

The Dunhill Medical Trust Academy Excellence Awards

Guidelines for nominees 2024/2025



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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

In March 2023, we launched the [Dunhill Medical Trust \(DMT\) Academy](#), an inclusive network of researchers and community organisations dedicated to ageing-related research and evidence-informed practice. Our key aims for the Academy include celebrating achievement and ambition in ageing-related research, and promoting the key principles we uphold in the work we support and in the wider research community.

Building on the success of the [first round Excellence Awards](#), awarded at our [2024 Annual Symposium](#) in memory of [Professor Stuart Parker](#), we are delighted to be running another round of the scheme.

The 2024/25 Excellence Awards are open to Academy members who are academic and/or clinical researchers focusing on ageing-related research. These awards recognise those who have demonstrated excellence and a meaningful commitment to our [research principles](#).

1.2 THE OPPORTUNITY

Two awards of £40k per year for three years (£120k in total per award) will be made to:

- One early to mid-career “rising star” in ageing-related research.
- One senior leader in ageing-related research.

This opportunity is only available to academic and/or clinical researchers who are members of the [DMT Academy](#). Academy members may either self-nominate or nominate another member for the award. Full eligibility criteria are provided in [Section 2](#).

The awards are intended to be flexible and can be used to support ageing-related research activities and/or career development – some examples of how the funds can be used are provided in [Section 2.3](#).

Excellence Award-holders will be invited to speak at the Trust’s 2025 Annual Symposium event and will be expected, from time to time, to participate in Academy training or other activities, such as panel review within their areas of expertise.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1 WHO CAN APPLY?

These awards are only available to members of the [DMT Academy](#). Academy members may either self-nominate or nominate another member for the award.

If you are nominating yourself for the award, then:

- You **must** be a member of the Academy and have a profile on the [member directory](#).
- In addition, as part of the nomination form you will be required to upload a statement from a supporter who **must** also be a member of the Academy.

If, alternatively, you are nominating somebody else for the award, then:

- Both you and the nominee **must** be members of the Academy and have profiles on the [member directory](#).
- In addition, as part of the nomination form you will be required to upload a statement from a seconder who **must** also be a member of the Academy.

For more information on becoming an Academy member, please visit the “[Apply to join](#)” page on our website.

Nominees must be ageing-related researchers based at a UK university, NHS Trust/Hospital/Board, Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland or other [eligible research organisation](#). The Dunhill Medical Trust has no specific geographical link and will consider nominees based anywhere within the UK. In addition, nominees do not need to be past / current Dunhill Medical Trust award-holders to be eligible.

An unsuccessful candidate from a previous award round **must** entirely amend any previously submitted unsuccessful nominations prior to submission (i.e. duplicate submissions, sections of the form and/or letters will **not** be eligible). Previous winners are **not** eligible to be nominated for the same award again. However, past “Rising Star” awardees may be nominated for the “Senior Leader” award if they subsequently fit the criteria for the award.

If successful, any funds will be paid to the award-holder’s university / research organisation to be used at the award-holder’s discretion (see [Section 2.3](#) for more details). Should the award-holder move university / research organisation during the lifetime of the award, they will take the award and any remaining funds with them (i.e. their previous university / research organisation will not retain any unspent funds). Furthermore, the award cannot be transferred to another individual¹.

¹ If, during the lifetime of the award, the award-holder leaves the academic or clinical environment completely and is no longer attached to a UK university, NHS Trust/Hospital/Board, Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland or other eligible research organisation, any remaining funds from a paid instalment will become repayable and no further instalments will be made.

In addition to the above, the following eligibility criteria apply to the two awards on offer:

- **For the “Rising Star” award:** nominees must be post-doctoral researchers **with between three and ten years of post-doctoral research experience** (taking into account any career breaks and/or the impacts of COVID-19). Nominees do not need to have a permanent position but, if successful, award-holders without tenure will need to provide a letter of support from their university / research organisation confirming that their contract extends for at least 12 months from the start of the award in the first instance.
- **For the “Senior Leader” award:** nominees must be a full Professor and hold a permanent position at their university / research organisation. Honorary Professors will only be considered if they are active members of their research community at an eligible research organisation.

Shortlisted nominees must be available to attend an interview on 15th or 16th of January 2025 (see [Section 3](#) for full details of the nomination process and timeline).

If successful, award-holders will be expected to attend and speak at the formal announcement of the award at the Trust’s 2025 Annual Symposium event. In the case that the award-holder is unable to attend, they may be asked to provide an acceptance video to be used during the event. The award-holder will also be expected to participate, from time to time, in Academy training or other activities, for example panel review within their areas of expertise.

2.2 OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND PRINCIPLES

Broadly, the awards are intended to recognise and celebrate success, achievement and ambition in ageing-related research.

We are looking for nominees that put forward creative plans for their intended use of funds that not only extend beyond their own research group(s) / organisation(s), but also demonstrate ambition and a genuine commitment to the Dunhill Medical Trust’s key principles for research. In particular:

- Capacity building and/or mentorship in ageing-related research, and a meaningful contribution to a positive research culture – in line with [our action plan for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#).
- Promoting meaningful patient, carer and/or public involvement and engagement (PPIE) and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in research.
- Influencing ageing-related policy and/or practice at a local, regional and/or national level.

For guidance on what makes a good nomination, please do refer to [last year's award feedback](#). More details on how nominations will be assessed are provided in [Section 4.3](#).

2.3 ELIGIBLE COSTS

If shortlisted, nominees will be asked to outline how they intend to use the funds if they are successful.

The awards are intended to be flexible, and some examples of how the funds could be used include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Attending and/or facilitating others to attend relevant conferences and meetings.
- Organising ageing-related conferences, meetings and/or networking events etc.
- Organising and/or attending career / professional development, mentoring and/or training opportunities etc.
- Carrying out activities which promote equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and/or increase the involvement / participation of under-served groups in research.
- Carrying out activities which promote patient, carer and/or public involvement and engagement (PPIE) in research.
- Providing funded internships / student placements etc.
- Providing small pots of seed funding, pump-priming grants etc.
- Purchasing equipment to support research.
- Supporting cross-sectoral secondments, partnership and/or network-building activities etc.

The funds are **not** intended to pay and/or back-fill the salary costs of staff members who are already employed. The funds are also **not** intended to extend the contracts of fixed-term post-doctoral researchers.

Please note that the awards will be paid up-front annually, in three £40k instalments, with the first instalment being paid no later than August 2025 (the start of the academic financial year). At the end of each year, the next instalment will be paid subject to a satisfactory update from the award-holder that details how the award has been spent to date. Typically, at the end of the three-year award period, any unspent funds will be returned to the Trust.

3. NOMINATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The nomination and selection process will consist of two stages:

1. Submission of an online nomination form
2. If shortlisted, an interview

The nomination and selection process for the awards will follow the timetable below:

Activity	Date
Nominations open	10 th September 2024
Deadline for nomination forms to be submitted	4 th November 2024 (5pm)
Panel review and shortlisting of nominations	November – December 2024
Notification of the outcome of your nomination and, if shortlisted, invitation for the nominee to attend an interview	3 rd January 2025 (at the latest)
Interviews held by our Panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shortlisted nominees must be available on these days, as unfortunately there is no flexibility with these dates and times • This interview will take place either in London or via Zoom 	15 th or 16 th January 2025 (9am – 5pm)
Ratification of the Panel's recommendation as to which nominees should receive the awards – this will take place at the February 2025 meeting of the Trust's Research Grants Committee	4 th February 2025
Shortlisted nominees notified of the outcome of their interview	Late February 2025
Formal announcement of the awards at the Trust's 2025 Annual Symposium event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note that the award-holders will be invited to attend and speak at this event • The exact date / time of the event will be confirmed in due course 	April 2025
Payment of the first £40k instalment	No later than August 2025

Every effort has been made to provide enough time for the various stages of the process while avoiding public / school holidays.

Please note that a letter confirming the award will only be sent after any further requested information has been provided, if necessary. Furthermore, the first instalment cannot be paid until the award offer has been formally accepted.

4. ONLINE NOMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

4.1 OVERVIEW

Nominations will open on Tuesday 10th September 2024 and close at 5pm on Monday 4th November 2024.

BEFORE STARTING A NOMINATION FORM

Please ensure that you have read these guidelines in full and have checked the eligibility criteria for the award. Additionally, we encourage both nominees and nominators to review [last year's award feedback](#) to help develop a strong nomination.

If you are nominating yourself for the award:

- You and your supporter will both need to [be a member of the Academy](#) before submitting the nomination form.

If, alternatively, you are nominating another Academy member for the award:

- You, your seconder and the nominee will all need to [be a member of the Academy](#) before submitting the nomination form.
- You **must** make the nominee aware that you are submitting the nomination form on their behalf and that, if shortlisted:
 - They will be required to attend an interview on the date specified in [Section 3](#).
 - They will be asked to outline how they would intend to use the award if they are successful.
- Please note that both you (the nominator) and the nominee may be approached for any communications related to the initial nomination.
- When making your nomination, it is important that you know the work of the nominee well enough to build a strong case for why they are deserving of the award. The Panel are looking for a compelling account of the significance of the nominee's work, their outstanding achievements, and their commitment to our research principles. A good nomination should describe as well as possible the difference the nominee's contribution has made. Consider what distinguishes your nominee from others doing similar work and provide details to support these claims.

If successful, as a condition of award the nominee's Head of Department or an equivalent authority will need to provide written confirmation that:

- The nominee's university / department / research organisation will administer the award.
- If the nominee is a "Rising Star" without a permanent / tenured position: the nominee's contract will extend for at least the first 12 months of the award in the first instance.

Regardless of the nomination route (i.e. self-nomination or nomination by another Academy member), if successful, the nominee will be the primary point-of-contact for any communications and publicity related to the award.

THE NOMINATION FORM

The nomination form needs to be submitted via our [online Grants Management Portal](#). You can download a PDF template of the nomination form from our website:

- If you are nominating yourself:
 - For the “Rising Star” award, please use [this version of the nomination form](#)
 - For the “Senior Leader” award, please use [this version of the nomination form](#)
- If you are nominating somebody else:
 - For the “Rising Star” award, please use [this version of the nomination form](#)
 - For the “Senior Leader” award, please use [this version of the nomination form](#)

Please note:

- That these PDF versions are only provided for planning purposes – only nominations made before the deadline via the online Grants Management Portal will be accepted.
- For either nomination route, when uploading the letter focussing on our research principles – try **not** to repeat information that has already been provided in the body of the form. The focus of the letter is on the nominee’s commitment to our key principles for research, as outlined in these guidelines and the nomination form.
- We will **not** consider the contents of any uploaded letter(s) that have not been expressly requested in the nomination form and that exceed the stated word count.

Detailed information on navigating and using the Grants Management Portal is provided in our [“how to” guide](#).

4.2 THE PANEL

The shortlisting and interview Panel will consist of the following members:

- Professor Deborah Dunn-Walters (University of Surrey and Chair of our Board of Trustees)
- Professor Bernard Conway (University of Strathclyde and Trustee)
- Professor Ala Szczepura (Coventry University and Research Grants Committee member)
- Professor Stuart Gray (University of Glasgow and Research Grants Committee member)
- Professor Ilaria Bellantuono (University of Sheffield, Chair of the DMT Academy Steering Group and 2024 ‘Senior Leader’ Excellence Award holder)
- Dr Sanjay Thakrar (Head of Research at the Dunhill Medical Trust)

Susan Kay, Chief Executive of the Dunhill Medical Trust, will Chair the shortlisting meeting and interviews, and members of staff from the Trust will act as observers and/or notetakers.

Panel review / shortlisting and interviews will take place on the dates specified in [Section 3](#).

4.3 ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Once submitted, the Trust will conduct an initial review of the nomination form to confirm that it meets the following criteria:

- Eligibility for the award
- Satisfactory completion of the nomination form, including the required uploaded documents

Nominations will then be reviewed and shortlisted by the Panel based on the following criteria:

- The nomination clearly articulates / justifies the nominee's status as a rising star **or** senior leader in ageing-related research.
- There is a clear explanation of how the nominee has: i) demonstrated excellence in ageing-related research (commensurate with experience and taking into account the impacts of COVID-19); and ii) contributed to the understanding of the mechanisms of ageing or ageing-related disease, and/or influenced ageing-related policy / practice at a local, regional, national and/or international level.
- There is a clear and compelling demonstration of the nominee's commitment to capacity building and/or mentorship in ageing-related research, and how they have meaningfully contributed to building a positive research culture.
- There is a clear and compelling demonstration of how the nominee has meaningfully promoted patient, carer and/or public involvement and engagement (PPIE) in ageing-related research, and the difference this has made.
- There is a clear and compelling demonstration of how the nominee has meaningfully promoted equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in ageing-related research, and the difference this has made.

Shortlisted nominees will be invited to interview on the date specified in [Section 3](#).

As part of your interview, nominees will be asked to give a 10-minute presentation to:

- Briefly outline why they are a suitable candidate for the award and how it will benefit them and others in their network.
- Explain how they intend to use the funds that come with the award, if successful.
- Explain how they intend to engage with / act as an ambassador for the [Academy](#) and wider Trust, if successful.

The interview will be an opportunity for the Panel to raise any queries arising from the nomination form / presentation and explore these in more detail. If relevant, the nominee may be provided with specific feedback following the shortlisting meeting and asked to address this at interview. It is anticipated that the interview will be no longer than 1 hour.

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 nominees' research record and career progression and we will be providing guidance on this matter to the Panel.

FEEDBACK ON NOMINATIONS

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide individual feedback to each nominee. However, we will be providing general feedback on the [news section of our website](#), which will highlight the common themes that distinguished stronger nominees, as well as noting areas that could have been improved. We will also be providing information on the eventual success rate for the awards at a later date. For example, please see the [feedback and success rate from last year](#) for your interest and information.

4.4 CHECKLIST

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

- Have you read these guidelines fully and checked the eligibility criteria for the award?
- If self-nominating, are you and your supporter both members of the Academy with a profile on the [member directory](#)?
- If you are nominating somebody else for the award:
 - Are you, your seconder and the nominee all members of the Academy with a profile on the [member directory](#)?
 - Is the nominee aware that you are submitting a nomination on their behalf and that, if shortlisted, they will be required to attend an interview on the specified date?
- Have you provided detailed and relevant answers to all mandatory questions in the nomination form?
- Have you uploaded any required documents (e.g. a statement from yourself, your supporter / seconder etc.) alongside the nomination form?

5. SUPPORT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

5.1 SUPPORT FROM THE TRUST

- You can download the following PDF template nomination forms to help plan your submission. However, please note that these PDF versions are only provided for planning purposes – only nominations made before the deadline via the online Grants Management Portal will be accepted:
 - If you are nominating yourself:
 - For the “Rising Star” award, please use [this version of the nomination form](#)
 - For the “Senior Leader” award, please use [this version of the nomination form](#)
 - If you are nominating somebody else:
 - For the “Rising Star” award, please use [this version of the nomination form](#)
 - For the “Senior Leader” award, please use [this version of the nomination form](#)
- Join the [DMT Academy](#), which aims to:
 - Facilitate better understanding and foster relationships between academic and clinical researchers, as well as community organisations, working with older people.
 - Create a supportive place to find new collaborators, mentors and advisors and to sustain nascent networks for the longer term.
- Read our [2020-25 Strategic Framework](#), which highlights our funding principles and research priorities.
- Read our [Funder Action Plan](#) for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.
- For guidance on what made a good nomination last year, [read this news post](#).
- For guidance on navigating and using the Grants Management Portal, please see our [“how to” guide](#).

5.2 EXTERNAL GUIDANCE

- 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](#). You may also wish to look at the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#), a framework for what good public involvement in research looks like. There is also this [practical guide to PPI in lab-based research](#).
- For more information on including under-served 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 created [a document that provides practical insights for researchers on how to engage more diverse participants in health research](#).
- The Royal Society has a [section of its website dedicated to research culture](#), which may be of interest.

5.3 CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any queries related to the Academy, please contact academy@dunhillmedical.org.uk.

For any queries regarding the nomination process and awards, including if you need any alternative accessible formats, please contact grants@dunhillmedical.org.uk. We will do our very best to assist you.