an ABN. Any GST liability will be borne by QUT and will not affect the amount of funds allocated to the Fellow for the Fellowship.

Key dates:

Applications open: 25 May 2026

Applications close: 2 August 2026

health.engage@qut.edu.au

