Funding opportunity

Molecular and cellular medicine 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: 3 May 2023 4:00pm UK time

Timeline

- 15 February 2023 9:00am
  Opening date
- 3 May 2023 4:00pm
  Closing date
- 31 August 2023
  Shortlisting decision meeting
- 11 to 12 October 2023
  Funding decision meeting

Apply for funding to support research projects focused on molecular and cellular medicine.

You must:

- be a researcher employed by 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.

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.

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:

- Within 10 working days of funding decision meeting
  Informed of funding decision

- 23 June to 5 September 2023
  Future round open for applications

- 13 October 2023 to 9 January 2024
  Future round open for applications

- 16 February to 1 May 2024
  Future round open for applications

Guidance on good research

Good research resource hub
- 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 molecular and cellular 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 are looking to fund research in molecular and cellular medicine.

The molecular and cellular medicine board (MCMB) funds research into basic biological mechanisms or technologies relevant to human health and disease.

We aim to increase understanding of:

- the structure and function of molecules and complexes
- the cellular environment during development and mature states
- how biological systems respond to challenges (for example, drugs and toxins) and diseases

We lead MRC’s investments in cancer, from fundamental discovery science to epidemiology, experimental medicine and early translation.

Research focused on specific organ systems or diseases (with the exception of cancer and haematology) is normally supported through our other research boards.

We are looking to fund research in areas including, but not limited to:

- cell biology
- structural biology and biophysics
- molecular and functional genetics, epigenetics, genomics
- developmental and stem cell biology (excluding neurobiology)
- regenerative medicine
- molecular haematology
- development of new tools and technologies relevant to MCMB remit, such as:
  - nanotechnology
  - chemical biology
  - synthetic biology
- medical bioinformatics, including:
  - biostatistics
  - computational biology
  - systems biology
- cancer
- toxicology and adverse health effects of environmental exposures
- pharmacology

**MRC molecular and cellular medicine 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 1 research group or institution

We encourage you to [contact us first to discuss your application](#), and for advice if you believe your research may cross MRC research board or research council interests, or 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.
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.

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 the feasibility of an approach that could lead to fundamentally new avenues of research.

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

What we will not fund

We will not fund:

- research involving randomised trials of clinical treatments
- costs for PhD studentships
- publication costs
Team project partner

Project partners are optional, but can be included when 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 opportunity deadline.

When applying:

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 3 May 2023 at 4:00pm.

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 you wish to include 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).

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**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
- your application 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](https://www.sanfranciscodeclaration.org) and recognises the relationship between research assessment and research integrity.

Find out about the [UKRI principles of assessment and decision making](https://www.ukri.org/grants-and-funding/research-and-innovation-grants/how-to-enter/how-to-enter-uniformed-services-research-grants#principles).  

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**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 application, or to ask which science area you should apply to, please [contact the relevant MRC programme manager](https://www.mrc.ukri.org/about-us/contact-us).

You can email the molecular and cellular medicine board admin team, if you’re not sure who you should contact, you have a general query, or if you do not receive a response to your email enquiry within 10 working days, please email: [mcmb@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:mcmb@mrc.ukri.org).

**Get help with applying through Je-S**
Contact the Je-S helpdesk

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

Supporting documents

Data management plan template form

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https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/molecular-and-cellular-medicine-research