Medical Research UK

Research and Career Development Awards

Skills Training Development Awards & Conference Attendance Awards

Guidelines for Applicants

Summary

This document guides you through the preparation and submission of an application for Research and Career Development Funding for mid-career researchers.

Applications must be submitted and approved by all signatories and the application received in its entirety before it can be considered by Medical Research UK. All applications must be submitted via our online grants management system. Paper application forms will not be accepted.

Medical Research UK is committed to making this application process accessible to all and will provide assistance where needed. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with our Research Team if you have any questions or concerns about the application process.

Email: research@medicalresearchuk.org.

Overview

Medical Research UK offers additional opportunities for training and travel support for its researchers and those supported by the MRC.

Medical Research UK is inviting applications from mid-career researchers with an active MRC or Medical Research UK funded grant who would benefit from a one-off Skills Training and Development Award or Conference Attendance Award in one of the following research areas:

- Asthma
- Cancer Pain
- Crohn's Disease
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Motor Neurone Disease
- Prostate Cancer
- Stroke/Arterial Illness

If you would like to apply for either of these awards but your research area is not displayed in the list above, please contact the Research Team (research@medicalresearchuk.org) and we may be able to facilitate this.

These awards are intended to support the research and career development of the grant holder in the research area originally funded by the MRC or Medical Research UK. The proposal for the use of funds must be clearly linked to the original grant.

Skills Training and Development Award (STDAs):

Skills Training and Development Awards are intended to provide MRC and Medical Research UK funded researchers with the opportunity to develop skills and training in their field and enhance their career development. STDAs provide researchers with the opportunity to develop collaborations and share skills with researchers outside of their own institutes.

Conference Attendance Award (CAAs):

Conference Attendance Awards are intended to provide MRC and Medical Research UK funded

researchers with the opportunity to attend a conference, either in-person or virtually, to develop networks, set up new collaborations, and present and discuss their findings with peers before publication in scientific journals.

The Funder

Medical Research UK is an independent charitable foundation. Formed by the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) over 100 years ago, we grow and nurture people and ideas wherever we see research opportunities with great potential.

The research supported in this funding call is possible thanks to the support of our generous donors.

The Funding

There are variable funding amounts available depending on the research area. The total that can be applied for will be limited to how much is stated for each topic. The amount of funding you can apply for can be found in "Annex 1".

Skills Training and Development Award applicants may apply for up to £10,000.

Conference Attendance Award applicants may apply for up to £2,500.

Please contact the Research Team at research@medicalresearchuk.org before applying to confirm the funding available for your research area.

Who can apply

This is an invitation only competition open to UK-based researchers at eligible institutions with an active MRC or Medical Research UK grant in one of the research areas mentioned above.

Only one application will be accepted per applicant as a lead applicant. Individuals can hold more than one Medical Research UK grant at any one time.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Medical Research UK is committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants and aims to create an inclusive environment that encourages excellence in research through good equalities practice. Diversity is important to Medical Research UK, and we are working to ensure that the ways in which we fund research embraces a diversity of thought, people, geographical locations and ideas.

We strongly encourage applications from under-represented groups including female and ethnic minority researchers, and researchers with disabilities or long-term health conditions. We will support our researchers and their teams to work flexibly and in a way that meets their personal circumstances. Guidance on Medical Research UK's flexible working policies can be found in our Terms and Conditions. Please contact the Research Team if you have any questions about flexible working: research@medicalresearchuk.org.

Environmental Sustainability

At Medical Research UK we know that we need to protect planetary health if we are to deliver our vision of a world with better health. We aim to reach net-zero in our activities as soon as possible and influence the activities of others whom we work with and fund.

As supporters of the concordat for Environmental Sustainability in Research and Innovation Practice we recognise the need to change how the research and innovation we fund is conducted and our part in promoting solutions. We are taking shared action now and into the future to reduce and eliminate our own environmental impacts and emissions, and achieve the transition to sustainable practices.

Applicants are encouraged to plan their award activities using the most sustainable approaches available to them, describe these measures within their grant application and provide a rationale for the choices made. For example, if you are considering attending a conference, outline whether you plan to participate online to reduce travel or attend in person and explain why this option is the most appropriate and worthwhile for your research or professional development. Please see our tips and resources for improving the environmental impact of your research for further suggestions.

Applicants may include direct costs in their budget to support the adoption of sustainable practices, where relevant. All costs associated with environmentally sustainable options such as purchasing more sustainable materials or equipment, or choosing lower-carbon travel options should be fully justified within the application, even if these options incur a higher upfront cost.

Responsibilities of the Lead Research Organisation and the Principal Investigator

Lead Research Organisations

By submitting an application, a Lead Research Organisation (LRO) indicates their formal acceptance of the proposal and resources sought and, if the application is successful, acceptance of the terms and conditions of a Medical Research UK award.

Administrative authorities have responsibility for ensuring that resources cited in the proposal are sufficient to undertake the proposed research, attract sufficiently experienced and skilled staff and represent good value-for-money.

Principal Investigators (PI)

The PI is responsible for the intellectual leadership of the research project and for the overall management of the research. They will be Medical Research UK's main contact for the proposal. The PI must be based at the LRO at which the award will be administered.

Terms and Conditions of Award

Awards made through this competition will follow standard Medical Research UK Terms and Conditions. Medical Research UK Terms and Conditions spell out the responsibilities of the Principal Investigator and the Lead Research Organisation. The Principal Investigator and the Lead Research Organisation are required to indicate their formal acceptance of the application, their acceptance of the terms and conditions of a Medical Research UK award, and the approval of the salaries and resources sought in the application. Medical Research UK may add additional conditions to an award to reflect the circumstances and requirements of the funding, or the nature of a particular award. Acceptance of an award constitutes acceptance of both the core conditions and any additional conditions. Medical Research UK reserves the right to vary these Terms and Conditions.

Application Guidance Notes

The information provided in this section provides guidance on completing the application form online grants management system. Guidance is provided within the system and this additional guidance will also be available.

Please clearly label all uploaded files and ensure that all relevant documents are suitable and present.

If you have any questions about any aspects of the application process, please contact a member of the Medical Research UK team at research@medicalresearchuk.org.

Completing the Narrative CV

Lead applicants are required to submit a CV using the Medical Research UK Résumé for Researchers CV template. A word version of the template is available on our website and within the online application form.

The Résumé for Researchers is an open-source template which has been developed by The Royal Society as a tool to more broadly evaluate researchers, particularly at the early career stages. The template has been adopted and adapted by Medical Research UK as it supports our approach of considering a wider view of contribution to the research landscape, at all career stages, not based solely on publication record.

Applicants are encouraged to provide examples of their impact outside of publications lists, although these should still be provided. Examples such as collaborative working, effective leadership, coaching and mentoring as well as inspiring others are welcomed.

Career progression disruptions and Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant and variable impact on researchers' careers across the world. We are committed to helping mitigate this is much as possible through our grant-making policies and practices, we are pleased to support the UK Academy of Medical Sciences Cross-funder COVID-19 memory statement as co-signatories, please see our website for further details.

There is a dedicated space within the application form, to detail how your career progression has been impacted by COVID-19. Additionally, guidance will be given to our Expert Reviewers and Panel Members so that they are able to take these impacts on an applicant's career into account when they are making funding recommendations.

Applicants are also provided with space to detail any other career disruptions (e.g. parental leave, ill health) that may have impacted their progression. Please only share details that you are comfortable with being shared with the Panel and do not include identifying information about third parties.

Contribution to knowledge generation

This section can be used to explain how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas and hypotheses and which key skills you have used to develop ideas and test hypotheses. It can be used to highlight how you have communicated your ideas and research results, both written and verbally. It can include a small selection of outputs, with a description of why they are of particular relevance and why they are considered in the context of knowledge generation. Outputs can include (but is not limited to) open data sets, software, commercial, entrepreneurial or industrial products, clinical practice developments, educational products, policy publications, evidence synthesis pieces and conference publications that you have generated. Where outputs have a digital object identifier (DOI) please only include this.

Contribution to the development of individuals

This section can be used to highlight expertise you provided which was critical to the success of a team or team members including project management, collaborative contributions, and team support. It can include your teaching activities, workshops or summer schools in which you were involved (for undergraduates and post-graduates as well as junior colleagues), and the supervision of students and colleagues. It can be used to mention mentoring of members in your field and support you provided to the advancement of colleagues, be it junior or senior. It can be used to highlight the establishment of collaborations, from institutional (maybe interdisciplinary) to international. It can be used to describe where you exerted strategic leadership, how you shaped the direction of a team, organisation, company or institution.

Contribution to the wider research community

This section can include various activities you have engaged in to progress the research community. It can be used to mention commitments including editing, reviewing, refereeing, committee work and your contributions to the evaluation of researchers and research projects. It can be used to mention the organisation of events that have benefited your research community. It can highlight contributions to increasing research integrity, and improving research culture (gender equality, diversity, mobility of researchers, reward and recognition of researchers' various activities). It can be used to mention appointments to positions of responsibility such as committee membership and corporate roles within your department, institution or organisation, and recognition by invitation within your sector.

Contribution to broader society

This section can include examples of societal engagement and knowledge exchange. It can include engagement with industry and the private sector. It can be used to mention engagement with the public sector, clients and the broader public. It can be used to highlight positive stakeholder feedback, inclusion of patients in processes and clinical trials, and other impacts across research, policy, practice and business. It can be used to mention efforts to collaborate with particular societal or patient groups. It can be used to highlight efforts to advise policy-makers at local, national or international level and provide information through the press and on social media.

Application form question guidance

Section 1: Lead Applicant details

Use this section to provide your details and the details of your lead research organisation.

Any other individuals involved in the application can be listed as collaborators in section 2.

Section 2: Research Proposal

Indicate whether you are applying for the Skills Training and Development Award or the Conference Attendance Award.

Provide details of the MRC or Medical Research UK funded project that enables you to apply for the chosen award, including a short scientific abstract that does not exceed 300 words.

Case for Support

Provide details in the case for support justifying the proposed use of the award. It should not exceed **2 A4 pages PDF format** (size 11, Arial font, 2cm margins, references can be size 8 Arial font or DOI list).

If applying for a **Skills Training and Development Award**, provide details of how the funding will be used and how it will benefit your research and career development.

If applying for a **Conference Attendance Award**, provide details of the type of conference you are attending, dates of attendance and how this will benefit your career.

The funding should be used to develop your research skills in an area that directly links to the MRC or Medical Research UK funded grant that enables you to apply for this award.

Letters of Support

Collaborators will need to provide a signed declaration on letter-headed paper confirming that they have consented to co-operate in the research project and explaining the role they will play.

Complete this section if your application includes travelling to another institute or being hosted at another lab to learn skills. A letter from the host supporting and giving permission for you to attend should be included here.

This section is not mandatory and only needs completed if applicable to your application.

Section 3: Ethical Approvals

Medical Research UK expects that before work commences on any research, the Principal Investigator will have ensured in collaboration with the Lead Research Organisation that all appropriate regulatory approvals are in place. These could include those relating to human participation, radiation, genetic manipulation, animals, stem cells, personal safety and health and safety.

If the project requires ethical approvals, please state this on the application form and a member of the Research Team will be in contact to request further information if necessary.

Section 4: Environmental Sustainability

We ask you to confirm whether reducing the environmental impact of award activities has been considered in your application and if so to describe how it has been considered. Please see our tips and resources about environmental sustainability in research.

We understand that sustainability practices vary between organisations. Please indicate that you have planned your award activities using the most sustainable approach available at your organisation that you can access and describe the support, resources and/or initiatives at your organisation to support you with environmental sustainability in your research/award activities.

Section 5: Funding Requested

For Skills Training Development Awards, Medical Research UK will meet the full direct costs of research. Direct costs are those that will arise from the conduct of the research project, can be charged as the cash value spent and can be supported by an auditable record. Like all UK medical research charities, Medical Research UK does not meet the indirect costs of research.

Applications should be costed at today's prices and inflation should not be included. Justify the budget requested and provide details of any costs to be met through other funding sources. As per the Medical Research UK's terms and conditions, if an Investigator chooses to travel by a low-carbon option which is more expensive (for example a train journey rather than airplane), we will meet these costs where costs are reasonable i.e, justifiable, proportional and documented, and a reasonable use of the charitable funds supporting the Grant. We support reducing the carbon footprint of research where possible. Carbon offsetting costs may be included within the budget at the point of application.

Refer to "Annex 1" for an indication of how much funding is available for each award. Please contact the Research Team before applying to discuss this further.

Sections 6-8: Authorisation and Declarations

Authorisations and/or declarations are needed from the following application participants:

- Principal Investigator
- Research Administrator
- Head of Department

Participants should be invited to complete their sections of the application by following the instructions under the participants tab on the Application Summary page. Please check which email address they would like to use, as they may already be registered on Flexi-Grant and mistakes may lead to a delay in processing the application.

Applicants can keep track of the progress of submission completion status on the Application Summary page. Applicants can issue a reminder email to the invited participants through the participants tab on the Application Summary page.

If the instruction email from Medical Research UK has not been received please: a) double check the accuracy of the email address supplied on the application form; b) advise the intended recipient to check their spam filters/junk folders; c) contact Medical Research UK with an alternative email address for the recipient. Medical Research UK is happy to help where possible but cannot be held responsible for automated emails that are not received due to address errors or spam filters.

All declarations must be signed by the appropriate persons prior to the submission of the application. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that approval of the application by the Lead Research Organisation is completed.

Applicants

Lead applicants are required to report any conflicts of interest. Each lead applicant is required to declare that they will abide by Medical Research UK's Terms and Conditions and will be actively engaged in the proposed research.

Head of Department

The Head of Department should be invited to approve the application.

It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to liaise with the Head of Department to ensure that they have received their invitation with instructions to participate in completion of the application.

Research Administrator

The Research Administrator at the Lead Research Organisation should be invited to approve the application ("Administrative Authority"). They must be someone with delegated authority at the Lead Research Organisation, where the award will be held. This may be someone within the research office, faculty administration, or other administrative or management role. The approver must be someone with the authority to confirm that the potential award can be hosted within their organisation and assure the proposed budget is appropriate and eligible for the scheme.

This section should be completed by individuals at the Lead Research Organisation responsible for the administration of funds. They will be contacted regarding financial arrangements and other contractual agreements, if your application is successful.