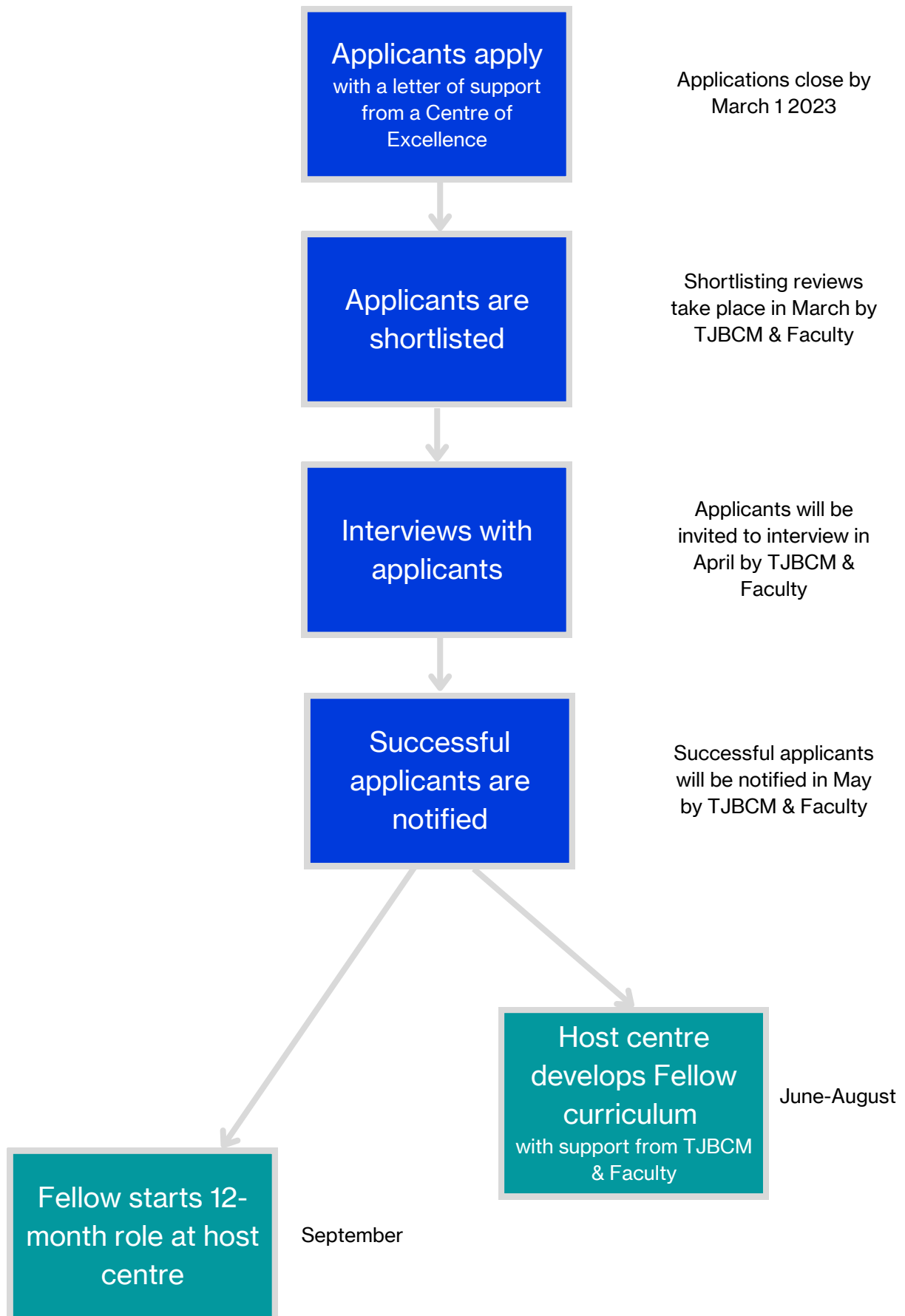


TJBCM Fellowship Programme: Neuro-oncology

Guidelines

Process Summary



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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission

The cure rates for brain tumours have remained low for many decades due to multiple complex issues. To improve outcomes, it is essential that scientists, who as experts in neurobiology, preclinical tumour modelling, genomics, drug discovery and development can have access to the best neurologists, neuropathologists, neurosurgeons, radiologists, clinical and medical oncologists so that the important challenges can be identified and targeted if we are eventually to be in the position to cure all patients with a brain tumour. Training for a career in neuro-oncology in the UK has a clear pathway for neurosurgeons but less so for the other disciplines. These guidelines outline a training fellowship programme in neuro-oncology for trainees in medical and clinical oncology, radiology, neuropathology and neurology.

Following Dame Tessa Jowell's call for action to improve brain tumour treatment, research and survival, the TJBM was formed to work with existing stakeholders in the government, academic, NHS, Charity and patient and volunteer sectors to help facilitate a new national strategy for brain tumours. The Mission, an independent community interest company, serves as a convening body for these stakeholders, enabling them to work together to make a tangible change in brain tumour treatment and research. The Mission is overseen by Chief Executive Officer Dr Nicky Huskens, Chaired by Professor Richard Gilbertson (Cambridge Cancer Centre) and Tessa's daughter Ms Jess Mills, serves as special advisor to the Mission.

TJBCM designs and delivers a national portfolio of eight transformational programmes focused on accelerating research, advancing clinical trial infrastructure, improving care for today's patients, and connecting and training NHS staff. As part of the connecting and training NHS staff strand, the Fellowship programme, led by Dr Jefferies, is tasked with designing training opportunities for healthcare professionals.

With the above initiatives the Mission aims to significantly grow the brain tumour research community in the UK, train outstanding health care professionals and offer better care for patients in the UK. We aim to make this area an attractive and rewarding career choice for aspiring scientist and physicians.

1.2 Why is a TJBCM Fellowship in Neuro-oncology needed?

Brain tumours are the 9th most common cancer in the UK with 11,432 cases reported in 2015. Brain tumour incidence rates are projected to rise by 6% between 2014 and 2035 (Smittenaar et al., 2016). Treatment options include surgery, radiotherapy, and chemotherapy, primarily delivered by neurosurgeons and oncologists, supported by neuroradiology, neuropathology and neurology. The neuro-oncology multi-disciplinary team (MDT) requires specialist input from clinicians dedicated to provide high-quality management of CNS tumours. In 2006 the NICE cancer service guideline for brain and CNS tumours highlighted the importance of specialist neurosurgical input in managing neuro-oncological surgery in which at least 50% of their clinical time is dedicated to management of CNS tumours (NICE(CSG10), 2006). Progress towards delivering world-class neuro-oncological cancer care in the UK requires training MDT members who have a deep appreciation of the treatment and management strategies applied throughout the team.

We anticipate in the coming decade the management of brain tumours will be increasingly complex. Surgical strategies are developing to refine the resection of tumours through intra-operative fluorescence and imaging. Radiotherapy will require advanced technical training to deliver stereotactic or proton radiotherapy. Tumour DNA sequencing resulting in subgrouping and the identification of actionable mutations will add to the complexity of understanding the implications of treatment and prognosis. Consequently, the application of new chemo- or immunotherapies in the context of early- and late-phase clinical trials will necessitate skilled clinicians in delivering comprehensive cancer care.

Our Tessa Jowell Fellowships, hosted in collaboration with Tessa Jowell Centres of Excellence (TJCE), are designed to support clinicians to address the needs of the future of neuro-oncology. The 12-month funded Fellowships aim to train highly skilled clinicians that are capable of appreciating the breadth of comprehensive brain tumour management and can integrate knowledge and experience in personalizing and optimising cancer care.

The intention is for the Fellow to gain experience with the ultimate objective of leading high impact practice changing neuro-oncology clinical trials in the future as a Chief Investigator. The exact curriculum of the Fellowship and its integration into existing centre infrastructure is flexible and will be negotiated locally between the Fellow and local host centre depending on training needs and local expertise.

1.0 Introduction

1.3 The Fellow programme committee

The Committee

Programme Lead – Dr. Sarah Jefferies
Medical oncology – Dr. Juanita Lopez
Clinical Oncology – Prof. Anthony Chalmers, Dr. Faye Robertson, Dr. Gillian Whitfield, Dr. Cressida Lorimer
Neurosurgery – Prof. Michael Jenkinson
Neuroradiology – Dr. Gerry Thompson
Neurology – Dr. Fiona McKevitt
Neuropathology – Prof. Kathreena Kurian
Director of Services and Policy Brains Trust – Dr. Helen Bulbeck

The role of TJBCM

The TJBCM is responsible for the general administration of the Fellowships and for the expansion of the Fellowship programme. It will:

- undertake the selection process to award the Fellowships
- ensure that the host centres are able to support the required aspects of training in neuro-oncology

The role of the Programme Lead

There is a single program lead responsible for the program. The person designated with this authority is accountable for the operation of the fellowship program and fulfills the following:

- possesses requisite specialty expertise such as demonstrated evidence of experience in the field of neuro-oncology, as well as documented educational and administrative abilities and experience in his or her field,
- has significant prior experience in the training of in neuro-oncology
- reports on the training program to the TJBCM committee

The role of the Faculty

- Oversee and organize the activities of the educational program for Fellows participating at their centre based on a suggested format (p.X)
- oversee the module contents
- report on the Fellowship training to the Programme Lead.



2.0 The Fellowship

2.1 Guidelines for planning the Fellows curriculum

Once approved, the host centre's Supervisor is in charge of developing the Fellow's curriculum and activities, within TJBCM's guidelines below. It is recommended that this is negotiated between the centre and Fellow, depending on personal requirements and interests.

Ensuring quality and relevance in curriculum development requires logical planning to achieve constructive alignment of Fellowship goals and outcomes. Harden proposed ten questions should be asked when planning a curriculum (Harden, 1986).

Question 1: What are the needs in relation to the product of the training programme?

Please see introduction section for the needs of the community

Question 2: What are the aims and objectives?

The aims of the TJBCM Fellowship are:

- To provide supervised training in the inpatient and outpatient practice of neuro-oncology.
- To develop clinicians that can high-quality comprehensive neuro-oncological patient care within all the associated disciplines.
- To cultivate the future leaders in neuro-oncology in the UK
- To equip clinical academics with the necessary research skills to lead high impact practice changing neuro-oncology clinical trials in the future

Objectives for the TJBCM Fellowship will be:

- To develop skills and familiarity in surgical decision-making, advanced techniques, and the management of complications.
- To provide a framework for the management of neurological symptoms and sequelae of brain tumours.
- To appreciate the role of neuroimaging in assessing brain tumours and the role of novel imaging modalities.
- To gain understanding of neuropathology and molecular genomics.

Question 3: What content will be included?

Specific content will be decided by the Fellow and their host institution supervisor and will be shaped by the educational opportunities at the host centre.

Question 4: How should the content be organized?

Content should be organized into discrete modules that address key aspects of neuro-oncological management (see p.X)

Question 5: What education strategies will be adopted?

The educational strategy applied will be trainee-centred integrated learning. The curriculum should be planned to deliver bespoke training modules that address the educational needs of the Fellow. The individual goals of the Fellow will be agreed with the host centre Programme Supervisor and the Programme Lead prior to commencement.

Question 6: What teaching methods will be used?

Training will be centred around work-based learning methods, such as reflection, role-modelling, mentoring, interprofessional interactions, and opportunistic clinic or 'bed-side' learning.

Question 7: How will assessments be carried out?**Feedback**

A short written report will be requested from the Fellow and the host supervisor at the end of the Fellowship. This will be reviewed by the Programme Lead. Colleagues at the TJCE will assess satisfaction and engagement with the Fellowship.

Behavioural change

By the end of the Fellowship the Fellow should be applying their learning. Either the application of new techniques or integrating obtained knowledge into their clinical practice.

Impact

The impact of the Fellowship will occur in two phases. Following the completion of the Fellowship, it is anticipated the Fellow will begin a substantive post treating brain tumours in the UK with at least a 50% of clinical workload. Long term, Fellows will support the local delivery of high-quality neuro-oncological care and develop national and international roles in brain tumour management.

Question 8: How will details of the curriculum be communicated?

Once outlined, details of the curriculum should be communicated to all potential relevant staff at the host centre and to the Fellow.

Question 9: What educational environment or climate will be fostered?

Work-based learning has learning embedded into the everyday practice, routines and cultures of the TJCE. Learning is supported by more knowledgeable and experienced colleagues, alongside the wider health care team. Consequently, engaged mentor and module leads are vital in identifying development opportunities. TJCE should be nationally recognized in one or two module areas to promote excellence for the trainee.

Question 10: How will the process be managed?

The process will be managed by the host centre supervisor, with support from the Programme Lead and the TJBCM (see p.X).

Structure

The Fellowship will be structured as concurrent core specialty experience and module participation. Importance is placed on the longitudinal experience of managing brain tumours, in which clinical oncology trainees usually have approximately 4-months and medical oncology trainees have zero experience within a standard training programme. Also, Fellows arriving at a new institute will gain from participating in a different clinical environment to widen breadth of experience. Below is an example of the expected Fellowship structure.



Fig.1 - Example of the expected Fellowship content modules and structure

External opportunities

It is also recommended that host centres encourage and integrate opportunities for a Fellow to expand into external learning opportunities, such as:

- Attend the annual BNOS meeting
- Join the NCRI Brain Tumour Group
- Complete a short-course on clinical trials and experimental therapeutics
- Complete modules at international institutions

2.0 The Fellowship

2.2 Eligibility

TJ Fellowships are for applicants who are near completion of training in medical or clinical oncology, neurology, radiology and pathology. Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate that they meet the range of skills and experience outlined in Appendix 1.

2.3 The Applicant

The TJBCM Fellowships are aimed at individuals planning an academic career in neuro-oncology. The application will expect the Fellow to demonstrate:

- Current research experience and impact at the time of applying
- Future research ambitions that the applicant will be expected to develop during the fellowship
- Wider supporting and enabling skills at the time of applying which will help them deliver on their research ambitions

The TJBCM Fellowship programme will use these factors to make the award decisions.

2.4 The host institution

a. Tessa Jowell Centre of Excellence Network

The Tessa Jowell Centre of Excellence designation serves as national recognition of a centre's staff going above and beyond for patients with brain tumours. For patients, designation creates transparency in treatment choice and instils confidence that they will receive the highest standard of care under the NHS.

Tessa Jowell Centres of Excellence are centres which have obtained designation status following a review by the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission against the Tessa Jowell Centre of Excellence standards. Each centre has demonstrated an active commitment to service development and improvement and will provide the level of training outlined in this document. Additionally, they will demonstrate the ability to promote the overall TJBCM fellowship goals and support educational activities.

Applicants may therefore apply to be hosted at a:

- a) Tessa Jowell Centre of Excellence which is the primary fellowship training site as well as;
- b) A participating institution may provide required experience that cannot be obtained at the primary site (e.g., an international institution)

b. Participating Institutions

- i. Assignments of Fellows to participating institutions must be based on a clear educational rationale, must have clearly stated learning objectives and activities and should provide resources not otherwise available to the Fellowship program.
- ii. Assignments at participating institutions must be of sufficient duration (e.g., at least two weeks) to ensure a quality educational experience and should provide sufficient opportunity for continuity of care. All participating institutions must demonstrate the ability to promote the overall fellowship goals and support educational activities.
- iii. If a participating institution is used, a participating institution letter must be submitted. Such a letter must: state the participating institution's commitment to training and education, list specific activities that will be undertaken, supported, and supervised at the participating institution, and be signed by the department chair of the participating institution.

Applicants who require additional support to facilitate the placement with a host institution or are interested in a placement at a secondary site to obtain an experience that cannot be obtained at the primary site (e.g. international site or proton beam therapy service) are advised to first contact sarah.jefferies@nhs.net to discuss how this can be facilitated.

2.5 NIHR Research Component

To ensure clinicians are equipped with the relevant research skills needed to lead high impact practice changing neuro-oncology trials, the TJ fellow will be trained in early phase clinical trial design, delivery and experience. Fellows will have the opportunity to serve as a mentored sub-investigator of a clinical trial.

2.6. What is funded?

The 1-year Fellowship award is £86,000, funded by the National Institute of Health Research and the Tessa Jowell Foundation. This consists of: a full Fellow salary cost of £60,000 - £75,000 and administrative costs to support the host institution of £500-£800 per month (up to £10,000 per annum).

2.7 Facilities and Resources

Each TJCE institution must demonstrate that it possesses the facilities and resources necessary to support a quality educational experience. The institution must provide the fellows with a suitable working environment and demonstrable access to administrative support, typical office equipment and supplies, and education and library resources. Fellows are expected to have access to the appropriate experience according to the modules selected.

2.0 The Fellowship

2.7 The Fellow's expected input into TJBCM

The Tessa Jowell Fellowship programme is part of the TJBCM's programme portfolio. The successful candidate will be expected to take an active role in the Mission's activities, to help deliver its national strategy for brain tumours and drive excellence in brain tumour treatment and care in the UK. Fellows will be asked to join the Mission's digital learning platform, the Tessa Jowell Academy, and take an active role in steering the interdisciplinary trainee working group. The trainee working group will consist of early-career researchers and junior clinicians, with the aim of providing networking and education opportunities across neuro-oncology disciplines. This is also an exciting opportunity for the Fellow to work on a national programme with a community of nearly 800 NHS clinical professionals. Within this, the Fellow may:

- Co-design resources and sessions for trainees
- Support the strategy of the working group
- Present on their experience or research at the end of the Fellowship in a profile/case study



3.0 The Application Process

The TJBCM Fellowships are aimed at individuals planning an academic career in neuro-oncology. The application will expect the applicant to demonstrate:

- Evidence of developing independent research ideas
- Evidence of the beginning of important research contributions in neuro-oncology
- An awareness of research in other fields/disciplines and how their own research could benefit from working across disciplines
- Identified appropriate career development opportunities
- Plans to develop relevant skills and knowledge to drive the development of their own cancer research ideas
- Evidence of balancing other commitments e.g. clinical, teaching, supervision activities
- Started to develop leadership skills
- Demonstrate effective communication skills across different audiences

Please note that: Part-time working and neuro-oncology discipline will be taken into consideration by the training programme and if applicants are applying for a place at a specific host institution, they will need to ensure to provide a letter of support from the institution's head of department with the application.

The 2023 TJ Fellowship recruitment window opens on January 18th 2023 and closes on March 1st 2023. The Fellow is expected to start in September 2023. Applicants will need to submit an application form and send to sarah.jefferies@nhs.net and nicky.huskens@tessajowellbcm.org. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview with the TJ Fellowship committee on the W/C 17th of April 2023.

If you would like to apply for the Tessa Jowell Fellowship, please see the application form and person specification, which can be downloaded at www.tessajowellbraincancermission.org/strategic-programmes/tessa-jowell-fellows/tessa-jowell-neuro-oncology-fellowship/.

If you need further guidance on the fellowship or the application process – please contact sarah.jefferies@nhs.net.