

Frequently asked questions about the Giordano Fellowship Programme

The Giordano Fellowship (GF) Programme has been an impactful ESP Educational Programme with a successful history of more than 10 years! For ensuring the smooth running of the GF, there are several regulations in place, both for applicants and awardees.

The GF webpage provides all the necessary information. We also share for answers to frequently asked questions below. Should you have any further questions, please contact Dr Christos Poullos at admin@esp-pathology.org

The best advice we can offer is: read everything carefully before acting. Be well-informed, so as not to be surprised.

Q: I wish to apply for the GF, but I see no call for applications. How should I proceed?

A: ESP announces a call for applications in early summer each year. Each year, the deadline to apply is mentioned. It is not possible to apply outside this timeframe.

Q: I have read the eligibility criteria and do not meet one or more of them. Can I still apply for the GF?

A: ESP is committed to providing high-level educational opportunities to all pathologists. The role of the eligibility is not to discriminate against applicants but to ensure that those selected will receive the optimal benefit from this Programme. If the applicant is not an ESP member, then he/she has no access to the application form. For the rest of the eligibility criteria, it is possible to complete the application. The applicant must state in the motivation why she/he does not meet one or more of the criteria. However, it is at the discretion of the Evaluation Committee if they will take the application into consideration. Priority is given to applicants who meet all the eligibility criteria.

Q: Do the eligibility criteria apply for the time of training or time of application?

A: The criteria apply at the time of application. For example, an applicant must have completed the required training (or exceptionally, be a resident in the last year of training) at the time of application.

Q: I wish to apply for this year's GF, and I have just paid a 3-year ESP membership. Can this be taken into account? Alternatively, can I retrospectively pay for previous years of missed ESP membership?

A: First, applicants should note that the criterium states "active ESP membership". This consists of two parts, one of which is indeed having an updated membership. The other part is to active participation in ESP-organised activities such as the ECP, courses, the PPT, the KHC and more. Those should be mentioned clearly in the CV of the applicant.

Regarding the ESP membership, the current platform does not allow retrospective payment for previous years.

Moreover, priority is given to applicants who have been meticulous with updating their ESP membership and active within the Society.

Q: Is it possible to contact multiple ESP-ATCs?

A: It is indeed possible to contact more than one ESP-ATC inquiring whether they are available for training. We understand that some centres receive far too many application requests to cover within one year. However, the applicant must provide only one invitation letter for the GF. If he/she has received more than one invitation letter, it is his/her responsibility to inform the other ESP-ATCs immediately which centre the application will be submitted to. This will allow the ESP-ATCs to adjust their schedule and potentially offer the opportunity to another colleague.

Q: I have contacted an ESP-ATC and have not received a reply thus far. What should I do?

A: ESP has no control over the responsiveness of ESP-ATCs or how they choose to communicate with applicants. For example, an ESP-ATC may choose to wait for a couple of weeks before providing an invitation letter, as to see how many colleagues are interested in training with them. We therefore advise applicants to contact ESP-ATCs as soon as the application call opens, allowing sufficient time for a response.

We would like to point out that all the colleagues who are training supervisors at ESP-ATCs are renowned experts with a busy agenda, and we advise applicants to take this into consideration.

Q: My country does not have a national society. How can I still apply for the GF?

A: We accept applications from all around the world. We are aware that some countries do not have an active national society of pathology. In this case, the applicant may submit a file explaining this situation and upload it instead of a letter from a national society.

Q: I do not currently work in Europe. Am I still eligible for the GF?

A: The programme is not restricted to European colleagues, and anyone may apply provided all the criteria are met. We have a history of awardees from South America, Africa, and Asia!

Q: I am not a pathologist. Is this a programme for me?

A: GF and GFR offer opportunities to non-pathologists too, provided that:

- The subject of the ESP-ATC is related to research and/or techniques
- The applicant is working or affiliated with a pathology department

Non-MD applicants are subject to an adjustment in the criterion regarding the current level of education. Please refer to the ESP website for further details.

Q: I have training obligations during the expected period of the GF. Is it possible to apply and adjust later?

A: We understand that many capable applicants have several obligations to meet. However, the criteria clearly state that during the expected training period for the GF, no other obligations should be scheduled. This includes items like undertaking an MSc, attending congresses and meetings outside the training of the GF, having teaching obligations at the home institute, conducting research with onsite obligations, and more.

Q: I would like to apply for an ESP-ATC in my own city. Is this possible?

A: The scope of the GF includes dissemination of knowledge to other countries. This does not comply with training at the same city where the applicant is located. Training in the same country though could be possible, if the distance between the primary working place and the ESP-ATC is considerable and the applicant has no other means to train at the ESP-ATC. This must be clearly explained in the motivation letter.

Q: I have no invitation letter from an ESP-ATC, but I meet all criteria and have all other documents at hand? Can I apply now and provide a letter at a later date?

A: This is not possible. Only complete applications will be considered.

Q: My application was accepted. What should I do now?

A: Upon acceptance, we provide the required information via email. As a general rule, we advise awardees to liaise with the ESP-ATC to start planning their training. We also provide information on when and how the stipend will be paid.

Q: My application was accepted but I am no longer interested or available for the GF. What should I do?

A: Each nominated awardee receives a letter from ESP that they must sign to either accept or decline the award. Acceptance includes agreeing to all terms, conditions, and instructions from ESP. A nominee may decline the award but is expected to explain his/her decision to the Evaluation Committee. If no explanation is provided, or if the explanation is deemed unsatisfactory, the Committee may decide to fully withdraw the nomination for the GF. All communications are confidential and transparent.

Q: I have been informed that the stipend to be provided is lower than expected. What should I do?

If one or more of the provided terms is not within the expectations of the nominee, then he/she may decline the GF with the points addressed above. The Committee is deciding on the amount for the stipend of each awardee. This decision will be based on the income of the applicant and the expected cost of life at the ESP-ATC. Applicants are encouraged to mention within their motivation letter if their salary is going to be affected during their stay at the ESP-ATC. This information will assist the Evaluation Committee take the best-suited decision.

Q: In my application, I have marked a potential start date of my training. However, this is no longer possible. What should I do?

A: We understand that conditions, either for the awardee or the ESP-ATC may change. It is possible to start the training on a different date than the one indicated in the application, subject to two conditions:

- The start date must be within the timeframe of the specific edition of the GF. It is not possible to move training to a future year.
- The ESP-ATC must agree on the new dates, and the awardee must inform ESP.

In exceptional circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, ESP may allow further flexibility regarding the above rule.

Q: My application is rejected. Is there an appeal process available?

A: The decision of the Evaluation Committee regarding the acceptance or rejection of an application is final, and there is no appeal process.

Do note that the selection process is highly competitive due to the high number of received applications.

Each rejected applicant who met all eligibility criteria receives brief feedback for further improvement. Those not meeting the criteria are notified upon. For those with promising CV, the Committee may express their encouragement for applying for a future edition of the GF, expecting from the applicant to improve his/her application. It should be noted that any new application will be judged independently and there is no benefit nor penalty for previous rejection(s). An applicant may apply for how many times needed, provided the eligibility criteria are met.

Q: I have completed my training. What should I do now?

A: Information is provided directly to awardees. There is a process for sharing feedback with the ESP-ATC, both immediately after the training and one year later. As a general recommendation, Giordano Fellows are encouraged to disseminate knowledge within their home department and country. Should the GF include a research project, we encourage publication at the ECP and/or in the VIAR journal.

Q: I would like to apply for the GFR. Are there any specific steps I need to take?

A: Detailed information is available on the website. This includes a list of ESP-ATCs participating in the GFR; however, not all are available there. Moreover, the ESP-ATC must confirm that they agree for the applicant to apply for the GFR and to stay at an extended period with them.

The applicant, having collected all required documentation, must follow the steps outlined in the application form.

If an applicant does not have the confirmation from the ESP-ATC and still applies for the GFR, the application will then not be taken into consideration. GFR includes a separate set of rules, as described in the supplement document on the ESP website. Please read it carefully before applying.

Q: I have applied for the GFR and was rejected. Could my application be considered for the standard GF?

A: This question is included in the application form. Each GFR applicant is welcome to indicate in the application form if he/she wishes to be assessed for the GF if the GFR application is rejected. No further action is required.

Q: I was awarded for a past edition of the GF and completed my training. Can I now apply for the GFR?

A: No, this is not possible.

Q: I applied for a past edition of the GF and was rejected. Can I now apply for the GFR, or am I required to continue with the GF? (and vice versa)

A: Each application is treated independently. Past outcomes do not bind the applicant, unless specifically stated otherwise by the Committee. If an applicant has been rejected for a past edition of the GF, the new application could be for the GFR and vice versa.

Q: I would like to apply at an ESP-ATC for the GFR, but my intention is to conduct research on another subject than the one mentioned for the GFR. Is this possible?

A: Training and research project must fall within the subject of the ESP-ATC, as stated on the ESP website. However, if the awardee wishes to spend additional time and the ESP-ATC supervisor confirms that the core subject is been covered by the awardee and agrees upon, there is no objection to study further subjects.