

The Dunhill Medical Trust Early Career Post-doctoral Fellowship Pilot Scheme

Guidelines for applicants 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Introduction.....	3
1.1	Overview.....	3
1.2	The opportunity.....	3
2.	Eligibility criteria.....	4
2.1	Who can apply?	4
2.2	Research topics	5
2.3	Period of support.....	6
2.4	Eligible costs.....	6
3.	Application process and timeline.....	10
4.	Online applications	11
4.1	Overview.....	11
4.2	Assessment criteria	12
4.3	Checklist	16
5.	Support and further information.....	17
5.1	Support from the Trust.....	17
5.2	External guidance.....	17
5.3	Contact information	18

If you require this document in any alternative accessible formats, please contact us at grants@dunhillmedical.org.uk. We will do our very best to assist you.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

As part of our [2020-25 strategic framework](#), we are committed to providing targeted support both to institutions which have demonstrated a long-term commitment to ageing-related research, but also to early career researchers, to ensure we continue to build and maintain research capacity in this important area. We are also signatories of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#), and have updated our [Concordat action plan](#), in which we commit to regularly reviewing our existing Fellowship opportunities. With this in mind, and in consultation with our [Research Grants Committee](#), it was agreed that supporting ageing-related researchers through the early post-doctoral career stage would build on our existing commitments to capacity-building within the UK.

1.2 THE OPPORTUNITY

This scheme is targeted towards early career post-doctoral researchers who have demonstrated excellence and a capacity for independent research. Funding has been made available to support at least three awards of up to £300k, with a maximum duration of three years full-time (and up to six years part-time).

Submitted proposals **must** fit our basic eligibility criteria (as outlined in our [eligibility O&A](#)), and the work undertaken **must** address one or more of our key strategic themes highlighted in [Section 2.2](#). Full details of our eligibility criteria can be found in [Section 2](#), including those related to eligible costs.

Please note that any Fellowships awarded must be based at those Departments/Centres that are holders of our [2020 and 2022 Multiple PhD Studentship awards](#) (see [Section 2.1](#) for more details).

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1 WHO CAN APPLY?

This scheme is for early career post-doctoral researchers who have up to three years' post-doctoral research experience and have demonstrated excellence and a capacity for independent research. When considering research experience and eligibility, we will take into account any career breaks, parental leave and/or the impacts of COVID-19.

Any Fellowships awarded **must** be based at the following Departments/Centres, which have already demonstrated an organisational strategic commitment to ageing-related research and the career development of early career researchers through our [2020 and 2022 Multiple PhD Studentship schemes](#):

Institution	Eligible Departments/Centres
Loughborough University	1) School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences; 2) the School of Design and Creative Arts; and 3) the School of Architecture, Building and Civil Engineering
Newcastle University	Faculty of Medical Sciences
University College London	Institute of Healthy Ageing
University of Aberdeen	School of Psychology
University of Birmingham	School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences
University of Edinburgh	1) Advanced Care Research Centre Academy; 2) the Usher Institute's Ageing and Health Research Group and Acute Care Research Group; and 3) the UK Dementia Research Institute at the University of Edinburgh
University of Liverpool	Institute of Life Course and Medical Sciences
University of Manchester	Healthy Ageing Research Group
University of Sheffield	Healthy Lifespan Institute
University of Strathclyde	1) Institute of Pharmacy and Biomedical Sciences; 2) the Department of Architecture; 3) the Department of Biomedical Engineering; and 4) the Department of Computer and Information Science
University of Surrey	Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences

You are not required to have been previously funded by the Trust. In addition, as the Principal Investigator/lead applicant, you can either be based at **or** recruited into an **eligible Department/Centre** (as listed above) when applying. However, you **must** apply with the support of a Primary Supervisor who is based at the eligible Department/Centre, and that of the respective Head of Department. Both your Primary Supervisor and Head of Department will need to be invited to contribute to your application (more details on this are provided in [Section 4.1](#)). If the application is successful, you

must be based at the eligible Department/Centre. Once awarded, Fellowships are not transferrable between institutions and cannot be transferred to another individual.

We welcome proposals with additional co-applicants, supporters and collaborators from within and beyond academia, including people with lived experience of issues relevant to the proposal. In addition, we encourage multidisciplinary research and, whilst studies should primarily focus on issues relevant to UK organisations and citizens, contributions from international collaborators are permitted where clearly justified.

In addition, successful applicants will not be precluded from applying for research funding from other sources during the course of their Fellowship, and indeed are encouraged to do so where feasible relevant and non-duplicative.

There are no nationality and age restrictions for applicants, but you must have (or plan to obtain) permission to live and work in the UK. **The host institution is responsible for securing all necessary work permits for the Fellow.** If applicable, the Dunhill Medical Trust is an endorsed funder approved by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) for the Global Talent visa (GTV) programme. For more information about applying to work in the UK as a researcher or academic leader under the GTV programme, please visit the [UK government website](#). We have also published a [news item on our website](#) highlighting the experience of one of our post-doctoral Fellows applying for a visa through this route.

2.2 RESEARCH TOPICS

The focus of the proposed research **must** address one or more of the following priority research themes outlined in our [2020-25 strategic framework](#):

- improve our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of ageing and age-related disease;
- target the social determinants of healthy life expectancy;
- improve quality of life for older people, in particular:
 - in developing and delivering suitable living environments;
 - addressing the issues of age-related vision, hearing and oral health;
- have the potential to prevent, delay or reduce future health and social care requirements, in particular, improve the ability to maintain functional independence for older adults.

Please note that research with a specific focus on cancer will **not** be eligible for funding.

All proposals, regardless of topic, should be aligned with the Trust's key principles for research as detailed on page nine of our [2020-25 strategic framework](#). In particular:

- Patient, carer and/or public involvement (PPI) should be considered in all aspects of the proposed study and its development.
- Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) should be considered in all aspects of the proposed study and its development.

- A commitment to capacity-building and researcher career-development in ageing-related research during and beyond the lifetime of the proposed Fellowship – in line with [our action plan in support of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) – should be demonstrated, with practical examples.
- Where appropriate, proposals should demonstrate a multidisciplinary approach to the proposed research.

2.3 PERIOD OF SUPPORT

The Fellowship is intended to be flexible and may be undertaken on either a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time Fellowships will be awarded for a maximum period of three years, whereas part-time Fellowships can be awarded for a maximum of up to six years.

Typically, for full-time Fellowships we expect that any non-research activities required of you must be linked to your research and limited to 0.2 FTE per year for the duration of the Fellowship. For part-time Fellowships, time allocated to non-research activities will be limited accordingly on a pro-rata basis. However, if you have any questions regarding this and would like to discuss it further, please get in touch.

If you are applying for a part-time Fellowship, you will need to include your salary costs on a pro-rata basis accordingly (more details on completing your budget are provided in [Section 2.4](#) below).

2.4 ELIGIBLE COSTS

In your application, you will be expected to provide detailed budgetary information on the funding you are requesting, phased annually in the first instance.

The budget table within your application should be reviewed and/or completed by the relevant Administrative/Finance Manager from your host institution (this individual must be invited to contribute to your application in the Grants Management Portal, and more information on this is provided in [Section 4.1](#) and in [our “how to” guide](#)).

In your budget table, please set out the detailed costs being requested from the Trust. Please do not include any part or in-kind contributions from other sources in your budget table (you will be given the opportunity to detail these, if applicable, in a separate question).

Please note that apart from any specific cases listed here, we will not meet overhead costs for research institutions (more guidance on overhead costs is provided below). However, if applicable, we do expect funding to be allocated within the proposed budget to compensate any involved community partner organisation(s) for their contribution to the work at their full economic cost. Some useful advice on full economic cost recovery for community organisations is provided in the [‘Community-facing organisations’ drop-down on the “How we support you” page on our website](#).

The following information outlines the budget table headings and what you can and cannot apply for. For further information on completing your budget within the application form, please read our [“how to” guide for using the Grants Management Portal](#).

When completing your budget table, please ensure that you make a realistic assumption regarding inflation when applying a cost uplift for future years.

COSTS FOR THE FELLOW

- **Basic salary**

Please only include your basic salary costs (at the appropriate grade on the relevant pay scale) under this budget heading¹. All amounts should include provision for relevant increases in pay grade/scale/spine point and inflation if necessary. For this scheme, the Trust will **not** fund salary costs for members of staff other than the Fellow.

- **National insurance and pension**

- **Local allowance**

This includes London weighting, or other location allowances.

- **Career development/support costs**

Career development/support costs will be met when there is a clearly defined explanation of how they will contribute to your career development, above that which is provided by the host institution as standard. Examples of career development costs include mentoring and training, which is actively encouraged for early career post-doctoral researchers. We would also expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the relevant sections of the application form.

RUNNING EXPENSES

- **Consumables and other specific running costs**

The cost of materials and consumables required to carry out the proposed research will be met but should be justified, with special regard to those categories of overhead costs which the Trust will not meet. Estimated figures for consumables/materials are not acceptable and must be itemised.

- **Travel and subsistence**

Travel and subsistence costs for yourself, supervisors and other members of the team assigned to the research, where required by the nature of the work, will normally be met and should be based on the most suitable and economical form of travel.

- **Other eligible costs**

- Steering group / meeting costs
- Participant costs / expenses / incentives (if any)
- Costs related to embedding Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in your proposed work and approach.
- Transcription costs (if any)
- Animal costs (if any) and this can include the costs of attaining appropriate licences.

- **Clinical trials**

¹ The Trust is a Living Wage Funder and we require all posts which are wholly or partially funded by us to be paid at least the real Living Wage, unless there are particular reasons for this not to happen. Please cost up any application for salaries at at least the real Living Wage. More information can be found on the [Living Wage website](#). Please note that organisations do not need to be accredited Living Wage Employers to apply to us, but we do encourage organisations to consider whether this is a possibility for them.

A detailed justification for each cost will need to be provided. We may provide a reasonable contribution towards Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) staff participating in the research, providing appropriate justification is given when requested. Please read our [Funding FAQs](#) on our website for more information on research involving a Clinical Trials Unit.

- **Data storage/archive**

Data storage, archiving and management costs may be met, on condition that they are reasonable and proportionate in the context of the study.

PATIENT, CARER AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- We will meet justified payments for patient, carer and public involvement (PPI). Please ensure that you have read the NIHR's "[Payment guidance for researchers and professionals](#)" page.
- In addition, please ensure that you have considered the [UK Standards for Public Involvement in Research](#). We would also expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the relevant parts of the application form.

EQUIPMENT (INCLUDING COMPUTER COSTS)

- Requests for study-specific items of equipment costing up to £10k may be met but should be fully justified. For requests over £10k, we will expect a detailed case to be provided and at least a 50% contribution towards the total cost of the equipment from the host institution and/or other funders. Suppliers' quotations will also be required.
- We would normally expect the involved organisations to provide access to major equipment, but where specific circumstances require substantial usage and/or the purchase of a major item of equipment specifically for the research, a detailed case should be provided, with the University contributing at least 50% of the costs.
- Computers and other IT equipment dedicated to the study may be met, on condition that full justification is provided.

OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- **Impact-related costs**

We will meet costs for the Fellow and, if applicable/justified, other team members to attend conferences as a speaker and/or to present posters etc. to disseminate the findings from the research conducted during the Fellowship. Costs for other dissemination and impact-related activities related to the research may be applied for, provided that full justification is given. We would also expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the relevant sections of the application form. We will **not** meet costs for attending an academic conference as a delegate only.

- **Open access/open data costs**

These may be included in applications but should be fully justified and comply with the Dunhill Medical Trust's [Open Access Policy](#).

OTHER COSTS

- If applicable, overhead costs for any involved community partner organisation(s)' contribution to the research can be included under this budget heading.
- Non-UK costs (e.g. specialist tests or assays) may be met, on condition that full justification is provided. It will, however, be the responsibility of the host institution to reimburse the non-UK institution for carrying out such tests.

GUIDANCE ON OVERHEAD COSTS

- Apart from any specific cases listed above, we will **not** meet overhead costs (typically those identified as Directly Allocated Costs, Indirect Costs and Estates Costs) for research institutions. In particular, we will **not** contribute towards the Apprenticeship Levy as this forms part of central overhead.
- Please note that this is because host universities receive a contribution to overheads via the [Charities Research Support Fund](#). More information regarding the [Charities element of the Quality-Related \(“OR”\) funding](#) can be found in the ‘What costs will you cover?’ question in our [Funding FAQs](#).

3. APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The application process will consist of three stages:

1. An online application and eligibility check
2. Peer review and Panel review
3. An interview, if shortlisted

The application process for this call will follow the timetable below:

Activity	Date
Call for applications open	Monday 4 th March 2024
Deadline for submission of online applications	Monday 29 th April 2024 (5pm)
Peer review and Panel review/shortlisting of applications	May – September 2024
Notification of the outcome of your application and, if shortlisted, invitation to attend an interview	Early September 2024
Deadline for interview presentation to be emailed to the Trust, if shortlisted	18 th September 2024 (1pm)
Interviews held by our Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either at our offices in London or via Zoom • Please do ensure that you are available on this day, as unfortunately there will be little flexibility with this date and timeframe 	19 th September 2024 (9am – 5pm)
Ratification of the Panel's recommendation as to which applicants should be funded	8 th October 2024
Shortlisted applicants notified of the outcome of their interview	Mid-November 2024

Every effort has been made to provide enough time for the various stages of the process while avoiding public/school holidays, but some clashes will unfortunately be unavoidable.

Based on this timetable, any awarded Fellowship would not be able to start until January 2025 at the earliest. However, please note that any successful Fellowship will not be able to commence until any pre- and post-award conditions have been met.

4. ONLINE APPLICATIONS

4.1 OVERVIEW

Online applications will open on Monday 4th March 2024 and close at 5pm on Monday 29th April 2024.

BEFORE STARTING AN APPLICATION

Please ensure that you have completed our [general eligibility O&A](#) and read our [Funding FAQs](#) on our website. You should also read our [Terms and Conditions for Research Grants](#).

You should also be aware that we will ask you to provide an ORCID iD when completing your application form. Any prospective applicants without an ORCID iD can [register for one](#). We use the information included in your ORCID profile to help auto-populate the “About you” section of the application form. [ORCID has published a range of help and support](#) for researchers on registering for their iD and managing their ORCID profile.

THE APPLICATION FORM

Applications need to be submitted via our [online Grants Management Portal](#). Please follow [this link for a separate “how to” document](#) with details on registering for an account and using the portal.

A [blank PDF template of the application form](#) will be available ahead of the scheme opening on our system. Please note, however, that this is only provided to help you plan your application – **only submissions made via the Grants Management Portal before the deadline will be accepted.**

Whilst you (as the Principal Investigator/lead applicant) are responsible for submitting the application form, other people (referred to on the portal as “Participants”) can also be invited to contribute to the form. Please see the table below for more information on who can and needs to be involved at this stage of the application process:

Required	Optional
<p>Primary Supervisor:</p> <p>You must invite a primary supervisor to complete the necessary section(s) of the application form. Your supervisor must hold a post at an eligible Department/Centre that will extend over the duration of the award and, if awarded, will need to provide a letter of support detailing the resources and space that you will have access to.</p> <p>Administrative/Finance Manager:</p> <p>An appropriate Administrative/Finance Manager must be invited to complete a declaration on behalf of the host institution (the</p>	<p>Co-applicant(s):</p> <p>The nominated candidate may, if they wish, invite co-applicants to review and contribute to the form. These may be a mentor and/or others who will support the proposed work.</p> <p>Please note:</p> <p>Once any optional participants have been invited, it will not be possible to submit the form until they have completed their contribution or you have indicated on the portal that they are no longer required to contribute.</p>

lead institution). This individual should also review and/or contribute to the financial details section of the form, if required.

Head of Department:

You **must** invite the Head of Department to complete a declaration on behalf of your host Department/Centre.

Please note:

The application cannot be submitted until all required external participants have completed their contributions.

Detailed information on inviting external participants, and contributing to an application as an external participant, is provided in our [“how to” guide for using the Grants Management Portal](#).

4.2 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Once submitted, the Trust will conduct an initial review of the application to confirm:

- Satisfactory completion of the form (e.g. that answers have been tailored to the scheme and have given sufficient detail to enable assessment etc.).
- That it meets the eligibility criteria for the scheme, as outlined in [Section 2](#).
- That the proposal is not duplicative when checked against other grants previously / currently funded. You can find details of research grants that have been previously funded on [Europe PubMed Central](#).

Any applications that do not meet the above criteria will not proceed to further assessment and applicants will be informed at this point if this is the case.

Eligible applications will then go through external peer review, following which they will be assessed by a Panel comprising independent experts alongside members of our [Research Grants Committee](#).

Recognising the impacts of COVID-19 on research activity: We are aware that COVID-19 has resulted in disruptions to research activities for the majority of researchers. As a result, the impacts of COVID-19 will be taken into account when assessing applicants’ record of outputs and career progression and we will be providing guidance on this matter to peer reviewers and panellists.

EXTERNAL PEER REVIEW CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed by peer reviewers using the following criteria:

- Quality of the proposed work, for example:
 - Has the applicant provided clear, detailed and well-referenced background information?
 - Have they provided a clear and compelling justification of its need and/or novelty?
 - Is the research question(s) and/or proposal clear, credible and detailed?
 - Will the work make a significant contribution to knowledge and understanding in the field?
 - Is the work ageing-related?
- Methodology and feasibility, for example:
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed methodological approach(es)?
 - Is the proposed methodology robust/appropriate and will it answer the research question(s)?
 - Is the overall approach convincing, coherent and effective?
 - Is the research achievable in the timeline proposed?
 - Does the applicant acknowledge potential problem areas and consider alternative tactics?
- Research team and environment, for example:
 - Is the applicant and the wider team well-suited to carry out this work?
 - Does the applicant and the wider team have a track record in the work that is proposed, commensurate with experience and taking into account the impacts of COVID-19 on research activity?
 - Is there appropriate support/expertise available within the wider team and/or the collaborative arrangements?
 - Does the applicant and the wider team have appropriate access to facilities, equipment, samples and/or resources?

PANEL REVIEW CRITERIA

Ahead of the Panel shortlisting meeting, members will have access to the external peer reviewers' assessments. They will then assess applications on the same criteria as the peer reviewers, as well as the additional criteria outlined below:

- Dissemination and impact, for example:
 - Are there detailed plans for dissemination beyond the academic community with a clear demonstration of the knowledge and connections that will enable the work to change practice and/or policy?
 - Is there a credible, feasible and specific plan to achieve benefit beyond the academic community and improve the health and social care of older people, where appropriate?
- Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), for example:
 - In relation to i) the people involved, ii) the proposed research and its development and iii) the protected characteristics that the [Equality Act 2010](#) protects, as well other characteristics, is there a well-considered and compelling approach to EDI (e.g. in the use of samples, recruiting participants, developing research materials etc.)?
- Patient, carer and public involvement/engagement (PPI), for example:
 - If appropriate, has the applicant considered PPI principles and processes in all stages of the research and its development, which takes into account the [UK Standards for Public Involvement in Research](#)?
- Capacity building, career development and support, for example:
 - Does the proposal demonstrate a clear and genuine focus on capacity building/career development and provide evidence of the quality and suitability of institutional support?
- Requested funds, for example:
 - Is the financial support requested necessary and sufficient?
 - Do the requested funds take into account all aims and activities (e.g. training, PPI, dissemination activities etc.)?
 - Are the requested funds well-justified? If relevant, is there any appropriate external financial and/or in-kind support offered?

Following the Panel shortlisting meeting, applicants will be notified whether they have been invited to interview according to the timeline specified in [Section 3](#).

If invited to interview, you will be required to give a 5–10-minute timed presentation on your research and future aspirations, as well as addressing Panel feedback received from the shortlisting meeting. After the presentation, there will be questions from the Panel which will examine a variety of topics, including but not limited to, your research experience, motivation and long-term goals, your role in the development of the proposal, and how you plan to engage with mentors and the wider research community, including the Trust. In total, it is anticipated that the interview will be no longer than 1 hour.

FEEDBACK ON YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION

All applicants, whether successful at interview or unsuccessful at either the shortlisting or interview stage, will receive feedback. We will be providing information on the eventual success rate for the call at a later date.

4.3 CHECKLIST

Make sure you have completed all the relevant tasks on this list before submitting your application:

- Have you read these guidelines, our general funding FAQs and our Terms and Conditions for Research Grants?
- Have you provided detailed and relevant / tailored answers to all mandatory questions in the application form?
- Have you uploaded all requested documents in the appropriate file formats?
- Has your Primary Supervisor read the application and completed the relevant section(s) to ensure that the application can be submitted before the deadline on the Grants Management Portal?
- Have all other invited participants read and understood the various guidelines to ensure that the application can be submitted by the deadline on the Grants Management Portal?
- Has an Administrative/Finance Manager from the host institution read the financial details section of the application and completed their declaration to ensure that the application can be submitted before the deadline on the Grants Management Portal?
- Has the Head of Department read the application and completed their declaration to ensure that the application can be submitted by the deadline on the Grants Management Portal?

5. SUPPORT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

5.1 SUPPORT FROM THE TRUST

- Download a [blank application form template](#). Please note, however, that this is only provided to help you plan your application – only submissions made via the Grants Management Portal before the deadline will be accepted.
- Read our general [Funding FAQs](#), including what our Research Grants Committee would say a good application looks like.
- Read our [Terms and Conditions for Research Grants](#).
- Read our [Open Access Policy](#).
- If relevant, read our sample [Intellectual Property Agreement](#).
- Read our [Funder Action Plan](#) for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.
- As stated earlier, the Dunhill Medical Trust is an endorsed funder approved by UKRI for the GTV programme. For more information about applying to work in the UK as a researcher or academic leader under the GTV programme, please visit the [UK government website](#). We have also published a [news item on our website](#) highlighting the experience of one of our post-doctoral Fellows applying for a visa through this route.
- For guidance on navigating and using the Grants Management Portal, please see our [“how to” guide](#).
- Join the [Dunhill Medical Trust Academy](#), which aims to:
 - Facilitate better understanding and foster relationships between academic and clinical researchers, as well as community organisations, working with older people.
 - Act as a supportive place to find new collaborators, mentors and advisors and to sustain nascent networks for the longer term.

5.2 EXTERNAL GUIDANCE

- Applications that include NHS resources will need to adhere to the [Department of Health AcoRD guidance](#). Follow this [link](#) to view the AcoRD FAQs.
- For applications that consist of clinical research, you might consider approaching the [Research Delivery Network](#) for help and support.
- For information regarding Patient, Carer and Public Involvement (PPI) in research, please do visit the [National Institute for Health and Care Research website for various PPI resources](#).
- For more information on including underserved groups in research, you might be interested in a website hosted by the [INCLUDE initiative from the National Institute for Health and Care Research](#), which provides guidance for ensuring health research is inclusive, as well as instructions on how to [register for a free online course](#) run by INCLUDE.
- NHS England has also published [practical guidance on engaging more diverse participants in health research](#).
- Feel free to read about [“A funding adviser’s guide to writing a great grant application”](#) in the academic journal Nature.

5.3 CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any queries regarding the scheme, including if you need any alternative accessible formats at any stage of the application process, please contact grants@dunhillmedical.org.uk. We will do our very best to assist you.