

Research Project Grants Guidance for Outline Applications 2025

Research Project Grants provide financial support for research projects of high quality and potential, the choice of theme and the design of the research lying entirely with the applicant (the Principal Investigator). Each grant covers salary and research costs directly associated with the project and is paid directly to the institution at which the applicant is employed.

During 2025, the Trust will also accept applications to the Research Project Grant scheme from eligible UK independent research institutes/organisations on a trial basis. Please note carefully the Trust guidance on remit and what the Trust offers.

Value

The maximum grant value is £500,000.

Duration

Research Project Grants may be held for up to five years.

Before deciding to apply, please read the information below carefully.

Eligibility

Institutions

The following institutions are eligible to apply:

- UK universities
- Other institutions of higher education in the UK
- Registered charities in the UK which have research capacity equivalent in standing to that of a UK university

And on a trial basis during 2025:

- UK-based independent research institutes/organisations. We will consider applications from organisations defined as eligible by UKRI: [ukri.org/publications/organisation-eligibility](https://www.ukri.org/publications/organisation-eligibility)
- Please note that not all of these institutions will conduct research that is a fit to the Trust remit. For details, please consult the webpage on '[Research we do not fund](#)'.

The applicant, or Principal Investigator

The applicant (Principal Investigator) must take responsibility for directing the grant, and their employing institution must also agree to administer the grant.

Eligible applicants will already be employed by the eligible institution or be academics who have maintained close links with that institution following retirement.

Applications can be submitted by those holding contract research posts, provided that their appointment continues for a period at least equal to the span of the requested award.

Up to three co-applicants from the same or different institutions may also be included. Overseas co-applicants are allowable.

Fields of study

Not all subject areas are eligible for funding from the Trust. Broadly, this includes medical and clinical research, research aiming to influence current policy, research with immediate commercial application, where the focus is on assembling a database, advocacy, capacity building, networking, or skills development. This is principally because of the large amounts of funding available from other funders for these activities.

More details and examples, are given here: leverhulme.ac.uk/research-we-do-not-fund

If applicants are uncertain about eligibility, they are encouraged to email the Trust before beginning an application.

What the Trust Offers

Research Project Grants provide research staff costs for those working directly on the research project and associated research costs. The funds requested should be appropriate for the grant duration and the resources required to realise the project's objectives.

Research staff costs

- At least 75% of the resources requested must be used to provide funding for research staff (research assistants, PhD students, overseas research assistant) who will each work specifically on the project with the applicant.
- There must be at least one research assistant, overseas research assistant or PhD student working at least 50% of the time throughout the grant. This means that someone must be working on the project every day for the duration of the project, even if this means as a part-time post.
- Research assistants should have a research degree or equivalent research experience.
- Where appropriate, it is possible to employ an overseas research assistant if the relevant research takes place outside the UK, and it is more suitable to employ personnel local to the area than a UK-based person paid to travel to the region.
- The costs of one or more consultants may also be included where specialist expertise is critical and cannot be provided by an academic co-applicant, but they can only provide consultancy and not actively work on the project. Cost of consultants should not exceed more than £5,000 per year.

- Funding may also be requested for research technicians who will contribute directly to the research outputs of the project. Generally, these staff will hold research degree qualifications and have a publication record in their own right.
- The tuition fees and maintenance costs of one or more PhD studentships may be included, provided they are set at the base rate for research council awards for UK students. PhD students registered overseas are not permitted.
- Support for an overseas student registered in the UK is allowable but requires explicit justification addressing how their specific skills contribute to the project.
- If support is requested for PhD students, a detailed justification should be given as to why this arrangement is most appropriate for the proposed research, including details of their supervision by an applicant/co-applicant at an institution with research degree awarding powers. The Trust does not provide partial funding to continue or complete theses which have been initiated independently of a Trust-funded project.

Teaching replacement costs

- The Principal Investigator and UK-based co-applicants based at UK universities may apply for the costs of teaching replacement. To be eligible for these, applicants must be currently employed on a continuing basis by their eligible institution.
- A maximum of one year's (33%) teaching replacement per grant over the course of a three-year grant may be awarded, pro rata for grants of different lengths, or for those with less than full-time contracts. For example, up to 8 months teaching replacement is available on a 2-year grant, 16 months on a 4-year grant, and so on.
- The replacement should not be someone currently studying for a research degree.
- The staff replacement should normally start at the most junior point of the lecturer scale of the institution concerned.
- Awards are not made to cover the salary costs of the applicant or those of the co-applicants based at any university.

Salary contribution

- During the trial period, applicants or co-applicants based at UK independent research institutions/organisations and who have an employment contract that requires them to secure research funds to cover their salary, may exceptionally apply for a salary contribution instead of replacement teaching.
- A maximum of one year's (33%) salary over the course of a three-year grant may be awarded, pro rata for grants of different lengths, or for those with less than full-time contracts. For example, up to 8 months' salary is available on a 2-year grant, 16 months on a 4-year grant, and so on.

Associated research costs

- Associated research costs can be included up to a maximum of 25% of the total budget. This percentage is a maximum and not a target.
- These costs must be directly related to the research activity, e.g.:
 - Necessary travel and subsistence costs - these can include conference attendance provided that such attendance can be shown to make a direct contribution to the research project
 - Consumable costs
 - Pool Technical services, computing costs or services.

Please ensure that applications do not include any [ineligible costs](#).

Continuation funding

- Applications for continuation of funding for existing research are not eligible.
- Requests for the continuation of funding for a research assistant currently active on an existing Leverhulme Research Project Grant will not normally be considered.

The Trust's approach to grant funding

- Proposals must reflect the personal vision of the applicant and demonstrate compelling competence in the research design.
- The Trust favours applications that surmount traditional disciplinary academic boundaries and involve a willingness to take appropriate degrees of risk in setting research objectives.
- Specific attention is paid to the reasons applicants give in justifying their choice of the Trust as the most appropriate agency to support their project. Applicants are therefore strongly advised to consult the statement on the [Leverhulme Trust's approach to grant-making](#).

How to Apply

Research Project Grants are assessed via a two-stage process:

- Outline Applications
- Detailed Applications

Outline Applications

Outline Applications are welcome at any time; there are no deadlines.

Their assessment is normally completed within three months.

An invitation to progress to the second stage – preparation of a Detailed Application – will be sent to those whose Outline Application has been approved.

Before making an application, applicants are advised:

- to read the [Budget Tips](#), paying particular attention to the construction of the budgetary aspects of the application and
- to consult with their institution's finance office.

Submitting your Outline Application

To make an application, please access the [Leverhulme Trust Grants Management System](#).

The recommended browser to use is Google Chrome.

If your institution is not listed, please email grants@leverhulme.ac.uk

When completing the application form, please refer to the [Application Help Notes](#).

Please ensure that you save a copy of your submitted Outline Application using the PDF/View options within the Grants Management System, as it will not be available after being assessed.

Feedback on applications

Unfortunately, due to the large number of applications for this scheme, it is not possible to provide feedback to individual applicants regarding unsuccessful applications.

Detailed applications

A Detailed Application is only accessible to applicants once they have received an invitation to progress from the Outline stage.

The Detailed Application should be an elaboration of the Outline Application.

Significant changes in the stated intention, aims or objectives of the research are not permitted.

The total budget and personnel requested in the Detailed Application should be the same as that provided in the Outline; the only budget changes allowable relate to adjustments in salary costs, which should conform to current pay scales.

Timings

For closing dates, see the [Key Dates box](#). Please note that deadlines are the same every year. The decision dates are those anticipated, but cannot be guaranteed. The earliest possible start dates for funded projects are as follows:

- for the March closing date: 1 September
- for the September closing date, 1 January
- for the December closing date, 1 May