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EARLY CAREER GRANT CALL 2026

Call for FOREUM Early Career Grant

Introduction

FOREUM is committed to supporting and advancing talented investigators in the field of rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs). In line with this commitment, FOREUM is pleased to launch its new **Early Career Grant**, a funding opportunity for outstanding early-career researchers proposing innovative, high-quality research projects in basic, translational, and clinical science related to RMDs.

Scope

The FOREUM Early Career Grant is intended to fund early-career researchers who have already demonstrated a strong and notable track record in RMD research.

The grant aims to support the transition to research independence by funding an innovative research project for a period of up to three years.

Eligibility and Requirements

The applicant must be a talented early-career scientist who has already developed a high-level publication record based on first or senior authorships on primary research papers. The applicant must be an MD or PhD, who is employed in a EULAR member country. It is anticipated that applicants will show steps towards independent research in their proposal. The applicant must have been awarded their PhD or MD **no longer than 4 years ago**. Periods of maternity or paternity leave and clinical training (full-time or part-time not including research) to become a medical specialist are not counted as part of the 4 years.

Budget

The applicant may apply for total funding of up to **150,000 EUR for a maximum duration of 3 years**. Continued financial support will be subject to the successful evaluation and approval of written mid-term and final reports by FOREUM's relevant committees. Submitted publications can be used as part of the report.

Applications

Letter of Intent (LoI)

Applicants intending to submit a proposal are required to apply via the AlphaFoundation grant submissions platform by **01 September 2026**. The **Letter of Intent** must be accompanied by a 'lay summary' (i.e. a summary written in non-scientific language for the general public) for review by patients. The structure and required content of the Letter of Intent are fully outlined on the Alpha platform, and access to the platform can be found on the FOREUM website.

Translational and clinical projects can be submitted. In the Letter of Intent, the applicant should indicate whether the content of the project is either clinical or translational. The applicant must also provide a CV, as well as a short statement of support from the head of the centre (integrated in the letter of intent). Page limitations are strictly applied.

Letters of Intent will be assessed by members of the FOREUM Scientific Committee. Applications demonstrating the highest merit will be selected on a competitive basis. The secretariat will respond **by the end of September 2026** to confirm whether the proposal meets the scope, priority, and requirements of the call. Applicants whose Letters of Intent are selected will then be invited to submit a full application.

Full Project Proposal

Applicants shortlisted for the second stage (30% chance) will then be invited to submit a full proposal on the grant submission platform. The full proposal will be assessed based on the scientific excellence of the applicant, the innovation potential, impact and feasibility of the proposed project, as well as clear evidence of support and the availability of the necessary infrastructure at the host centre.

To facilitate review by patient representatives, applicants invited to submit a full proposal must also complete a lay summary. Full research proposals must be submitted electronically via the AlphaFoundation platform by **06 November 2026**.

Participation of Patient Research Partners (PRPs)

Participation of patient research partners is strongly recommended for all research projects to provide experiential knowledge, with the aim of improving the relevance, quality and validity of the research process. For more information, please read the material on [EULAR | PARE patient research partners](#).

Evaluation and Decision

The proposals will be independently peer-reviewed for (i) their scientific quality, (ii) the applicant's expertise to conduct research in RMD, (iii) the applicant's CV, the (iv) feasibility of conducting the project, and (v) appropriate involvement of patient-related research partners. Based on the peer review process, the FOREUM Scientific Committee will make a funding recommendation to the FOREUM Executive Committee, which will take the final funding decision. One representative of the supporting industry partner may attend the Scientific Committee decision-making meeting as a non-voting observer.

Decisions will be communicated to applicants by **mid-December 2026**.

Ethical Considerations

FOREUM expects a high standard in the conduct of research it funds. For researchers this includes scientific integrity and adherence to the principles of good research practice. Patients involved in the study must be treated in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

How to Apply

Applications should be submitted electronically via the following link:

Apply Here: [Please choose the Career Grant form](#)

The AlphaFoundation grant submission system will guide you through the application process and specify the **word count** for each section.

Management of the Call

The call and approval process will be administered by the FOREUM Secretariat in collaboration with the FOREUM Scientific Committee.

Call Timeline

- Closing date for applications: 1 September 2026
 - Decisions on applications announced: End of September 2026
 - Closing date for full proposals: 6 November 2026
 - Decisions on full proposals announced: End of November 2026
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General Inquiries

Please contact the FOREUM Secretariat at info@foreum.org.

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FOREUM is devoted to promote research in rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases (RMDs)

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