



# MRC neurosciences and mental health research grant: May 2021

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Open
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Medical Research Council (MRC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Publication date:</b>	9 February 2021
<b>Opening date:</b>	15 February 2021
<b>Closing date:</b>	26 May 2021 16:00 UK time

*Last updated: 5 March 2021*

[Start application](#)

Funding is available from MRC's Neurosciences and Mental Health Board to support focused research projects on neurosciences and mental health.

We award research grants to UK-based research organisations, and research grants may involve more than one research group or institution.

There is no limit to the funding you can request, but it should be appropriate to the project – typically awards are up to £1 million. We will usually fund up to 80% of your project's full economic cost.

Projects can last up to five years and are typically 3-4 years.

[Open all](#)

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**Who can apply**

Any UK-based researcher with an employment contract at an eligible research organisation can apply. You will need to:

- have at least a graduate degree, although we usually expect most applicants to have a PhD or medical degree
- show that you will direct the project and be actively engaged in the work

You can include one or more industry partners as project partners in your application. International co-investigators can be included if they provide expertise not available in the UK.

The focus of this funding opportunity is neurosciences and mental health research. There are similar opportunities across [other areas of medical research within our remit](#), including molecular and cellular medicine, infections and immunity, population and systems medicine, and applied global health. There are also other types of awards including programmes, partnerships and new investigator.

You should contact us if you are not sure which opportunity to apply to.

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## What we're looking for

The MRC's Neurosciences and Mental Health Board 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.

Research we fund includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- 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 science areas we support and our current board opportunity areas.](#)

We encourage you to contact us first to discuss your application, especially if you believe your research may cross MRC research board or research council interests. If your application fits another research board remit better we may decide to transfer it there to be assessed.

Medical Research Council neurosciences and mental health research grants:

- are suitable for focused short or long-term research projects
- can support method development or development and continuation of research facilities
- may involve more than one research group or institution.

We will fund projects lasting up to five years, although projects typically last 3 to 4 years. If your project will last more than three years, you must justify the reason for this; for example, if you need time for data collection or follow-up.

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

Contact one of our programme managers for advice if you would like to apply for a short or long-duration project.

You can request funding for costs such as:

- a contribution to the salary of the principal investigator and co-investigators
- support for other posts such as research and technical
- research consumables
- equipment
- travel costs
- data preservation, data sharing and dissemination costs
- estates/indirect costs.

We won't fund:

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

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## How to apply

Application deadlines for Neurosciences and Mental Health Board funding are usually around January, May and September/October, although sometimes dates can change, so check the Funding finder for details.

You can submit to any of the available deadlines in the year. We do not expect you to submit more than two applications at the same time and encourage you to focus on application quality, not the number you can submit. [Read our guidance for applicants for details of our resubmission process.](#)

## Applying through Je-S

You must apply through the [Joint Electronic Submission system \(Je-S\)](#). Please read the [Je-S how to apply guidance](#) for more information. If you need help applying, you can contact Je-S on 01793 444164 or by email [JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org).

You should give your administrative department at least two weeks' notice that you intend to apply. You must submit your application before 4pm on the deadline date.

When applying select:

- council: MRC
- document type: standard proposal
- scheme: research grant
- call/type/mode: research boards May 2021 submissions

### Indicating the proposal is a research grant

Select the 'grant type' option from the proposal document menu, within the Je-S proposal form. Within the section, select the radio button adjacent to the 'research grant' option and select the 'save' button.

## Guidance for applicants

Our [guidance for applicants](#) will:

- help you check your eligibility
- guide you through preparing a proposal
- show you how to prepare a case for support
- provide details of any ethical and regulatory requirements that may apply.

## Industrial partners

If you want to include one or more industry partners as a project partner, you must also:

- complete the project partner section in Je-S
- submit an MRC industrial collaboration agreement (MICA) form and heads of terms
- include 'MICA' as a prefix to your project title.

Find out more about [MRC industry collaboration agreements](#).

## Longitudinal population studies

If your application is to fund new or existing longitudinal population studies, you must first submit an outline application for joint review by the Longitudinal Population Studies Strategic Advisory Panel and the Research Board. Should a full application be invited, this may be submitted within a 12-month window.

Applications for longitudinal population studies must be for core infrastructure only, applications may include associated research only if it is for proof of principle work.

Applicants must speak to the relevant programme manager at least 6 weeks before the outline submission deadline to confirm the eligibility of their application.

Please email [populationcohorts@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:populationcohorts@mrc.ukri.org) for the outline template, timeline for review and next outline submission deadline. Applications for funding for clinical (meaning, patient-specific or disease-focused) cohorts are exempt from this process.

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## How we will assess your application

When we receive your application, it will be peer-reviewed by independent experts from the UK and overseas.

You can nominate up to three independent reviewers. We will invite only one to assess your application, and may decide not to approach any of your nominated reviewers.

Peer reviewers will assess your application and provide comments. They will also score it using the peer reviewer scoring system against the following criteria:

- importance: how important are the questions, or gaps in knowledge, that are being addressed?
- scientific potential: what are the prospects for good scientific progress?
- resources requested: are the requested funds essential for the work? And do the importance and scientific potential justify funding on the scale requested? Does the proposal represent good value for money?

[Read the detailed assessment criteria for each grant type](#).

We will review these scores and comments at a triage meeting and expect to continue with the highest-quality applications with potential to be funded. If your application passes the triage stage, we will give you the chance to respond to reviewers' comments.

A board meeting will then discuss your proposal and decide if it is suitable for funding. We make a decision within six months of receiving your application.

Find out more about [our peer review process](#).

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## Contact details

Visit our [science contacts page](#) or contact the programme manager most relevant to your research area for advice on developing your application and which board to apply to:

- head of programme – mental health: Dr Karen Brakspear – [karen.brakspear@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:karen.brakspear@mrc.ukri.org)
- programme manager for cognition and developmental disorders: Dr Charlotte Inchley – [charlotte.inchley@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:charlotte.inchley@mrc.ukri.org)
- programme manager for neuronal function: Dr Simon Fisher – [simon.fisher@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:simon.fisher@mrc.ukri.org)
- programme manager for neurodegeneration: Dr Clara Fons – [clara.fons@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:clara.fons@mrc.ukri.org)
- programme manager for pain and addiction: Dr Siv Vingill – [siv.vingill@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:siv.vingill@mrc.ukri.org)
- programme manager for neurological disorders: Dr Steph Migchelsen – [stephanie.migchelsen@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:stephanie.migchelsen@mrc.ukri.org)
- programme manager for adolescent mental health: Dr Victoria Swann – [victoria.swann@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:victoria.swann@mrc.ukri.org)

## Other contacts

- for queries about submitting your application using Je-S, email [JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org) or call 01793 444164
- for general enquiries about your application contact [NMHB@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:NMHB@mrc.ukri.org)

For general queries about MRC policy and eligibility or if you are not sure who to contact, get in touch with our research funding policy and delivery team:

- [RFPD@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:RFPD@mrc.ukri.org)
  - 01793 416440
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## Additional info

### Supporting documents

- [Je-S how to apply guidance \(PDF, 190KB\)](#)
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# Timeline

- **15 February 2021**  
Opening date
- **26 May 2021 16:00**  
Closing date
- **29 September 2021**  
Shortlisting date
- **10 -11 November 2021**  
Meeting dates

## Related content

[Guidance for applicants](#)

[The science areas we fund and support](#)

[Peer review process](#)

[Information about full economic costing](#)

[MRC strategy](#)

[MRC terms and conditions](#)

[MRC industry collaboration agreements](#)

[Neurosciences and Mental Health Board membership](#)

NOTE This is the first phase of our new website – let us know if you have [feedback](#) or would like to [help us test new developments](#).

