Funding opportunity

Neurosciences and mental health research

Opportunity status:	Closed
Funders:	**Medical Research Council (MRC)**
Funding type:	Grant
Publication date:	21 December 2021
Opening date:	15 February 2023 9:00am UK time
Closing date:	24 May 2023 4:00pm UK time

> ⓘ MRC is preparing the **transition of responsive mode funding opportunities to the new UKRI Funding Service**. You may need to apply to the next round of this opportunity using the new service. Check this opportunity at the time the next round opens for confirmation on how to apply.

Apply for funding to support research projects focused on neurosciences and mental health.

You must:

- be a researcher employed at a research organisation eligible to apply for MRC funding
- have at least a postgraduate degree

You can involve more than 1 research group or institution in the project.

There is no limit to the funding you can apply for, but it should be appropriate to the project. We will usually fund up to 80% of your project's full economic cost.

Projects can last up to 5 years, but they typically last 3 to 4 years.

This is an ongoing scheme. Application rounds close every January, May and September.

Who can apply

Before applying for funding, check the following:

- **the MRC eligibility guidance for applicants**
- **the eligibility of your organisation**
- **your eligibility as an individual**

Who is eligible to apply

To be eligible to apply for this opportunity you must:

- be a researcher employed by an **eligible research organisation**
- have at least a postgraduate degree, although we expect most applicants to have a PhD or medical degree
- show that you will direct the project and be actively engaged in the work
- focus your application within the science area of population and system medicine

International applicants

You can include international co-investigators if they provide expertise not available in the UK. The inclusion of an international co-investigator must be discussed and agreed with the **relevant programme manager** before you submit the application to us.

Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

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

Read MRC's **guidance on flexible working and career breaks**. You can also find out more about **MRC's current EDI initiatives** and **EDI at UK Research and Innovation**.

What we're looking for

Scope

We're looking to fund research into neurosciences and mental health.

The neurosciences and mental health board funds research in:

- neurosciences
- mental health
- 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're 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
    - neuroinformatics

We encourage you to **contact us** first:

- to discuss your application
- for advice if you believe your research may cross MRC research board or research council interests
- if you would like to apply for a short or long-duration project

If your application fits another research board remit better, we may decide to transfer it there to be assessed.

MRC neuroscience 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

Project duration

We will fund projects lasting up to 5 years, although projects typically last 3 to 4 years. If your project will last more than 3 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 2 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.

What we will fund

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 and indirect costs

We will not fund

We will not consider request for costs such as:

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

Team project partner

Project partners can optionally be included with your application if they are providing support to your project with cash or in-kind contributions, such as:

- staff time
- access to equipment
- sites or facilities
- the provision of data
- software or materials

If you do include a project partner, you must provide a letter of support for each project partner you include within your application. If your application involves **industry partners**, they must provide a company letter of support if the team project partner falls within the **industry collaboration framework**.

Find out more about **subcontractors and dual roles**.

Who cannot be included as a team project partner

The individual named as the contact for the project partner organisation cannot also be named as staff.

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**.

International collaboration

If your application includes international applicants, project partners or collaborators, visit **Trusted Research** for more information on effective international collaboration.

How to apply

You must apply using the **Joint Electronic Submission (Je-S) system**.

You can find advice on completing your application in:

- the **Je-S handbook**
- the **MRC guidance for applicants**

You can submit to any 1 of the available deadlines in the year.

We do not expect you to submit more than 2 applications at the same time. We encourage you to focus on application quality, not the number you can submit. Read our **guidance for applicants about multiple applications**.

We recommend you start your application early.

Your host organisation will also be able to provide advice and guidance.

Creating and submitting your application

Before starting an application, you will need to log in or create an account in Je-S.

All investigators involved in the project need to be registered on Je-S.

Any investigators who do not have a Je-S account must register for one at least 7 working days before the funding opportunity deadline.

When applying:

1. Select 'documents', then 'new document'.
2. Select 'call search'.
3. To find the opportunity, search for: Research boards May 2023 submissions.

This will populate:

- council: MRC
- document type: Standard proposal
- scheme: Research grant
- call/type/mode: Research boards May 2023 submissions

Once you have completed your application, make sure you 'submit document'.

You can save completed details in Je-S at any time and return to continue your application later.

Deadline

MRC must receive your application by 24 May 2023 at 4:00pm UK time.

You will not be able to apply after this time. Please leave enough time for your application to pass through your organisation's Je-S submission route before this date.

You should ensure you are aware of and follow any internal institutional deadlines that may be in place.

Indicating your application is a research grant

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

What to include with your application

In addition to the Je-S application, you will also need to include the following mandatory attachments:

- a curriculum vitae (CV) for each named researcher, including investigators and named researchers. Each CV should not exceed 2 sides of A4
- publications (should not exceed 1 side of A4 per named person)
- a case for support, which length should not exceed:

  - 8 pages (for a project with a duration of 36 months or less)
  - 12 pages (for a project with a duration of 37 months or more)

- a justification of resources (should not exceed 2 sides of A4)
- a data management plan (DMP). Page length can vary, **see section 2.2.7 of our attachments guidance**. You must use the available **DMP template form**

If your research includes excess treatment costs of studies involving human participants you will need to include a schedule of events cost attribution template (SoECAT). For details and access to the SoECAT form see the **National Institute for Health and Care Research's information on excess treatment costs**.

If there will be a researcher co-investigator on your project you will need to include a statement of support for researcher co-investigators. This should not exceed 2 sides of A4 or equivalent on headed paper or a PDF of an email.

Optional attachments include:

- covering letter: this can be up to 2 sides of A4 using a sans-serif typeface (Arial or equivalent) and font size of 11pt

- letters of support: each letter should not exceed 2 sides of A4 or equivalent on headed paper or a PDF of an email

You can find full details of what to include in mandatory and optional attachments in **section 2.2 attachments guidance**.

Guidance for applicants

The **MRC guidance for applicants**:

- helps you check your eligibility
- guides you through preparing an application
- shows you how to prepare a case for support
- provides details of any ethical and regulatory requirements that may apply

Industrial partner information

If you want to include 1 or more industry partners as a project partner, you must also complete the **project partner section in Je-S**.

Each project partner must provide a project partner letter of support, which should not exceed 2 pages of A4 on headed paper or a PDF of an email. The letter must:

- be an integral part of the application
- focus on the application it accompanies which includes the requirement to include a project partner letter of support

Full details of the content the project partner should include in their letter of support, are provided in **section 2.2.6 of the MRC guidance for applicants**.

MRC industry collaboration framework

If your application involves the collaboration of 1 or more industrial partners, you should review the information published within the **MRC industry collaboration framework (ICF)** to decide if you should submit your application under the ICF.

After reading the ICF information, if you decide that your application will include industry collaboration, you will need to include the following within your application for each collaborating industry partner:

- **ICF form**
- **ICF company partner letter of support**

The completed ICF form should be uploaded to the Je-S attachments section using the 'MICA form' document type. Please type 'Industry Collaboration Framework form' in the description box.

The company letter of support must use the available template and be uploaded to the relevant project partner entry you are required to add to your Je-S application.

Research disruption caused by COVID-19 pandemic

You have the option to include a 1-page annex to the case for support. You can use it to provide additional information explaining any disruptions you have encountered to previous or current research, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (where relevant to your pending application).

For further information relating to the annex, please **see the MRC guidance for applicants (section 2.2.3.6)**.

How we will assess your application

Assessment process

We will assess your application using the following process.

Peer review

We will invite experts to review your application independently, against the specified criteria for this opportunity.

You can nominate up to 3 reviewers to comment on your application.

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

We will assess the importance of the questions, or gaps in knowledge, that are being addressed.

Scientific potential

We will assess what the prospects are for good scientific progress.

Resources requested

We will consider whether:

- funds requested are essential for the work
- importance and scientific potential justify funding on the scale requested
- proposal represents good value for money

For more information about our assessment criteria, **read our detailed assessment criteria**.

Shortlisting

We will review the comments and scores for each application. Shortlisted applications will go to a panel who will make a funding recommendation.

If your application is shortlisted, you will have 10 working days to respond to reviewers' comments.

Panel

Following peer review, we will invite a panel of experts to collectively review your application against the criteria and rank alongside other applications after which the panel will make a funding recommendation.

Timescale

We aim to complete the assessment process within 6 months of receiving your application.

Feedback

If your application was discussed by a panel and they provided feedback, this will be sent to you when we advise you of the outcome of your application.

Principles of assessment

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) supports the San Francisco **declaration on research assessment (DORA)** and recognises the relationship between research assessment and research integrity.

Find out about the **UKRI principles of assessment and decision making**.

Contact details

Get help with your application

For help on costings and writing your application, contact your research office. Allow enough time for your organisation's submission process.

Get help with science-related queries

For questions about the scientific aspects of your research proposal, or to ask which science area you should apply to, please **contact the relevant MRC programme manager**.

You can email the neurosciences and mental health board (NMHB) admin team if:

- you're not sure who you should contact
- you have a general query
- you do not receive a response to your email enquiry within 10 working days

Email: **nmhb@mrc.ukri.org**

Get help with applying through Je-S

Email

jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org

Telephone

01793 444164

Opening times

[Je-S helpdesk opening times](#)

Questions about eligibility

Read MRC's **[research organisation](#)** and **[applicant](#)** eligibility guidance. If you are still unsure whether you are eligible, contact **rfpd@mrc.ukri.org**

Additional info

Supporting links

[MRC policies and standards](#)

[UK Research and Innovation policies and standards](#)

[Good research resource hub](#)

[Data management plan template form](#)

Timeline

○ **15 February 2023 9:00am**
Opening date

○ **24 May 2023 4:00pm**
Closing date

○ **27 September 2023**
Shortlisting decision meeting

○ **8 to 9 November 2023**
Funding decision meeting

○ **Within 10 working days of funding decision meeting**
Informed of funding decision

○ **23 June to 21 September 2023**

Future round open for applications

○ **13 October 2023 to 24 January 2024**
Future round open for applications

○ **16 February to 22 May 2024**
Future round open for applications

Guidance on good research

Good research resource hub

https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/neurosciences-and-mental-health-research