



Research grants

ME Research UK is pleased to announce an open call for applications for PhD-level research funding, and we welcome proposals from researchers wishing to investigate the causes, consequences and treatment of ME/CFS.

Funding is available to support scientifically robust biomedical studies at appropriate host institutions worldwide, where the research is being conducted in fulfilment of a PhD degree.

Please note that applications need to come from the project supervisor, not from the student themselves.

Timetable

The deadline for outline proposals is **Friday 9 January 2026**, by 5 p.m. GMT.

The deadline for full applications is **Friday 3 April 2026**, by 5 p.m. GMT (for applicants who are successful at the outline stage).

We anticipate that final decisions on awards will be made by **July 2026**.

How to apply

1. Outline Proposal

All applicants should initially submit an Outline Proposal Form. This is a brief summary of the proposed project and its associated costs. The deadline for submissions is **Friday 9 January 2026**, by 5 p.m. GMT.

The proposal will be reviewed by our Science Committee over the following 4 weeks, and applicants will be notified by 9 February 2026 whether or not the Committee would like them to submit a full grant application.

2. Full Grant Application

A Grant Application Form will be sent to all applicants who have been asked to submit a full application, and the deadline for these submissions is **Friday 3 April 2026**, by 5 p.m. GMT.

3. Review Process

Applications will be sent for external review by experts in the field, and then assessed by our Science Committee which will make a recommendation on funding. Applicants may be asked to respond to questions raised by the reviewers.

4. Decision

The final decision on funding will be made by our Board of Charity Trustees, after which applicants will be notified whether or not their application has been successful. We anticipate that final decisions will be made by **July 2026**.

5. Award

Award of a grant is subject to acceptance of ME Research UK's Standard Grant Conditions.

Please read our Standard Grant Conditions, other information on this page, and our FAQs before making an application.

Please send completed forms by email to Dr David Newton at grants@meresearch.org.uk.

Eligibility

It is essential that applicants demonstrate clear translational potential for their proposed research, and how it will benefit patients in the short-to-medium term.

ME Research UK funds projects in all areas related to the biology or treatment of ME/CFS, but our main areas of interest include the following:

- Muscle fatigue – underlying mechanisms and potential therapies
- Brain and nervous system – structural and functional changes
- Immune system – autoimmunity and the role of specific antibodies
- Metabolomics and the search for diagnostic biomarkers
- Symptomatic impact of ME/CFS on other organ systems

We also ask researchers to consider the following points when preparing their applications:

- We encourage a multidisciplinary approach where appropriate.
- Please specify the diagnostic criteria used to select patients, which should include post-exertional malaise as one of the key symptoms.
- We encourage patient involvement in study design and implementation where possible and appropriate, and if it is not included applicants should explain why. Science for ME has established a forum for researchers looking for members for Patient and Public Involvement
- We do not fund research that is focused mainly on long COVID, although that does not preclude it being a subgroup within an ME/CFS study.
- We encourage consideration of differences in patient characteristics and disease-related factors, or at least an understanding of how the research does or does not apply to different groups (e.g. by sex or disease severity).
- Applicants may find it useful to consult the UK ME/CFS 'Researcher toolkit', which was produced as part of the work surrounding the Department for Health and Social Care's Delivery Plan process. This contains information such as resources for developing high quality proposals, and guides to embedding patient and public involvement.

Other information

Please send any enquiries to Dr David Newton at grants@meresearch.org.uk.

For more information about our research grants, please see our FAQs.

ME Research UK does not fund research which involves the use of animals.

In common with other charitable organisations, ME Research UK does not pay for the indirect costs of research projects. Please see our Standard Grant Conditions for more information. In the UK, you may be eligible to receive top-up funding from the Government to cover these costs – from the Charity Research Support Fund in England, the Scottish Funding Council, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, or Higher Education Quality-related Research funding in Northern Ireland.

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)

ME Research UK is an NIHR RDN Non-commercial Partner. This means the studies that we fund may be eligible to access the NIHR Study Support Service which is provided by the NIHR Research Delivery Network within the NHS, and the wider public health and social care environment, across England.

To find out more, read the Eligibility Criteria for NIHR RDN Support.

In partnership with your local R&D office, we encourage you to involve your regional NIHR Research Delivery Network team in discussions as early as possible when planning your study. This will enable you to fully benefit from the support available through the NIHR Study Support Service.

If your study involves NHS sites in England you will need to apply for Health Research Authority (HRA) Approval. Guidance on submitting an application for approvals is available on the HRA website.