



# Experimental medicine grants: April 2021

<b>Opportunity status:</b>	Open
<b>Funders:</b>	<a href="#">Medical Research Council (MRC)</a>
<b>Funding type:</b>	Grant
<b>Total fund:</b>	£10,000,000
<b>Publication date:</b>	9 February 2021
<b>Opening date:</b>	3 March 2021
<b>Closing date:</b>	28 April 2021 16:00 UK time

*Last updated: 9 February 2021*

[Start application ►](#)

Apply for funding to investigate the causes, progression and treatment of human disease.

Your project must:

- include an experimental intervention or challenge in humans
- focus on addressing mechanistic questions
- be academically led.

You must be based at an eligible UK research organisation. In addition to our usual eligibility criteria, you can apply if you hold a fellowship or lectureship.

There is no limit to the amount of funding you can apply for or the length of your project.

We will fund 80% of your project's full economic cost.

This is an ongoing scheme with an annual budget of £10 million. Application rounds open every six months.

## Who can apply

You should be based at an eligible research organisation, which include:

- higher education institutions
- UKRI-approved independent research organisations or NHS bodies
- government-funded organisations
- MRC institutes
- MRC units and partnership institutes
- institutes and units funded by other research councils

Read more details on institutional and individual eligibility in our [general guidance for applicants \(PDF, 1MB\)](#).

Investigators in receipt of fellowships (MRC, National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), charity, learned societies) and NIHR lectureships are eligible, if their fellowship terms and conditions allow.

---

## What we're looking for

You can apply for academically-led experimental medicine projects that are conducted in humans, based round a clearly articulated gap in understanding of human pathophysiology and have a clear path to clinical impact.

These grants will produce new mechanistic insights, identifying opportunities to modify disease pathways and enabling novel therapeutic or diagnostic approaches for future development.

The panel welcomes all disease areas and interventions.

The application must involve an experimental intervention or challenge in humans, perturbing the system to explore disease mechanism. The challenge may be, but is not limited to:

- pharmacological
- immunological
- physiological
- psychological
- infectious.

The following types of proposals are eligible for support:

- the use of novel readouts or technologies especially related to early evaluation of clinical efficacy
- the use of drugs, other interventions or measures with established safety profiles in new settings or conditions, for example repurposing drugs as tool compounds to probe disease mechanism

- deep characterisation or phenotyping of subjects using samples from clinical studies where there is a clear link to a current treatment strategy but this should not be the sole focus of the proposal
  - acceptable approaches include the identification and verification of responder patient populations (precision medicine strategies).

Proposals which are predominantly descriptive will not be shortlisted. We expect an experimental approach, and a clear plan for establishing causal relationships and mechanisms.

The following activities are ineligible for support:

- characterisation or phenotyping work aiming to elucidate disease aetiology (supported by the [Research Boards](#))
- experimental intervention or challenge in animals, using clinical assets to explore disease mechanisms and pathways (supported by the [Research Boards](#))
- development and evaluation of novel therapeutics, diagnostics or devices (supported by [Developmental Pathway Funding Scheme](#))
- high-throughput screening approaches to target validation
- pre-clinical model development and validation (supported by the [Research Boards](#))
- clinical efficacy trials (supported by the [Efficacy and Mechanism Evaluation funding scheme](#)).

There is no limit to the amount of funding you can apply for or the length of your project. You should instead justify the timescale and resources needed in the context of the proposed work.

## Collaborations

Applications including partnerships with charities or industry are encouraged where these add value to the project, for example in terms of access to expertise, technologies, reagents or funding. Please note that industrial collaboration is not a prerequisite for application.

Applications involving collaboration with industry should adhere to the [MRC Industry Collaboration Agreement](#) guidance. The lead applicant must be the academic partner, and the project must be academically led. Please note that we do not fund the work of your industrial partners.

---

## How to apply

You must first submit an outline proposal via the Je-S website. The opportunity is open for eight weeks leading up to the deadline of 28 April 2021.

The next deadline for outline applications will be in September 2021.

When applying select:

- council: MRC

- document type: Outline Proposal
- scheme: Standard Outline
- call/type/mode: Experimental Medicine Out Apr 2021.

For your Je-S application you must use our [outline proposal form \(Word, 271KB\)](#).

BEfore you apply please read our [guidance for outline stage applicants \(PDF, 273KB\)](#).

If successful at the outline stage, you will be invited to submit a full application. We will send guidance on completing a full application.

We aim to complete the process from outline submission to full decision in approximately 30 weeks.

---

## How we will assess your application

Your application will be assessed in a two-stage process. Your outline proposal will first be considered by an independent panel of experts.

The panel will assess your proposal on the following criteria:

- fit to the call remit
- scientific rationale and potential impact
- research strategy and experimental design
- deliverability of the project.

If successful, you will be invited to submit a full proposal. This undergoes external peer review before a further and more detailed review by the panel. All applicants will receive feedback from the assessment process within eight weeks of the panel meeting.

---

## Contact details

General enquiries: [experimental.medicine@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:experimental.medicine@mrc.ukri.org)

---


## Additional info

### Supporting documents

[Case for support form \(Word, 271KB\)](#)

[Guidance for outline applicants \(PDF, 273KB\)](#)

## Timeline

- 
- 3 March 2021**  
Outline application opening date
  - 28 April 2021 16:00**  
Outline application closing date
  - 21 June 2021**  
Outline panel meeting

**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](#).