Develop guidance for better research methods

Opportunity status: Upcoming

Funders: Medical Research Council (MRC)

Co-funders: National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)

Funding type: Grant

Total fund: £120,000

Maximum award: £60,000

Publication date: 20 April 2021

Opening date: 8 May 2021

Closing date: 10 June 2021 16:00 UK time

Last updated: 20 April 2021

Apply for funding to develop new guidance on biomedical and health research methods.

The guidance should aim to:

- improve the understanding and use of better methods related to the remit of MRC or National Institute of Health Research (NIHR)
- be accessible to those without specialist methodology knowledge.

The lead applicant must have a postgraduate degree and be based at a UK research organisation eligible for UKRI funding.

Funding lasts 18 months and should typically support:

- background or scoping review
- consensus development
- open access publication
- production of other learning resources, if required.

The funding can cover direct costs at 100% full economic cost. Indirect costs are not eligible.
Who can apply

The lead applicant should be based at an eligible research organisation. These 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.

You must have a graduate degree, although we expect most applicants to have a PhD.

We recognise the diversity of skills necessary for a successful research team and encourage multidisciplinary teams or approaches.

We encourage applications from collaborative teams, which may include international co-investigators where additional impact can be justified.

Following an award, teams must begin the proposed work within six months to ensure that the resulting guidance for better methods retains its relevance as assessed when awarded.

What we're looking for

Gaps remain between the development of improved biomedical and health research methodologies, widespread awareness and uptake, and their recognition as best practice.

Where multiple methodologies are available, it can be difficult to understand when, where or how each methodology should be best applied.

This funding opportunity will support the development of guidance in priority areas of methodological uncertainty, with the aim of catalysing uptake of improved research methods.

Proposed guidance should allow others to navigate the methodological options available and provide frameworks to ensure the optimal research approach or approaches are used.

Any area of unmet methodological need within MRC or NIHR remit will be considered.

Guidance should be accessible and appropriate to inform:

- methodologists
- non-methodologist researchers
non-expert stakeholder groups, for example:
- funding bodies’ policy and decision-makers
- the public as required by the identified area of need.

The case for support should include:
- the need for guidance, including:
  - current literature
  - resources
  - methodological practice
- relevance of expertise of the applicant team
- methodology for identifying stakeholders, eliciting views and co-production of guidance
- proposed scope and format of consensus activities
- format of the proposed outputs and the dissemination strategy, including legacy plans
- risks and barriers to uptake
- the proposed project timeline.

Funds provided will support direct costs (100% full economic cost) of:
- background review or scoping activities
- consensus activities and workshop costs, including travel and subsistence, if applicable
- writing and open-access publication costs
- production of other learning resources, if appropriate.

Indirect costs are not eligible for funding.

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**How to apply**

You must apply through the [Joint Electronic Submission system (Je-S)](https://jes.ukri.org).

If you need help in applying, you can contact the Je-S help desk on 01793 444164 or by email [jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org).

When applying select:
- council: MRC
- document type: standard proposal
- scheme: research grant

Applications must include the following:
- completed proposal form
- case for support (maximum five pages)
- applicant CVs (principal investigator and co-investigators, maximum two pages each)
- applicant publication lists (principal investigator and co-investigators, maximum one page each)
- justification of resources, including a detailed table of costings (maximum three pages).

A data management plan is not required, unless instructed by the programme manager.

This programme is open once a year with a June deadline. The next deadline is 16:00 on 9 June 2022.

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**How we will assess your application**

Your proposal will be assessed via a two-stage peer review process. A triage panel will consider your application roughly one month before the full panel meeting.

Applications not declined by the triage panel will have two weeks to respond to external written peer review and any feedback from the triage panel.

We aim to communicate funding recommendations within one week of the full panel meeting.

Your application will be assessed on:

- the unmet need for methodological guidance in the proposed area
- strategic importance
- the approach or approaches for developing guidance
- project management, risk mitigation and decision-making approaches
- assurance of guidance resulting in clarity and wider implementation of methods
- value for money and impact.

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**Contact details**

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Programme Manager

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**Timeline**

8 May 2021
Opening date
10 June 2021
Closing date
23 to 24 November 2021
Panel review

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