



## Funding opportunity

# Neurosciences and mental health research: research grant: responsive mode

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Upcoming
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Medical Research Council (MRC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Publication date:</b>	14 June 2024
<b>Opening date:</b>	21 June 2024 9:00am UK time
<b>Closing date:</b>	17 September 2024 4:00pm UK time

Apply for funding to support research projects focused on neurosciences and mental health.

You must be employed by a research organisation eligible to apply for Medical Research Council (MRC) funding.

You can involve more than one research group or organisation in the project.

There is no limit to the funding you can apply for, but it should be appropriate to the project. We will usually fund up to 80% of your project's full economic cost.

Projects can last up to five years, but they typically last three to four years.

This is an ongoing funding opportunity. Application rounds close every January, May and September.

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## Who can apply

Before applying for funding, check the [Eligibility of your organisation](#).

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has introduced new role types for funding opportunities being run on the new UKRI Funding Service.

For full details, visit [Eligibility as an individual](#).

## Who is eligible to apply

To be eligible to apply for this opportunity you must:

- be employed by an [eligible research organisation](#)
- show that you will direct the project and be actively engaged in the work
- focus your application within the research area of neurosciences and mental health

For applicants who do not have a contract of employment for the duration of the proposed project, by submitting an application the research organisation is confirming, if it is successful:

- contracts will be extended beyond the end date of the project
- all necessary support for the project and the applicants will be provided, including mentorship and career development for early career researchers

## Who is not eligible to apply

You are not eligible to apply for this opportunity as a project lead if you are based at an international research organisation. This does not include MRC Unit The Gambia or MRC/UVRI Uganda Research Unit at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine that are eligible to apply as project lead. Before applying for funding, check the [Eligibility of your organisation](#).

## International applicants

You can include international applicants as project co-leads (international), where they will make a major intellectual contribution to the design or conduct of the project. The contribution and added value to the research collaboration should be clearly explained and justified in the application, see Applicant and team capability to deliver.

## Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.

We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances. This includes:

- career breaks
- support for people with caring responsibilities
- flexible working
- alternative working patterns

Find out more about [equality, diversity and inclusion at UKRI](#).

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## What we're looking for

### Scope

We're looking to fund research into neurosciences and mental health.

The Neurosciences and Mental Health Board funds research in:

- neurosciences
- mental health
- disorders of the human nervous system

We aim to transform our understanding of the physiology and behaviour of the human nervous system throughout the life course in health and in illness, as well as how to treat and prevent disorders of the brain.

The research we support includes the interactions between the nervous system and other parts of the body, the brain, mental health and physical health. We are also interested in how episodes throughout life impact on lifelong mental and neurological health.

We're looking to fund research in areas including, but not limited to:

- neurodegeneration
- clinical neurology and neuroinflammation
- mental health
- addictions and substance misuse
- behavioural and learning disorders including autism
- cognitive and behavioural neuroscience and cognitive systems
- sensory neuroscience including vision and hearing
- neurobiology and neurophysiology
- underpinning support, such as:
  - neuroimaging technology

- brain banking
- neuroinformatics

Find out more about the [Neurosciences and mental health areas of investment](#).

We encourage you to contact us first at [nmhb@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:nmhb@mrc.ukri.org) to discuss your application, especially if you believe your research may cross MRC or research council interests. If your application fits another research board remit better, we may decide to transfer it there to be assessed.

MRC responsive mode research grants:

- are suitable for focused short or long-term research projects
- can support method development
- can support development and continuation of research infrastructures and resources specifically relevant to the needs of our research communities, that cannot be supported through other routes
- may involve more than one research group or organisation

For more information on the background of this funding opportunity, go to the Additional information section.

## Duration

We will fund projects lasting up to five years, although projects typically last three to four years. If your project will last more than three years, you must justify the reason for this.

If your project will last less than two years, it must be for proof of principle or pilot work only. We expect proof of principle applications to support high-risk or high-reward research by critically testing a key hypothesis or demonstrating the feasibility of an approach that could lead to fundamentally new avenues of research.

Contact [nmhb@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:nmhb@mrc.ukri.org) for advice if you would like to apply for a short or long-duration project.

Projects should start between one to six months after the funding decision date.

## Funding available

There is no limit to the funding you can apply for. Your application must be for an amount that:

- is appropriate to the project
- you can justify in order to deliver the objectives of the proposed research

We will fund 80% of the full economic cost and 100% of permitted exceptions.

Find out more about [full economic costing](#).

## What we will fund

You can request funding for costs such as:

- a contribution to the salary of the project lead and co-leads
- support for other posts such as research and technical staff
- research consumables
- equipment
- travel costs
- data preservation, data sharing and dissemination costs
- estates and indirect costs
- [NHS research costs](#), when they are associated with NHS studies

You can also request costs for work to be undertaken at international organisations by international project co-leads. We will fund 100% of the full economic cost.

The total of such costs requested for international applicants from developed countries (those not on the [OECD DAC List of ODA Recipients](#)), India and China must not exceed 30% of the total resources requested.

There is no cap on costs requested for international applicants from DAC list countries.

For more information on international costs and what we will and will not fund see [costs we fund overseas](#) and the [Collaborate with Researchers in Norway guidance](#).

## What we will not fund

We will not fund:

- research involving randomised trials of clinical treatments
- costs for PhD studentships
- publication costs
- funding to use as a 'bridge' between grants

If you are applying using a lead agency agreement, we will not fund the international partners, they will be funded by their respective funding agency.

## Team project partner

You may include team project partners that will support your research project through cash or in-kind contributions, such as:

- staff time
- access to equipment
- sites or facilities
- the provision of data
- software or materials
- recruitment of people as research participants
- providing samples, such as human tissue, for the project

Each project partner must provide a statement of support. If your application involves [industry partners](#), they must provide additional information if the team project partner falls within the [industry collaboration framework](#).

Find out more about [subcontractors and dual roles](#).

### **Who cannot be included as a team project partner**

Any individual included in your application with a [core team](#) cannot also be a project partner.

Any organisation that employs a member of the application core team cannot be a project partner organisation, this includes other departments within the same organisation.

If you are collaborating with someone in your organisation, consider including them in the core team as project co-lead, or specialist. They cannot be a project partner.

### **Supporting skills and talent**

We encourage you to follow the principles of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and the [Technician Commitment](#).

### **Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)**

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is committed in ensuring that effective international collaboration in research and innovation takes place with integrity and within strong ethical frameworks. TR&I is a UKRI work programme designed to help protect all those working in our thriving and collaborative international sector by enabling partnerships to be as open as possible, and as secure as necessary. Our [TR&I Principles](#) set out UKRI's expectations of organisations funded by UKRI in relation to due diligence for international collaboration.

As such, applicants for UKRI funding may be asked to demonstrate how their proposed projects will comply with our approach and expectation towards TR&I, identifying potential risks and the relevant controls you will put in place to help proportionately reduce these risks.

See [further guidance and information about TR&I](#), including where applicants can find additional support.

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## How to apply

We are running this funding opportunity on the new UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service so please ensure that your organisation is registered. You cannot apply on the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system.

The project lead is responsible for completing the application process on the Funding Service, but we expect all team members and project partners to contribute to the application.

Only the lead research organisation can submit an application to UKRI.

If the lead research organisation is an NHS organisation, check it is available in the Funding Service. You are encouraged to check this early as there may be additional steps for the organisation to be set up before you can apply.

## To apply

Select 'Start application' near the beginning of this Funding finder page.

Four grant types are available, [research](#), [new investigator](#), [programme](#) and [partnership](#). Before you select 'Start application', check you are applying for the appropriate grant type. Applications submitted to the incorrect grant type will be rejected.

1. Confirm you are the project lead.
2. Sign in or create a Funding Service account. To create an account, select your organisation, verify your email address, and set a password. If your organisation is not listed, email [support@funding-service.ukri.org](mailto:support@funding-service.ukri.org). Please allow at least 10 working days for your organisation to be added to the Funding Service. We strongly suggest that if you are asking UKRI to add your organisation to the Funding Service to enable you to apply to this funding opportunity, you also create an organisation Administration Account. This will be needed to allow the acceptance and management of any grant that might be offered to you.
3. Answer questions directly in the text boxes. You can save your answers and come back to complete them or work offline and return to copy and paste your answers. If we need you to upload a document, follow the upload instructions in the Funding Service. All questions and assessment criteria are listed in the How to apply section on this Funding finder page.
4. Allow enough time to check your application in 'read-only' view before sending to your research office.

5. Send the completed application to your research office for checking. They will return it to you if it needs editing.
6. Your research office will submit the completed and checked application to UKRI.

Where indicated, you can also demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. You must:

- use images sparingly and only to convey important information that cannot easily be put into words
- insert each new image onto a new line
- provide a descriptive legend for each image immediately underneath it (this counts towards your word limit, so must not be included in the image)
- files must be smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Watch our [research office webinars about the new Funding Service](#).

For more guidance on the Funding Service, see:

- [how applicants use the Funding Service](#)
- [how research offices use the Funding Service](#)
- [how reviewers use the Funding Service](#)

## References

Applications should be self-contained, and hyperlinks should only be used to provide links directly to reference information. To ensure the information's integrity is maintained, where possible, persistent identifiers such as digital object identifiers should be used. Assessors are not required to access links to carry out assessment or recommend a funding decision. Applicants should use their discretion when including references and prioritise those most pertinent to the application.

References should be included in the appropriate question section of the application and be easily identifiable by the assessors, for example (Smith, Research Paper, 2019).

You must not include links to web resources to extend your application.

## Deadline

We must receive your application by 17 September 2024 at 4:00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply after this time.

Make sure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines.

Following the submission of your application to the funding opportunity, your application cannot be changed, and applications will not be returned for amendment. If your application does not follow the guidance, it may be rejected.

## Personal data

### Processing personal data

MRC, as part of UKRI, will need to collect some personal information to manage your Funding Service account and the registration of your funding applications.

We will handle personal data in line with UK data protection legislation and manage it securely. For more information, including how to exercise your rights, read [our privacy notice](#).

### Publication of outcomes

MRC, as part of UKRI, will publish the outcomes of this funding opportunity at [board and panel outcomes](#).

If your application is successful, we will publish some personal information on the [UKRI Gateway to Research](#).

## Summary

Word limit: 550

In plain English, provide a summary we can use to identify the most suitable experts to assess your application.

We usually make this summary publicly available on external-facing websites, therefore do not include any confidential or sensitive information. Make it suitable for a variety of readers, for example:

- opinion-formers
- policymakers
- the public
- the wider research community

### Guidance for writing a summary

Clearly describe your proposed work in terms of:

- context
- the challenge the project addresses
- aims and objectives
- potential applications and benefits

If your application relates to the [Artificial intelligence, engineering biology and quantum technologies highlight notice](#), you should also refer to this and the critical technology in your summary.

## Core team

List the key members of your team and assign them roles from the following:

- project lead (PL)
- project co-lead (UK) (PcL)
- project co-lead (international) (PcL (I))
- specialist
- professional enabling staff
- research and innovation associate
- technician
- visiting researcher
- researcher co-lead (RcL)

Only list one individual as project lead. If you include more than one project lead your application will fail at the checking stage.

Find out more about [UKRI's core team roles in funding applications](#).

## Application questions

### MRC research area

Word limit: 1

Select the primary MRC research area your application most closely aligns to.

In the text box, copy the number corresponding to your selected area:

### Neuroscience and Mental Health

18. cell biology and signalling
19. cognitive and behavioural neuroscience
20. developmental neurobiology
21. mental health
22. addiction
23. neurology
24. neurodegeneration
25. neurophysiology of systems
26. pain, sleep and fatigue
27. sense disorders

## Cross-board areas

- 50. data science and integration
- 51. motor neurone disease
- 52. myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome

## Additional guidance

This is for administrative purposes to help with the initial application processing. We will check your choice and make a final decision on which board will lead the assessment of your application.

## Vision

Word limit: 550

What are you hoping to achieve with your proposed work?

### What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how your proposed work:

- is of excellent quality and importance within or beyond the field(s) or area(s)
- has the potential to advance current understanding, or generate new knowledge, thinking or discovery within or beyond the field or area
- is timely given current trends, context, and needs
- impacts world-leading research, society, the economy, or the environment

Within the Vision section we also expect you to:

- identify the potential direct or indirect benefits and who the beneficiaries might be
- identify potential improvements in human or population health, whether through contributing to relieving disease or disability burden, improving quality of life or providing benefit to the health service or health-related industry

References may be included within this section.

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

## Approach

Word limit: 3,300

How are you going to deliver your proposed work?

### What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain how you have designed your approach so that it:

- is effective and appropriate to achieve your objectives
- is feasible, and comprehensively identifies any risks to delivery and how they will be managed
- uses a clearly written and transparent methodology (if applicable)
- summarises the previous work and describes how this will be built upon and progressed (if applicable)
- will maximise translation of outputs into outcomes and impacts
- describes how your, and if applicable your team's, research environment (in terms of the place and relevance to the project) will contribute to the success of the work

Within the Approach section we also expect you to:

- demonstrate access to the appropriate services, facilities, infrastructure, or equipment to deliver the project
- provide a project plan including milestones and timelines, in the form of an embedded Gantt chart or similar
- explain and justify how you will approach diversity and inclusion in the study population and follow the [MRC embedding diversity in research design policy](#) (if applicable)
- show how you will use both sexes in research involving animals and tissues and cells (if applicable). If you are not proposing to do this justify why

You are encouraged to use 500 words to provide information about reproducibility and how you will ensure reliability and robustness of your work, such as further details of statistical analyses, methodology and experimental design. If this information is not applicable, then you should not use this space to expand on other areas of your approach and your response to this section should be below the word limit.

The reproducibility information should be clearly identified using the heading Reproducibility and statistical design. We expect you to seek professional statistical or other relevant advice in preparing your response, which may include:

- experimental approach to address objectives
- sample and effect sizes
- planned statistical analyses
- models chosen (for example animal model, cell line)

Refer to the [MRC guidance for applicants](#), for further information, examples and online tools.

If your proposed work involves animals, and you provide information on animal sample sizes and statistical analyses in the approach, you should not duplicate

it in the Research involving the use of animals section. Use the Research involving the use of animals section to provide information on the rationale for using animals, choice of species, welfare and procedure severity.

References may be included within this section.

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

## **Applicant and team capability to deliver**

Word limit: 1,650

Why are you the right individual or team to successfully deliver the proposed work?

### **What the assessors are looking for in your response**

Evidence of how you, and if relevant your team, have:

- the relevant experience (appropriate to career stage) to deliver the proposed work
- the right balance of skills and expertise to cover the proposed work
- the appropriate leadership and management skills to deliver the work and your approach to develop others
- contributed to developing a positive research environment and wider community

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

The word count for this section is 1,650 words: 1,150 words to be used for R4RI modules (including references) and, if necessary, a further 500 words for Additions.

Use the Résumé for Research and Innovation (R4RI) format to showcase the range of relevant skills you and, if relevant, your team (project and project co-leads, researchers, technicians, specialists, partners and so on) have and how this will help deliver the proposed work. You can include individuals' specific achievements but only choose past contributions that best evidence their ability to deliver this work.

Complete this section using the R4RI module headings listed. Use each heading once and include a response for the whole team, see the [UKRI guidance on R4RI](#). You should consider how to balance your answer, and emphasise where appropriate the key skills each team member brings:

- contributions to the generation of new ideas, tools, methodologies, or knowledge

- the development of others and maintenance of effective working relationships
- contributions to the wider research and innovation community
- contributions to broader research or innovation users and audiences and towards wider societal benefit

## Additions

Provide any further details relevant to your application. This section is optional and can be up to 500 words. You should not use it to describe additional skills, experiences, or outputs, but you can use it to describe any factors that provide context for the rest of your R4RI (for example, details of [career breaks](#) if you wish to disclose them).

Complete this as a narrative. Do not format it like a CV.

References may be included within this section.

UKRI has introduced new role types for funding opportunities being run on the new Funding Service.

For full details, see [Eligibility as an individual](#).

## Project partners

Add details about any project partners' contributions. If there are no project partners, you can indicate this on the Funding Service.

A project partner is a collaborating third party organisation who will have an integral role in the proposed research. This may include direct (cash) or indirect (in-kind) contributions such as expertise, staff time or use of facilities.

Important note: If your application includes industry project partners, you will also need to complete the Industry Collaboration Framework (ICF) section. Find out [more about ICF](#).

You must ensure that any third-party individual or organisation you include within the Funding Service as a project partner, also provides you with a supporting email or letter of support (see next section 'Project partners: letters or emails of support').

The individual named as the project partner contact, cannot be included in your application as a member of the core team, in any [core team role](#).

The project partner organisation cannot be an applicant organisation, where any member of the core team is based. For example, you cannot include a different department based within the applicant organisation as a project partner.

If an individual or organisation outside the core team is responsible for recruitment of people as research participants or providing human tissue for this

project, list them as a project partner.

Add the following project partner details:

- the organisation name (searchable via a drop-down list or enter the organisation's details manually, as applicable)
- the project partner contact name and email address
- the type of contribution (direct or in-direct) and its monetary value

If a detail is entered incorrectly and you have saved the entry, remove the specific project partner record and re-add it with the correct information.

If there are specific circumstances where project partners do require funding for minor costs such as travel and subsistence, these project partner costs should be claimed and justified within the resources and costs section of your application.

For audit purposes, UKRI requires formal collaboration agreements to be put in place if an award is made.

### **Project partners: letters or emails of support**

Word limit: 10

Upload a single PDF containing the letters or emails of support from each partner you named in the 'Project partners' section. These should be uploaded in English or Welsh only.

#### **What the assessors are looking for in your response**

Enter the words 'attachment supplied' in the text box, or if you do not have any project partners enter 'N/A'.

#### **What supporting statements we are looking for**

Important note: We are only looking for you to provide project partner letters or emails of support from the following:

- a third-party individual
- a third-party organisation

Third party means the individual and organisation must not be involved in the application core team. You must ensure that any project partners providing a supporting document, are also added to the 'project partners' section within the Funding Service.

Ensure you have prior agreement from project partners so that, if you are offered funding, they will support your project as indicated in the 'Project partners' section.

For audit purposes, UKRI requires formal collaboration agreements to be put in place if an award is made.

### What supporting statements we are not looking for

We are not looking for you to provide any letters or emails of support from individuals or organisations included in your application core team (this includes other departments within the same organisation). Any individual or organisation included in your application with a [core team role](#) cannot also be a project partner.

Do not include any other statements or any other type of information we have not requested, including letter or emails of support from colleagues simply expressing supportive opinions. We only expect letters or emails of support from your third-party project partners uploaded to this section.

If you include any information not requested by MRC, your application will be rejected.

### Supporting document guidance for third party project partners

Each project partner supporting letter or email you provide, should:

- be no more than two A4 pages
- confirm the partner's commitment to the project
- clearly explain the value, relevance, and possible benefits of the work to them
- describe any additional value that they bring to the project
- include the name of the project partner organisation and contact information (this should match the partner contact and organisation name details you must add to the 'Project partners' section)

Project partners letters and emails of support are not required to be on headed paper or include handwritten signatures (electronic signatures are acceptable from the nominated partner contact).

### Project partner responsibility for the recruitment of people

If the project partner is responsible for the recruitment of people as research participants or providing human tissue their letter or email of support should include:

- agreement that the project partner will recruit the participants or provide tissue
- confirmation that what is being supplied is suitable for the proposed work
- confirmation that the quantity of tissue being supplied is suitable, but not excessive for achieving meaningful results (if applicable)

### Multiple project partners

If you have multiple project partners, you should:

- ensure each separate letter or email of support, does not exceed two pages of A4
- consolidate all the supporting documents provided by each project partner into a single PDF file before uploading
- ensure the PDF does not exceed the maximum file size of 8MB

For the file name, use the unique Funding Service number the system gives you when you create an application, followed by the words 'Project partner'.

## **Industry Collaboration Framework (ICF)**

Word limit: 1,500

Does your application include industry project partners?

### **What the assessors are looking for in your response**

If industry collaboration does not apply to any of your project partners, or you don't have any project partners, simply add 'N/A' into the text box.

If your research project involves collaboration between an academic organisation and an industry or company, you are likely to need to follow the industry collaboration framework and answer this question, check using the [ICF decision tree](#).

The assessors are looking for information relating to the nature, goals and conditions of the collaboration and any restrictions or rights to the project results that could be claimed by the project partner.

By 'industry or company' we mean an enterprise that puts goods or services on a market and whose commercial activities are greater than 20% of their overall annual capacity.

Find out [more about ICF](#), including:

- collaboration agreements
- definitions of basic or applied research
- internationally based companies
- subsidy control
- Intellectual property (IP) arrangements
- fully flexible and gated contributions
- the ICF assessment criteria

In addition to the project partner information completed in the previous section, confirm your answers to the ICF questions in the text box, repeat this process for each ICF project partner:

1. Name the industry or company project partner considered under ICF.
2. Indicate whether your application is either basic research or applied research.
3. Explain why, in the absence of the requested UKRI funding, the collaboration and the planned research could not be undertaken.
4. State whether your application is under the category of either fully flexible contribution or gated contribution (based on the IP sharing arrangements with the ICF partner).
5. Outline the pre-existing IP ('background IP') that each project partner, including the academic partner, will bring to the collaborative research project and the terms under which project partners may access these assets.
6. Outline the IP that is expected to be developed during the collaborative research project ('foreground IP') and briefly outline how it will be managed, including:
  - which project partners will own this IP
  - what rights project partners will have to use academically-generated foreground IP during and after the research project, for internal research and development or for commercial purposes
  - any rights of the academic partner to commercialise the foreground IP, including foreground IP generated by project partners
7. Outline any restrictions to dissemination of the project results, including the rights of the project partner to:
  - review, approve or delay publications (including the time period associated with such rights)
  - request or require the removal of any information
8. Declare any conflicts of interest held by the applicants in relation to the project partners and describe how they will be managed.
9. If applicable, justify collaborating with an overseas industry or company under ICF.

Failure to provide the information requested for industry partners under ICF could result in your application being rejected.

You are recommended to discuss the goals and conditions of any collaboration with an industry or company project partner with your university technology transfer or contracts office before applying.

## **Trusted Research and Innovation (TR&I)**

Word limit: 100

Does the proposed work involve international collaboration in a sensitive research or technology area?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Demonstrate how your proposed international collaboration relates to TR&I, including:

- list the countries your international project co-leads, project partners and visiting researchers, or other collaborators are based in
- if international collaboration is involved, explain whether this project is relevant to one or more of the [17 areas](#) of the UK National Security and Investment (NSI) Act
- if one or more of the [17 areas](#) of the UK National Security and Investment (NSI) Act are involved list the areas

If your proposed work does not involve international collaboration, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

We may ask you to provide additional information about how your proposed project will comply with our approach and expectation towards TR&I, identifying potential risks and the relevant controls you will put in place to help manage these risks.

## **Facilities**

Word limit: 250

Does your proposed research require the support and use of a facility?

**What the assessors are looking for in your response**

If you will need to use a facility, follow your proposed facility's normal access request procedures. Ensure you have prior agreement so that if you are offered funding, they will support the use of their facility on your project.

For each requested facility you will need to provide the:

- name of facility, copied and pasted from the [facility information list \(DOCX, 35KB\)](#)
- proposed usage or costs, or costs per unit where indicated on the facility information list
- confirmation you have their agreement where required

Facilities should only be named if they are on the facility information list above. If you will not need to use a facility, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

## **Data management and sharing**

Word limit: 1,500

How will you manage and share data collected or acquired through the proposed research?

## What the assessors are looking for in your response

Provide a data management plan which should clearly detail how you will comply with MRC's published [data management and sharing policies](#), which includes detailed guidance notes.

Provide your response in the text box following the headings in the [MRC data management plan template](#). You are not required to upload the document to your application.

The length of your plan will vary depending on the type of study being undertaken, as follows:

- population cohorts, longitudinal studies, genetic, omics and imaging data, biobanks, and other collections that are potentially a rich resource for the wider research community: maximum of 1,500 words
- all other research, less complex, the plan may be as short as 500 words

## Ethics and responsible research and innovation (RRI)

Word limit: 500

What are the ethical or RRI implications and issues relating to the proposed work? If you do not think that the proposed work raises any ethical or RRI issues, explain why.

## What the assessors are looking for in your response

Demonstrate that you have identified and evaluated:

- the relevant ethical or responsible research and innovation considerations
- how you will manage these considerations

Consider the [MRC guidance on ethics and approvals](#).

You may demonstrate elements of your responses in visual form if relevant. Further details are provided in the Funding Service.

## Genetic and biological risk

Word limit: 700

Does your proposed research involve any genetic or biological risk?

## What the assessors are looking for in your response

In respect of animals, plants or microbes, are you proposing to:

- use genetic modification as an experimental tool, like studying gene function in a genetically modified organism
- release genetically modified organisms

- ultimately develop commercial and industrial genetically modified outcomes

If yes, provide the name of any required approving body and state if approval is already in place. If it is not, provide an indicative timeframe for obtaining the required approval.

Identify the organism or organisms as a plant, animal or microbe and specify the species and which of the three categories the research relates to.

Identify the genetic and biological risks resulting from the proposed research, their implications, and any mitigation you plan on taking. Assessors will want to know you have considered the risks and their implications to justify that any identified risks do not outweigh any benefits of the proposed research.

If this does not apply to your proposed work, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

## **Research involving the use of animals**

Word limit: 10

Does your proposed research involve the use of vertebrate animals or other organisms covered by the Animals Scientific Procedures Act?

**What the assessors are looking for in your response**

If you are proposing research that requires using animals, download and complete the [Animals Scientific Procedures Act template \(DOCX, 74KB\)](#), which contains all the questions relating to research using vertebrate animals or other Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 regulated organisms.

Save it as a PDF. The Funding Service will provide document upload details when you apply. If this does not apply to your proposed work, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

## **Conducting research with animals overseas**

Word limit: 700

Will any of the proposed animal research be conducted overseas?

**What the assessors are looking for in your response**

If you are proposing to conduct overseas research, it must be conducted in accordance with welfare standards consistent with those in the UK, as in [Responsibility in the use of animals in bioscience research, page 14](#). Ensure all named applicants in the UK and overseas are aware of this requirement.

If your application proposes animal research to be conducted overseas, you must provide a statement in the text box. Depending on the species involved,

you may also need to upload a completed template for each species listed.

## Statement

Provide a statement to confirm that:

- all named applicants are aware of the requirements and have agreed to abide by them
- this overseas research will be conducted in accordance with welfare standards consistent with the principles of UK legislation
- the expectation set out in Responsibility in the use of animals in bioscience research will be applied and maintained
- appropriate national and institutional approvals are in place

## Templates

Overseas studies proposing to use non-human primates, cats, dogs, equines or pigs will be assessed during NC3Rs review of research applications. Provide the required information by completing the template from the question 'Research involving the use of animals'.

For studies involving other species, select, download, and complete the relevant Word checklist or checklists from this list:

- [Additional questions on the use of rodents overseas \(DOCX, 49.1KB\)](#)
- [Additional questions on the use of rabbits overseas \(DOCX, 49.2KB\)](#)
- [Additional questions on the use of sheep overseas \(DOCX, 50.9KB\)](#)
- [Additional questions on the use of goats overseas \(DOCX, 47.3KB\)](#)
- [Additional questions on the use of pigs overseas \(DOCX, 51.4KB\)](#)
- [Additional questions on the use of cattle overseas \(DOCX, 57.0KB\)](#)
- [Additional questions on the use of \*Xenopus laevis\* and \*Xenopus tropicalis\* overseas \(DOCX, 57.3KB\)](#)

Save your completed template as a PDF and upload to the Funding Service. If you use more than one checklist template, save it as a single PDF.

The Funding Service will provide document upload details when you apply.

If conducting research with animals overseas does not apply to your proposed work, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

## Research involving human participation

Word limit: 700

Will the project involve the use of human subjects or their personal information?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

If you are proposing research that requires the involvement of human subjects, provide the name of any required approving body and whether approval is already in place.

Justify the number and the diversity of the participants involved, as well as any procedures.

Provide details of any areas of substantial or moderate severity of impact.

If this does not apply to your proposed work, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

## **Research involving human tissues or biological samples**

Word limit: 700

Does your proposed research involve the use of human tissues, or biological samples?

**What the assessors are looking for in your response**

If you are proposing work that involves human tissues or biological samples, provide the name of any required approving body and whether approval is already in place.

Justify the use of human tissue or biological samples specifying the nature and quantity of the material to be used and its source.

If this does not apply to your proposed work, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

## **Resources and cost justification**

Word limit: 1,000

What will you need to deliver your proposed work and how much will it cost?

**What the assessors are looking for in your response**

Justify the application's more costly resources, in particular:

- project staff
- significant travel for field work or collaboration (but not regular travel between collaborating organisations or to conferences)
- any equipment that will cost more than £10,000
- any consumables beyond typical requirements, or that are required in exceptional quantities
- all facilities and infrastructure costs
- all resources that have been costed as 'Exceptions'
- support for public and patient involvement and engagement

- support for preserving, long-term storage, or sharing of data
- support for international co-leads, demonstrating this is within the 30% costs cap for co-leads from developed countries, India and China. There is no cap on costs requested for international applicants from DAC list countries
- [NHS research costs](#), when they are associated with NHS studies
- animal costs, such as numbers that need to be bred or maintained and to maintain high welfare standards
- MRC unit transition applicants: briefly summarise the resources you will receive for this work from unit funding which are not being requested as part of this application. Use the current unit costing approach to explain these and state the total cost of your proposed work, including unit resources and costs requested from this application

Assessors are not looking for detailed costs or a line-by-line breakdown of all project resources. Overall, they want you to demonstrate how the resources you anticipate needing for your proposed work:

- are comprehensive, appropriate, and justified
- represent the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes
- maximise potential outcomes and impacts

## **Clinical research using NHS resources**

Word limit: 250

Will your research involve participants from the NHS or Health and Social Care duty of care?

**What the assessors are looking for in your response**

If not, enter 'N/A' into the text box

Researchers applying for clinical research in the NHS, public health or social care need to complete a Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT) to be eligible for the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) Research Delivery Network (RDN) portfolio. This is the route through which support and excess treatment costs are provided in England.

You must answer 'Yes' and complete and upload a SoECAT if you are applying for clinical research funding, and:

- you will carry out your research in the UK
- it is intended for the NIHR RDN portfolio, this may include studies in a social care or public health setting
- the research requires approval by Health Research Authority (England) or its equivalents in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales
- your research will use NHS resources

You must complete a SoECAT even if you don't think your clinical research will involve excess treatment costs (ETCs).

See MRC guidance on [who needs to complete a SoECAT](#).

If you are applying for clinical research in the NHS, public health or social care, and don't think you need to complete a SoECAT, answer 'Yes' and explain why a SoECAT is not necessary.

We want to know that you have taken the appropriate steps for the full costs of your research to be attributed, calculated and paid.

We want to see the expected total resources required for your project, such as excess treatment costs (ETCs), to consider if these are appropriate.

### How to complete a SoECAT

SoECAT guidance can be found on the [NIHR website](#).

These are the steps you need to take:

1. Contact an Attributing the costs of health and social care research and Development (AcoRD) specialist as early as possible in the application process.
2. Complete an online SoECAT. Excel versions of the form have been discontinued. If you don't have an account for NIHR's Central Portfolio Management System (CPMS) you will need to create and activate one. [See the user guide for instructions](#)
3. Request authorisation of your SoECAT.
4. Once authorised, extract the 'study information' and the 'summary' page from the 'Funder Export', combine them as a single PDF and upload it to your application.

Applications that require a SoECAT but have not attached the SoECAT funder export study information and summary may be rejected.

Ensure the AcoRD specialist's name and date are included within the uploaded summary page. The SoECAT is invalid without this information.

Contact [nmhb@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:nmhb@mrc.ukri.org) if you have questions about the UKRI aspects of this process or have concerns that your SoECAT may not be authorised in time for the application deadline.

### Related applications

Word limit: 500

Is this application related to another application to MRC or other funding organisation?

## What the assessors are looking for in your response

If your application is not related to another, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

If yes, state your previous reference number and explain how this new application is related to the other application.

If the related application was submitted to another funder you should identify the name of the funder and when you applied.

If this is a resubmission describe how it differs from the previous application and how feedback on the previous application has been considered and acted on.

## MRC unit transition grant applications

Word limit: 1,000

What is the relationship between this application and your MRC unit programme funding?

## What the assessors are looking for in your response

Explain the relationship between this transition grant application and your current unit programme and how this grant will help you transition to new funding arrangements, including:

- activities that will be delivered during the remaining unit-funded period and during this grant
- important changes or new directions proposed from your unit-funded research (if applicable)
- feedback from the last unit review that is important for the assessment of these plans (if applicable)
- the transition approach to staff costs across the unit-funded and grant-funded parts of the proposed work

You should only complete this section if you are seeking to transition your unit research programme out of unit support and onto grant funding because MRC funding for your unit is coming to an end. If this does not apply to your proposed work, you will be able to indicate this in the Funding Service.

## International agreements

Word limit: 50

Is your application using an international agreement?

## What assessors are looking for in your response

If not enter 'N/A' in the text box

If your application is using an international agreement, identify the agreement concerned by answering 'Yes' followed by 'FAPESP' or 'FNR' or 'RCN' as follows:

- lead agency agreement with Luxembourg (FNR)
- lead agency agreement with Sao Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP)
- Collaborate with researchers in Norway (RCN)

### Lead agency agreements

For applications using a lead agency agreement the assessors are looking for you to create and upload the required lead agency documents, to support your application.

You must complete all the relevant documentation and attach it to this application as a single PDF. This is not required for applications using the Collaborate with researchers in Norway agreement.

### FAPESP

FAPESP applicants must complete the FAPESP-specific forms.

Documents and guidance are available on the [FAPESP website](#), including a FAPESP:

- consolidated budget form
- proposal form
- letter of eligibility

### FNR

FNR applicants should complete the FNR-specific forms.

Documents and guidance are available on the [FNR website](#), including:

- INTER budget sheet
- INTER budget justification
- INTER budget plan
- FNR eligibility letter of support

You must also complete the project partners section, with information about the international research partner, including:

- international lead applicant contact name and organisation details
- contribution from the international funder (FAPESP or FNR)

Include the experience, skills and contributions of your international research partners in the response to Applicant and team capability to deliver.

You should ensure that you have read and understood the specific requirements for the lead agency agreement you are applying to, especially for costing the applications.

Failure to comply with the specific guidance may result in the rejection of your application.

On receipt of your application, we will provide the international funder (FAPESP or FNR) with a copy to complete eligibility checks and provide names of expert reviewers.

For general FAPESP guidance please see the [FAPESP website](#).

For general FNR guidance please see the [FNR website](#).

### Collaborate with researchers in Norway

There are no additional documents, complete the application as normal requesting all the required resources and costs and include the Norway based researcher as a project co-lead (international).

For further guidance, including the costs the MRC will cover please see the [opportunity page](#).

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## How we will assess your application

### Assessment process

We will assess your application using the following process.

#### Peer review

We will invite experts to review your application independently, against the specified criteria for this funding opportunity.

You will not be able to nominate reviewers for applications on the new UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service. Research councils will continue to select expert reviewers.

We are monitoring the requirement for applicant-nominated reviewers as we review policies and processes as part of the continued development of the new Funding Service.

#### Shortlisting

Experts will review the comments and scores for each application. Shortlisted applications will go to a panel who will make a funding recommendation.

If your application is shortlisted, you will have 14 days to respond to reviewers' comments.

If your application is not shortlisted, we will give you the reviewers' comments and any feedback from the shortlisting panel.

## **Panel**

Following peer review and shortlisting, we will invite experts to use the evidence provided by reviewers and your applicant response to assess the quality of your application and rank it alongside other applications after which the panel will make a funding recommendation.

MRC will make the final funding decision.

Find out more about [MRC's assessment process](#).

## **Timescale**

We aim to complete the assessment process within six months of receiving your application.

## **Feedback**

If your application was discussed by a panel, we will give feedback with the outcome of your application.

## **Principles of assessment**

We support the [San Francisco declaration on research assessment](#) and recognise the relationship between research assessment and research integrity.

Find out about the [UKRI principles of assessment and decision making](#).

We reserve the right to modify the assessment process as needed.

## **Assessment areas**

The assessment areas we will use are:

- vision of the project
- approach to the project (including data management)
- capability of the applicant or applicants and the project team to deliver the project
- ethical and responsible research and innovation considerations of the project
- resources requested to do the project

Find details of assessment questions and criteria under the 'Application questions' heading in the 'How to apply' section.

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## Contact details

### Get help with your application

If you have a question and the answers aren't provided on this page

Important note: The Helpdesk is committed to helping users of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Funding Service as effectively and as quickly as possible. In order to manage cases at peak volume times, the Helpdesk will triage and prioritise those queries with an imminent opportunity deadline and/or a technical issue. Enquiries raised where information is available on the Funding Finder opportunity page and should be understood early in the application process (for example, regarding eligibility or content/remit of an opportunity) will not constitute a priority case and will be addressed as soon as possible.

### Contact details

For help and advice on costings and writing your application please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation's submission process.

For questions related to remit and scientific aspects of this specific funding opportunity email: [nmhb@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:nmhb@mrc.ukri.org)

For general questions related to MRC funding including our funding opportunities and policy please contact [rfpd@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:rfpd@mrc.ukri.org)

Any queries regarding the system or the submission of applications through the Funding Service should be directed to the helpdesk.

Email: [support@funding-service.ukri.org](mailto:support@funding-service.ukri.org)

Phone: 01793 547490

Our phone lines are open:

- Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5:00pm
- Friday 8:30am to 4:30pm

To help us process queries quicker, we request that users highlight the council and opportunity name in the subject title of their email query, include the application reference number, and refrain from contacting more than one mailbox at a time.

Find out [more information on submitting an application](#).

## Sensitive information

If you or a core team member need to tell us something you wish to remain confidential, email [nmhb@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:nmhb@mrc.ukri.org)

Include in the subject line: [the funding opportunity title; sensitive information; your Funding Service application number].

Typical examples of confidential information include:

- individual is unavailable until a certain date (for example due to parental leave)
- declaration of interest
- additional information about eligibility to apply that would not be appropriately shared in the 'Applicant and team capability' section
- conflict of interest for UKRI to consider in reviewer or panel participant selection
- the application is an invited resubmission

For information about how UKRI handles personal data, read [UKRI's privacy notice](#).

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## Additional info

### Background

#### International agreements

You can apply for this funding opportunity using these lead agency agreements:

- [Collaborate with researchers in Luxembourg \(FNR\)](#)
- [Collaborate with researchers in Brazil](#)

You should check the requirements for the agreement you are using and submit the joint application to the international funder within seven days after your submission to the MRC.

You can apply for this opportunity using this international agreement:  
[Collaborate with researchers in Norway](#)

### Additional disability and accessibility adjustments

UKRI can offer [disability and accessibility support for UKRI applicants and grant holders](#) during the application and assessment process if required.

### Webinar for potential applicants and research offices

MRC hosted a webinar for applicants and research offices applying to MRC responsive mode board and fellowship funding opportunities. This webinar consists of a presentation with information and tips on using the new UKRI Funding Service followed by a question and answer session with MRC staff.

### [Watch the webinar](#)

See the [question and answer session \(PDF, 120KB\)](#).

## Research disruption due to COVID-19

We recognise that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major interruptions and disruptions across our communities. We are committed to ensuring that individual applicants and their wider team, including partners and networks, are not penalised for any disruption to their career, such as:

- breaks and delays
- disruptive working patterns and conditions
- the loss of ongoing work
- role changes that may have been caused by the pandemic

Reviewers and panel members will be advised to consider the unequal impacts that COVID-19 related disruption might have had on the capability to deliver and career development of those individuals included in the application. They will be asked to consider the capability of the applicant and their wider team to deliver the research they are proposing.

Where disruptions have occurred, you can highlight this within your application if you wish, but there is no requirement to detail the specific circumstances that caused the disruption.

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## Timeline

○ **21 June 2024 9:00am**

Opening date

○ **17 September 2024 4:00pm**

Closing date

○ **To be confirmed**

Shortlisting decision meeting

○ **To be confirmed**

Funding decision meeting

☐ **Within 10 working days of funding decision meeting**

Informed of funding decision

☐ **October 2024 to January 2025**

Future round open for applications

☐ **February to May 2025**

Future round open for applications

## **Guidance on good research**

[Good research resource hub](#)

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<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/neurosciences-and-mental-health-research>