



## Funding opportunity

# Neurosciences and mental health: new investigator: responsive mode

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Open
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Medical Research Council (MRC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Publication date:</b>	13 January 2025
<b>Opening date:</b>	13 January 2025 9:00am UK time
<b>Closing date:</b>	30 April 2025 4:00pm UK time

Apply for funding to:

- research neurosciences and mental health
- take the next step towards becoming an independent researcher

You must have:

- the skills and experience to ‘transition to independence’
- the support of a host research organisation eligible for Medical Research Council (MRC) funding

There is no limit to the funding you can apply for, but the typical full economic cost of a project is under £1 million. MRC will usually fund 80% of the full economic cost.

This funding usually lasts three years and covers up to 50% of your salary.

This is an ongoing funding opportunity.

---

## 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 funding opportunity you must:

- have [research organisation support](#)
- be able to show that your skills and experience match those in the 'transition to independence' stage of the [MRC applicant skills and experience table](#)
- use this grant to support your long-term career goals and chosen career route
- be able to demonstrate you are the sole intellectual leader of the application and the proposed work
- focus your application within the research area of neurosciences and mental health

You are also eligible to apply if you:

- are employed as a postdoctoral research assistant, although this grant cannot start until your current work finishes
- hold a lecturer appointment, a junior fellowship or another research staff position
- hold, or have held, an early career training fellowship such as an MRC skills development fellowship
- do not have a contract with your chosen host organisation
- are not currently based at the eligible research organisation that has agreed to host your new investigator award
- are either a non-clinical or clinically active researcher
- have any number of years of experience

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 if you have already achieved independence. New investigator grants support individuals who have not previously led a research team or been awarded a substantial grant as fellow or project lead (formally known as principal investigator).

A substantial grant is typically defined as for three or more years and including salary support for one or more additional team members

You are also not eligible to apply if you have:

- already hold or have held an award that facilitates the transition to independence
- applied for a new investigator research grant twice before
- an application for any UKRI fellowship currently under consideration, including a [career development award](#), [clinician scientist fellowship](#) or [future leaders fellowship](#)

If you are unsure whether you meet the eligibility criteria or have any questions about your eligibility you should contact [nmhb@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:nmhb@mrc.ukri.org) to find out whether you can apply.

Read our [new investigator research grants frequently asked questions](#) for situation-specific eligibility information.

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

## Project co-leads and other team members

We recognise and support the value of team science and interdisciplinary research, which may be important to your career development. Therefore, project co-leads, specialists and other team roles may be included within your new investigator application. Your team members should bring essential complimentary research, technical expertise or skills to the project, that you as the new investigator project lead cannot provide, or you are aiming to develop.

We encourage you to use the appropriate application sections, such as 'Applicant and team capability to deliver', to make your leadership role clear and justify the team around you.

It is not usually appropriate for a current or recent supervisor or lab head of the new investigator to be part of the applicant team, as this may make your leadership unclear. If this is essential to the proposed work, it must be specifically justified.

## International applicants

As MRC is a lead funder for this funding opportunity, international researchers can apply as project co-lead (international).

Project co-leads (international) make a major intellectual contribution to the design or conduct of the project. Their 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](#).

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

---

## What we're looking for

### Scope

We are looking to fund new investigators who are capable of becoming independent researchers and are now ready to take the next step towards that goal.

We're looking for new investigators with a proposal for research that increases understanding within the field of neurosciences and mental health.

The Neurosciences and Mental Health Board (NMHB) funds research in neurosciences, mental health and 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 are 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 and 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.

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

## How you spend your time

New investigator grants are intended to support a research project, combined with a range of other academic or clinical activities, during the transition to independence, such as:

- time spent on other research grants
- clinical duties
- teaching
- research organisation administration duties
- other time spent in faculty

This means we expect you to apply for salary costs for a proportion of your contracted working time, up to 50%. The proportion you request should be justified in the application and suitable for leading the research project as you transition to independence. A new investigator grant is distinct from a fellowship that supports 100% of the fellow's time.

## Duration

The duration of a new investigator grant should be determined by what the research project needs and the case supporting the transition to independence. In this opportunity three years is typical.

You may apply for a longer duration project and justify why this is necessary.

New investigator grants do not normally last for less than three years, because it is unlikely the transition to independence could be achieved in that time.

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

New investigator research grants are not renewable.

## 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 your salary, up to 50% of your total working time
- a contribution to the salary of any 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
- public partnerships and related activities, including [payments to public contributors](#)

The salary requested should be in line with the research organisation's usual new investigator levels.

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

costs.

The total of such costs requested for international applicants from high-income countries (HICs) (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](#) 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

## 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 relationship 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 [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. Trusted Research and Innovation (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.

---

## 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

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.

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

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 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 should:

- 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)
- ensure files are smaller than 5MB and in JPEG, JPG, JPE, JFI, JIF, JFIF, PNG, GIF, BMP or WEBP format

Watch our [research office webinars about the 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.

## Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Use of generative AI tools to prepare funding applications is permitted, however, caution should be applied.

For more information see our [policy on the use of generative AI in application and assessment](#).

## Deadline

MRC must receive your application by 30 April 2025 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 or returned to you. 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](#).

## 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](#).

## 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

## 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

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

Project co-leads, specialists and other team roles may be included. Team members should bring essential complimentary research, technical expertise or skills to the project, that you cannot provide, or are aiming to develop.

To make your leadership role clear and justify the team around you, we encourage using the appropriate application sections, such as:

- applicant fit to the funding opportunity
- applicant and team capability to deliver

It is not usually appropriate for your current or recent supervisor or lab head to be part of the applicant team, as this may make leadership unclear. If this is essential to the proposed work, it must be specifically justified.

UKRI has introduced a new addition to the 'Specialist' role type. Public contributors such as people with lived experience can now be added to an application.

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 board

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.

### **Applicant fit to the funding opportunity**

Word limit: 250

How do you consider yourself eligible for this funding opportunity?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Give a clear description of why you are eligible for funding through this funding opportunity. In your response you should consider, where relevant:

- that you have not already achieved independence. See [MRC applicant skills and experience criteria](#)
- that you have not been awarded a substantial grant as fellow or project lead, that is three or more years duration and includes salary support for one or more additional team members
- that you have not already held a transition to independence award
- that you have independently devised and will lead on the delivery of the proposed work, and any project co-leads and other team members are

providing essential complimentary expertise (If applicable)

Find out more about [MRC new investigator award eligibility](#).

## **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: 2,800

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
- explain and justify the inclusion of public partnerships (if applicable) and the added value these offer

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.

## **Reproducibility and statistical design**

Word limit: 500

How will you ensure your proposed work is reliable, robust and reproducible?

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

Information about reproducibility and how you will ensure reliability and robustness of your proposed work, such as further details of statistical analyses, methodology and experimental design, not provided in your approach.

We expect you to seek professional statistical or other relevant advice in preparing your response, which should include, as appropriate:

- sample and effect sizes
- planned statistical analyses
- models chosen (for example animal model, cell line)
- potential sources of bias and how these will be mitigated during analysis
- how your approach to addressing diversity is reflected in the experimental design and analyses

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 here, 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.

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

The length of your response will vary depending on the type of project, you may not need to use 500 words.

## **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

## **Career development**

Word limit: 250

How will this award contribute to your career development as the project lead?

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

Explain why you are applying for this new investigator award and demonstrate how it will support you in achieving your:



- long-term career goals and chosen career route
- plans to develop your own research profile
- independence, as the sole intellectual leader of the proposed work
- plans to secure further grant support during or after this award
- plans to establish and lead a research team

We also expect you to demonstrate how you will instigate positive change in the wider research and innovation community, for example through:

- equality, diversity and Inclusion
- advocacy or advisory roles
- stakeholder engagement
- participation in peer review
- influencing policy
- public engagement or outreach

### **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 limit 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, including public partnerships
- you need to make your leadership role clear and justify the team around you

### 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.

The [roles in funding applications policy](#) has descriptions of the different project roles.

### Research organisation support

Word limit: 1,000

What support will be provided by the research organisation for your new investigator award?

### What assessors are looking for in your response

Considering your career trajectory and how the support offered forms a cohesive career development package for you, provide a clear statement of commitment and support from the research organisation to you and the project covering:

- how your expertise fits within the wider interest and strategies of the research organisation and department
- development and training opportunities to be provided and how they form a cohesive career development package tailored to you

- mentoring and support arrangements proposed and how they are appropriate to you, include the name of any current or future mentors
- financial support to be provided, including the contribution to your salary, and how this improves the application

This statement of support should also provide:

- the name and role of the person providing the statement, who should be the head of department or other senior manager
- how they will support you following the end of the award
- how they recognise and value you as part of their team and will integrate you into the research organisation, enabling you to develop your independence and the focus of your research
- guidance and training on setting up a research group, building partnerships and collaborations, or with public engagement
- rapid access to resources at the research organisation through knowledge of appropriate processes and systems
- access to career development support and advice to enable future career transitions
- support for any proposed leadership activities
- access to laboratory space or investment in equipment to establish your laboratory, and access to communal departmental resources

## **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. Project partners may be in industry, academia, third sector or government organisations in the UK or overseas, including partners based in the EU.

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 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.

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.

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.

## 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 letter and email guidance for third party project partners

Each project partner letter or email you provide should:

- 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)
- have a page limit of two sides of A4 per partner

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).

## Industry or company project partner letter and email of support guidance

Industry or company project partners are required to complete the industry or company letter of support template by exploring the document download section of [MRC Industry Collaboration Framework \(ICF\)](#). This will ensure the letter or email they provide you, contains all the relevant information we need.

## 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 partner 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

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

If you do not have any project partners, you will be able to indicate this in 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.

## Industry Collaboration Framework (ICF)

Word limit: 1,500

Does your application include collaboration with industry or company project partners?

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

The assessors are looking for you to confirm if your proposed work involves collaboration with an industry or company project partner. If it does, you will need to follow the MRC industry collaboration framework (ICF).

By 'industry or company' we mean an enterprise that puts or has intention to put goods or services on a market.

For guidance to assist your decision if your proposed work requires you to follow ICF, you should explore the [ICF decision tree](#) and find out [more about ICF](#) which includes:

- 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

Enter 'Yes' in the text box if you have industry or company project partners and you are likely to follow ICF. You should also confirm your answers to the ICF questions one to nine in the text box for each ICF project partner.

Contact [nmhb@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:nmhb@mrc.ukri.org) if you are unsure if your application should follow ICF.

In addition to the project partner information completed in the previous section, 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 industry or company project partner.

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 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 fully flexible contribution or gated contribution (based on the IP sharing arrangements with the industry or company).
5. Outline the pre-existing IP ('background IP') that each partner, including the academic partner, will bring to the collaborative research project and the terms under which 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:
  - who will own this IP
  - what rights industry or company 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 industry or company partners
7. Outline any restrictions to dissemination of the project results, including the rights of the industry or company 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 industry or company project partners and describe how they will be

managed.

9. Justify collaborating with an overseas industry or company under ICF (if applicable).

Failure to provide the information requested for industry or company 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 with your technology transfer or contracts office before applying.

For audit purposes, UKRI requires formal collaboration agreements to be put in place if an award is made. You must provide us with a copy of the collaboration agreement, signed by all partners, before an ICF award starts.

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

## **Trusted Research and Innovation**

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 Trusted Research and Innovation, 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 contact you following submission of your application 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 \(DOCX, 42KB\)](#)
- 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.

## **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](#). 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 'Research involving the use of animals' question.

For studies involving other species, such as:

- rodents
- rabbits
- sheep
- goats
- pigs
- cattle
- xenopus laevis and xenopus tropicalis
- zebrafish

Select, download, and complete the relevant Word checklist or checklists by [exploring NC3Rs checklist for the use of animals overseas](#).

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. [Payments to public partners](#) can be included under the exceptions fund heading
- 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 high-income 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

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

Are you applying to do clinical research in the UK?

What the assessors are looking for in your response

Researchers applying to do clinical research in the NHS, public health or social care usually need to complete a Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT).

We request the SoECAT because we want to know that you have taken the appropriate steps to request National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) support and 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 to consider if these are appropriate.

Enter 'Yes' and complete and upload a SoECAT if you are applying for clinical research and:

- you will carry out your research in the UK
- your research will use NHS resources

- the research requires approval by Health Research Authority (England) or its equivalents in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales
- you will need support from the NIHR Research Delivery Network, this may include studies in a social care or public health setting

It is important to complete a SoECAT to be eligible for NIHR support 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](#).

## 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 & 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 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 uploaded the SoECAT funder export study information and summary may be rejected.

Ensure the AcoRD specialists 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 closing date.

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

## 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.

---

## **How we will assess your application**

### **Assessment process**

We will assess your application using the following process.

#### **Examination of applications**

All applications will be examined to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria and scope of the funding opportunity. If your application is outside the scope, you will be advised by email, and we will not assess your application. We aim to notify you of this around four weeks after the closing date.

#### **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 and make a shortlisting recommendation.

If your application is shortlisted, you will have 14 days to respond to reviewers' comments and any shortlisting panel feedback. Your application will then go to a funding panel.

If your application is not shortlisted it is unsuccessful and we will give you the reviewers' comments as feedback. In most cases there will be no further feedback.

## 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

All applicants receive reviewer comments as feedback. If your application was discussed at the funding panel, we will give any further feedback within six weeks of the panel meeting.

We are committed to providing support to researchers transitioning to independence, you are welcome to contact us at any stage to discuss your new investigator application and how it was assessed. You can either contact the relevant programme manager directly or we can assist you at [nmhb@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:nmhb@mrc.ukri.org)

## 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](#).

## Using generative artificial intelligence (AI) in peer review

Reviewers and panellists are not permitted to use generative AI tools to develop their assessment. Using these tools can potentially compromise the confidentiality of the ideas that applicants have entrusted to UKRI to safeguard.

For more detail see our [policy on the use of generative AI](#).

## Assessment areas

The assessment areas we will use are:



- vision of the project
- approach to the project (including reproducibility and statistical design and data management)
- career development
- capability of the applicant or applicants and the project team to deliver the project
- research organisation support
- 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.

---

## 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 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 email: [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.

See further information on [submitting an application](#).

---

## Additional info

### Background

MRC hosted a new investigator research grant (NIRG) webinar in January 2022.

#### [Watch the webinar](#)

Since January 2020, all successful new investigator research grant holders are eligible to register for the [Academy of Medical Sciences mentoring scheme](#).

### Research and innovation impact

Impact can be defined as the long-term intended or unintended effect research and innovation has on society, economy and the environment; to individuals, organisations, and the wider global population.

### 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.

---

## Timeline

- **13 January 2025 9:00am**  
Opening date
- **30 April 2025 4:00pm**  
Closing date
- **October 2025**  
Shortlisting decision meeting
- **November 2025**  
Funding decision meeting
- **Within 10 working days of funding decision meeting**  
Informed of funding decision
- **May to September 2025**  
Future round open for applications
- **September 2025 to January 2026**  
Future round open for applications

## Guidance on good research

[Good research resource hub](#)

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