



## Grant-making policy (research)

### 1. Taking a quality approach

We are an accredited member of the [Association of Medical Research Charities \(AMRC\)](#). Every five years, we submit ourselves to its Peer Review Audit to provide an independently assessed hallmark of quality in terms of how the application review process is undertaken and research is funded.

We comply and abide by the five principles of peer review:

- **Accountability:** we are open and transparent about our review procedures and the members of our decision-making committees.
- **Balance:** we aim to reflect a broad range of experience and disciplinary expertise on our decision-making committees.
- **Independence:** our Research Grants Committee is independent of our Board of Trustees and administrative staff.
- **Rotation:** members of our Research Grants Committee have fixed terms of office.
- **Impartiality:** our Research Grants Committee comprises a significant number of experts who are not in receipt of funding from us and we adhere to strict rules on this as well as having a conflict of interest policy. Anyone in conflict is not put in a position where they can influence funding decisions.

### 2. Who will the Trust fund to carry out research?

We will make research awards to recognised university departments, NHS hospitals or other [recognised research centres within the UK](#) with the appropriate capacity, research record and governance arrangements to ensure that the research will be able to be carried out in an appropriate manner. Research will be supported directly with the institution in which the research is carried out, rather than through a third party (such as a fundraising charity supporting research).

We have no specific geographical link and will consider supporting applications anywhere within the UK. While the Trust aims to ensure equitable access to grants across the UK, applications will be considered on merit alone.

We will support research carried out by:

- clinicians from all health professions (including allied health professionals) with the relevant qualifications and experience to undertake the research;
- academics with the relevant qualifications and experience to undertake the research;
- clinicians and researchers in training and/or registered to study for a higher qualification and who are supervised by appropriately qualified clinicians/academics.

All applicants for research grants must be able to demonstrate that they are based in a supportive and appropriately equipped research environment with a suitable skill mix in the research team.

Lead applicants applying for their first award as Principal Investigator will not be precluded, indeed, the Trust wishes to encourage the development of research capacity by providing opportunities for career development. We would, however, expect to see a more experienced researcher as a Co-Investigator with a clear plan for mentoring and support.

### 3. Our assessment procedures

Our assessment procedures for specific funding schemes will be published on our website. Broadly, where there is a multi-stage process, for example for research project grants, applicants will be required to submit an outline application which will be subject to an internal triage process and assessed by the executive team for eligibility, fit with the Trust's strategy, feasibility, potential for positive impact and outline plans for the development of research capacity. The applications will be ranked, with the highest ranked being invited to submit a full application. Do please note that even if the outline proposal falls into the "potentially fundable" range, it may not go forward to the next stage owing to the constraints in operational capacity.

Full applications will be subject to full peer review. Reviewers are asked for their expert opinion on: the application's:

- academic quality;
- demonstration of need;
- novelty;

- value for money;
- feasibility of the research plan;
- competence of the applicant/the research team;
- suitability of the research environment;
- credibility and feasibility of the plan to achieve benefit beyond the academic community to improve the health and well-being of older people; and
- credibility and feasibility of the project team’s plans to support the development of professional research careers in the Trust’s priority areas.

The reviews are gathered and reviewed by two members of the Research Grants Committee who present their assessment to the full Committee for discussion and decision. All full applications are ranked with the highest ranked (up to the level of the budget allocated to the Committee for distribution) being funded. Please note, therefore, that even if an application is deemed to be “fundable” it may not be able to be funded. All decisions of the Committee are reported to the Board of Trustees.

For personal funding, such as doctoral training fellowships and PhD studentship awards, an amended version of the above process will be undertaken, with the second stage being supplemented with interviews of candidates by a panel of suitable experts drawn from the Research Grants Committee and, if co-funded, from partner organisations.

In all cases, applicants are expected:

- to confirm that they have read and completed the eligibility questionnaire for the available grant schemes, which can be found on the Trust’s website;
- to provide a clear demonstration of what the research is expected to achieve within a reasonable time frame, in terms of patient benefit and/or improving the health and well-being of, or environment for, older people;
- to demonstrate that they are based in a well-equipped research environment with a suitable skill mix in the research team and to specify clearly the role of each member of the team in the research.

Within these priorities, greatest weighting in assessment will be given to academic quality and feasibility, however applicants will also be expected to:

- set out a pathway to impact, providing a clear demonstration of what the research is expected to achieve within a reasonable time frame, in terms of patient benefit/improving the health and well-being of older people;
- show how the project will support the development of research careers to increase and sustain capacity in the Trust's priority areas of interest.

## 4. Feedback

We endeavour to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Owing to the volume of applications received, particularly at outline stage, this may be generic but we will always try to give broad pointers for improvement. Feedback after the full application stage will be based on the comments of the peer reviewers and Research Grants Committee. We are unfortunately not able to engage in correspondence about the comments and our decision on award is final.

## 5. Other considerations for applicants

### 5.1 Guidance on implementing AMRC policies on animal research

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), the Trust supports the principle of using animals in research when it is necessary. [Please review the guidance](#). The Trust will only support the use of protected animals in research where no viable alternative exists, and applicants must comply with best practice in animal welfare and advances in the refinement, replacement and reduction of animal use, including compliance with the ARRIVE guidelines published by the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs).

### 5.2 Concordat to Support Research Integrity

The Trust supports the Concordat to Support Research Integrity and is committed to its principles as it relates to funders of research. It expects host institutions to have systems in place to ensure that research is conducted to best practice and the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

### 5.3 Open access

The Trust supports an open access policy with regard to peer reviewed (primary) publications arising from research funded by the Trust.

### 5.4 Research sponsorship

The Trust will not undertake the role of research sponsor (as required by the NHS Research Governance Framework) and requires formal confirmation that the research has a formally approved and explicitly stated research sponsor (where this is applicable) before a grant can be started as stated in the Terms and Conditions for the grant scheme.

We are a  
signatory to the  
Concordat to  
Support  
Research  
Integrity

## 5.5 Intellectual property

Where the research supported has the potential to produce intellectual property which may have commercial potential, the institution in which the research takes place will be required to enter into an Intellectual Property Agreement with the Trust.

## 6. Funding policy

We recognise the importance to the research sector's sustainability of paying the Full Economic Cost (fECs) of research. Institutions that receive our grants are eligible to receive a contribution from the Government-funded Charities Research Support Fund (CRSF), which has been established to enable universities to pay the indirect costs required for charity funded research to occur. Universities report the research income they receive from charities in the financial statistics they return annually to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. This is then used to inform the allocation made by Research England (or equivalent body), which universities receive with their annual recurrent grant (part of the Quality-Related research funding stream).

In order to qualify for the CRSF, the grant must fulfil two main eligibility criteria: it was awarded through open competition using a method of external peer review and it was awarded by a charity registered in the United Kingdom or an overseas body with exclusively charitable purposes. Grants from the Dunhill Medical Trust fulfil both of these criteria.

For the purposes of building the budget to support projects, we will therefore meet:

- directly Incurred Costs. Please note that some 'direct' costs of clinical research in the NHS can be covered by NIHR Clinical Research Networks under the Attributing the costs of health and social care Research and Development ([AcoRD](#)) agreement.
- some Directly Allocated Costs (considered on a case-by-case basis, having regard to information on eligible costs included in the guidelines and advice for the relevant grant scheme, provided as a set of "frequently asked questions" on the Trust's website, providing that full justification is included in the grant application).

## 7. Reporting

We will require a progress report (for operational purposes) at the end of each year of the grant period and a final report within three months of the end of the grant period. Principal investigators will be contacted by a Grants Officer to arrange a conversation based on the final report, with a view to writing a case study for publication on the Trust's website and/or used in its Annual Report. It is also an opportunity to provide feedback to the Trust.

Providing information on any published outputs and details of the impact arising from the award is encouraged and, at a minimum, all grant holders are required to complete an annual submission via [Researchfish](#) for the duration of the grant and for 3 years after the grant ends. Submission periods are typically 5-6 weeks in duration and we will attempt to align submission periods with other funders.

It is the grant holder's responsibility to ensure that they have submitted within the specified time. For the avoidance of doubt, grant holders are required to log into the system and click on the "submit" button to register a valid submission, regardless of whether or not they have outputs to report. This requirement is stipulated in the Grant Offer Letter and communicated to the grant holder each year prior to the submission period via email and posted on the Trust's website.

Any peer reviewed publications arising from the grant-funded work funded must be submitted to [Europe PubMed Central](#), a repository to which the Trust subscribes. Ideally, the Trust encourages the publication of peer reviewed papers by open access immediately, or, if this is not possible, within 6 months of publication. Given the growing cost of open access publication, the Trust makes additional funds available to support this.

The Trust is a signatory to the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#). Early Career Researchers identified as being part of the project team funded by the grant will be contacted directly within 3 months of the grant end date to receive their feedback on whether the support outlined in the grant application was provided and to identify next destinations.