Funding opportunity

Clinician scientist fellowship

Opportunity status: Closed

Funders: Medical Research Council (MRC)

Funding type: Fellowship

Publication date: 21 January 2022

Opening date: 10 February 2023 9:00am UK time

Closing date: 5 April 2023 4:00pm UK time

Apply for funding to support your move to independent investigator in a medical research field.

Your research can focus on any area of MRC’s remit to improve human health.

You must:

- be a registered healthcare professional
- have a PhD or equivalent
- show evidence of career progression
- show clear plans for developing as a leader in your specialist area of research

Your research plans must not overlap with those of your current group leader or proposed sponsor.

There is no limit on the amount of funding you can apply for.

We will fund your salary and project costs for up to 5 years. We will fund 80% of the full economic cost.

You may also choose to apply for joint funding from one of the collaborating organisations.

This is an ongoing scheme. Application rounds open 3 times a year, closing in January, April and September.

MRC is preparing the transition of our funding opportunities to the new UKRI Funding Service.
Who can apply

You can apply if you are a registered healthcare professional. This includes, but is not limited to:

- nurses
- midwives
- allied health professionals
- healthcare scientists
- pharmacists
- clinical psychologists
- doctors
- dentists
- general practitioners
- veterinarians

Who is eligible

To be eligible for the clinician scientist fellowship, you must:

- have completed a PhD or equivalent
- have the skills and experience that match those of the ‘transition to independence’ career stage in the MRC applicant skills and experience criteria, such as showing evidence of career progression and productivity across past appointments
- have your own research plans that do not significantly overlap with those of your current group leaders or proposed sponsors
- have the support of an eligible research organisation

There are no eligibility rules based on years of postdoctoral experience.

You are not eligible to apply if you have previously held a comparable intermediate fellowship from any organisation.

Medical and dental graduates

Medical or dental graduates should have specialty registrar or consultant status, or be at the equivalent level in general practice.

If you have not completed your specialty training, you must have plans in place for doing so and have consulted your deanery before applying.

Non-medical healthcare professionals
For non-medical healthcare professionals, you must have completed your professional training.

**Veterinarians**

If you are a veterinarian, you may apply if you are a registered vet and a member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

Your proposed project must be relevant to human health.

**International applicants**

Proposals are welcomed from applicants of all nationalities, including those not currently based in the UK.

This is subject to the fellowship being hosted by an eligible research organisation.

You will need to be registered with a regulatory body, such as the General Medical Council or the Health and Care Professions Council or have plans in place to hold the required registration by the proposed award start date.

**Career breaks and flexible working**

We will take into account any career breaks, flexible working and changes in discipline when assessing your research experience and current track record.

Read our [guidance for reviewers on how to assess career breaks and flexible working](#).

MRC is supportive of applicants wishing to combine their research training with caring responsibilities.

All our fellowship awards may be held on a part-time basis or within flexible working arrangements.

Read our [policy on part-time and flexible working](#).

**Find out more**

Further information can be found in [guidance for fellowship applicants](#).

If you’re unsure whether you are eligible to apply, email [fellows@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:fellows@mrc.ukri.org) before beginning your application.

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**What we're looking for**

The aim of this scheme is to support talented clinically active healthcare professionals who have gained a higher research degree to:

- lead their own research plans
- establish their own research team
- make the transition to independent investigator

You must be able to:

- explain why a fellowship is the best way to support your long-term career goals and chosen career path to become an independent researcher, for example by identifying opportunities for learning new skills, professional development, and undertake training that will underpin your future career ambitions
- show ambitious and credible ideas for using the fellowship to enable a step-change in your career
- describe your experience of identifying and maximising potential in others, for example, through the day-to-day support of masters and PhD students or early career scientists
- show how your skills and experience match those of the transition to independence career stage in our [applicant skills and experience criteria](#)

We welcome applications from across all areas of MRC’s remit to improve human health.

This may range from basic studies with relevance to mechanisms of disease, to translational and developmental clinical research.

We expect your clinical work will help to inform and strengthen your research work.

MRC science areas include:

- infections and immunity
- molecular and cellular medicine
- population and systems medicine
- neurosciences and mental health
- translation
- global health
- methodology
- public health

[Explore MRC’s areas of scientific remit.](#)

We also welcome proposals for interdisciplinary approaches or research that will address global health issues and be of benefit to those living in low and middle-income countries.

**What the fellowship gives you**

The clinician scientist fellowship provides support for up to 5 years. We expect you to take advantage of the full 5 years’ funding available.

If you are intending to apply for a shorter period, you should contact the programme manager ([fellows@mrc.ukri.org](mailto:fellows@mrc.ukri.org)) before submitting a proposal. These periods are based on full-time equivalents.

Awards may be held on a part-time basis to meet personal commitments but not because of other professional commitments.
We expect you to take up your fellowship no more than 6 months after the date of the review meeting.

This fellowship scheme provides a competitive salary, giving you the chance to concentrate fully on your research, training and development. You may:

- spend up to 6 hours a week (pro-rated for part-time fellowships) on other commitments such as teaching, demonstrating, or other funded projects
- undertake up to 2 clinical sessions a week

Read MRC’s guidance on research staff development.

For surgeons and fellows undertaking patient-oriented projects where the clinical sessions will be of direct relevance to the research, applicants may undertake up to 4 clinical sessions a week.

We may allow greater flexibility on the time dedicated to non-fellowship activities (for example, those detailed above or obtaining grant support) during the second half of a fellowship.

Email the programme manager at fellows@mrc.ukri.org to discuss your plans.

Find out more about what to expect as an MRC fellow.

Funding available

The clinician scientist fellowship award will cover the full cost of your salary, as well as:

- research staff costs
- consumables expenses
- travel costs
- appropriate capital equipment

This award will also support a period of research overseas, at a second UK institution or within industry, whichever is most appropriate.

We encourage successful applicants to take advantage of the opportunities this will provide to develop collaborative networks and establish cross-sector development.

There is no limit to the amount of funding you can request under this scheme.

Requests must be appropriate to the project and you must be able to justify the amount you need to meet the objectives of your research proposal.

Awards are made under the full economic costing framework.

MRC will typically fund 80% of the full economic cost. The research organisation must agree to find the balance of full economic cost from other resources.

You cannot hold a salaried position and a fellowship at the same time. If you are awarded a fellowship, you may need to change to a proleptic appointment.
If you want to retain an existing position and combine this with research funding, we recommend you look at one of our grant scheme funding opportunities instead.

**Search MRC grant funding opportunities.**

**Joint funders**

MRC collaborates with royal colleges and charity funders to offer jointly-funded clinician scientist fellowships.

These awards offer the prestige of having the relevant organisation co-fund your fellowship and may offer additional opportunities to report on your project, present your work at meetings and take part in professional networking.

We are inviting applications for the following jointly-funded clinician scientist fellowship schemes.

**Blood Cancer UK**

Blood Cancer UK is a community dedicated to beating blood cancer by funding research and supporting those affected.

Since 1960, we've invested over £500 million in blood cancer research, transforming treatments and saving lives.

We welcome applications from clinicians and non-clinical academics in any area of blood cancer research.

We offer joint funding opportunities with MRC administered through the clinician scientist fellowship and career development award schemes.

If you have any questions about the fellowship, please contact our research team via research@bloodcancer.org.uk or take a look at the [Blood Cancer UK website](#) funding schemes.

For further information on the charity and its work please visit [Blood Cancer UK’s website](#).

**DEBRA**

Each year, 1 clinical scientist fellowship will be awarded jointly by MRC and DEBRA.

DEBRA is the largest UK funder of epidermolysis bullosa (EB) research. To support continued growth of EB research, we are committed to building a strong community of highly trained, innovative researchers with a clear career pathway into and through EB research.

DEBRA will be there to provide support at every stage: to attract, retain and support existing researchers and to bring new researchers into the field. This will ensure we inspire the next generation of EB researchers to become leaders of a future where no one suffers with EB.
Our new strategy puts patient outputs front and centre, with a focus on translational research that will have a positive impact on those with EB today. Our ambition is to find and fund treatments to lessen the day-to-day impact of EB, and cures to eradicate EB.

If you wish to discuss the fellowship or your proposed research area, please contact Dr Sagair Hussain, Director of Research at DEBRA: sagair.hussain@debra.org.uk

For more information about the charity and our research strategy visit the DEBRA website.

**Diabetes UK**

Diabetes UK is leading the fight against the UK’s biggest and growing health crisis. Our vision is a world where diabetes can do no harm and we fight diabetes through support, information, campaigning and research. As part of our research ambitions, we’re committed to attracting new research talent and retaining expertise so that we are growing the next generation of the future leaders.

We are partnering with MRC on a suite of research training fellowships to help grow investment in diabetes research careers. These include:

- clinical research training fellowship
- clinical scientist fellowship
- senior clinical fellowship
- career development award
- senior non-clinical fellowship

We will jointly fund up to 1 fellowship annually across these funding schemes. We will consider high quality applications into any aspect of diabetes and its related complications.

For further information regarding the charity’s work, including the research strategy, please visit the Diabetes UK website.

**Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA)**

MNDA’s Lady Edith Wolfson fellowships aim to support clinicians wishing to pursue research into the pathogenesis and treatment of motor neuron disease.

Awards under this scheme are available for clinical research training fellowships, senior clinical fellowships and clinician scientists fellowships.

If you have any questions about the fellowship or your proposed research area, please contact our director of research development, Dr Brian Dickie at brian.dickie@mndassociation.org

For further information, visit MNDA fellowships.

**MRC-Kidney Research UK Professor David Kerr clinician scientist award**
Kidney Research UK is the leading medical research charity that funds research dedicated to deliver change for people affected by kidney disease. Under this joint funding initiative, awards will be given to those whose research will help us drive forward our research strategy.

This award supports clinicians who have already achieved a higher degree. Kidney Research UK and MRC will co-fund successful applicants. The award will be offered in the tri-annual MRC clinician scientist funding rounds.

We offer joint funding opportunities with MRC administered through the clinical research training fellowship, clinician scientist fellowship and career development award schemes.

Successful applicants will also be able to attend Kidney Research UK’s annual Driving Discoveries event.

For further information about this award, contact:

Elaine Davies, Director of Research Operations
Email: elainedavies@kidneyresearchuk.org

Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH)

Founded in 1996 and now with about 17,500 members across the world, RCPCH trains and educates paediatricians throughout their careers to the highest professional standards.

It also promotes research and child health policy in the UK and worldwide.

Its mission is to transform child health through knowledge, innovation and expertise. Its vision is a healthier future for children and young people across the world.

The Children’s Research Fund has been established to grow child health research capacity in the UK and to reverse the decline in the number of paediatric academics and researchers.

We welcome applications from clinicians and non-clinical academics in any area of child health research.

We offer joint funding opportunities with the MRC administered through the clinical research training fellowship, clinician scientist fellowship and career development award schemes.

For further information on the charity and its work:

- visit RCPCH
- email research@rcpch.ac.uk

How to apply
Before applying, you should read the information on the application process in the **guidance for MRC fellowship applicants**.

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

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

When applying, select ‘new document’, then:

- council: MRC
- document type: fellowship proposal
- scheme: fellowships, FEC
- call: clinician scientist fellowship April 2023

You can find advice on completing your application in the **Je-S handbook**.

Your host organisation will be able to provide advice and guidance on completing your application.

The clinical research training fellowship award opens 3 times a year, closing in:

- January
- April
- September

If you need advice on your suitability for an MRC fellowship scheme, email your CV using the **fellowship CV template**, to fellows@mrc.ukri.org

You must also include:

- a 1 page project outline
- list of your publications
- description of how you meet the **skills and experience needed for this scheme**

**Resubmissions and other applications**

You may apply to any MRC fellowship scheme no more than twice, even if your application changes. You should allow at least a year between submissions whether applying to the same or a different scheme.

You are allowed to apply for fellowship funding from other funders or research organisations at the same time. However, you may not have simultaneous fellowship applications under consideration by MRC and UK Research and Innovation fellowship schemes.

You must list any current applications in the ‘other support’ section of the Je-S form and mention your MRC application in any applications to other funders. For further information, see **section 2.8 of the guidance for MRC fellowship applicants**.

If you want to reapply within a year, you should request permission from the relevant programme manager before resubmission by emailing
Applying for a jointly funded fellowship

To apply for joint funding, your application must include the jointly-funded fellowship form.

Joint-funding does not alter the assessment process. We will offer all jointly funded fellowships under standard MRC terms and conditions, except where the co-funder has specified extra terms and conditions.

If you apply for a jointly funded award that is not available for any reason, we will automatically consider you for a standard MRC fellowship instead.

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, a maximum of 2 pages 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 one 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.

Further guidance

For more information on the application process, see:

- the grant application checklist: eight checks to do before you submit
How we will assess your application

When we receive your application, we will check it to make sure it is within remit. It will then be peer reviewed by at least 3 independent experts from the UK and overseas.

You can nominate up to 3 independent reviewers. We will invite only one to assess your application or we may decide not to approach any of your nominated reviewers.

Criteria

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 assess what the prospects are for good scientific progress.

Resources requested

We will consider whether the funds requested are essential for the work, and whether the importance and scientific potential justify funding on the scale requested.

We will also assess whether the proposal represents good value for money.

Further information related to our assessment criteria

For more information about our assessment criteria, read our detailed assessment criteria for each fellowship type.

Decision

A sub-committee of members of the clinical training and career development panel will review these scores and comments at a shortlisting meeting.

We continue with the highest-quality applications with greatest potential to be funded.

If your application passes the shortlisting stage, we will invite you to interview and send you copies of the external reviewers' comments.
Interviews with the clinical training and career development panel will usually last 30 minutes.

We will contribute towards the cost of your return travel, modest subsistence costs and reasonable additional family care costs.

**Feedback**

We will let you know as soon as possible after we have made a final decision about your application. This is usually within 5 working days of your interview.

If you reach the interview stage, we will send you feedback and let you know the reasons for the panel's decision.

If you are not invited to interview, we will send you copies of the external reviewers' comments.

We aim to make a decision within 6 months of receiving your application.

Find out more about the [MRC fellowship assessment process](#).

Read an [overview of the MRC peer review process](#).

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**Contact details**

**Get help with your application**

For help and advice on costings and writing your application please contact your research office in the first instance, allowing sufficient time for your organisation’s submission process.

**Ask about this funding opportunity**

Email: fellows@mrc.ukri.org

Include ‘CSF’ in the subject line.

We aim to respond within ‘10’ working days.

**Get help with applying through Je-S**

**Email**

jeshelp@je-s.ukri.org

**Telephone**

01793 444164

**Opening times**
The Global Talent visa

Clinician scientist fellowship holders are eligible for a Global Talent visa under the ‘exceptional promise’ category for future research leaders.

Find out about the Global Talent visa.

Differences between a clinician scientist fellowship and a new investigator research grant (NIRG)

The NIRG aims to support individuals seeking to transition to independence through their first grant as a principal investigator and clear host institution support.

The time spent on the NIRG should be combined with a portfolio of other activities, such as, but not limited to:

- teaching
- administration duties
- other time spent in faculty
- time spent on other research grants
- clinical duties

A clinician scientist fellowship is a personal award that aims to support individuals seeking to transition to independence through protected research time and an ambitious programme of research training and personal career development.

You cannot apply concurrently for a clinician scientist fellowship and a NIRG. Given both awards support the transition to independence, you cannot apply for a NIRG if you have held a clinician scientist fellowship and vice versa.

Supporting guidance

Guidance for MRC fellowship applicants
Guidance for reviewers on career breaks and flexible working
Guidance on attachments, including the data management plan
Guidance on NHS costs

Supporting documents

MRC fellowships CV template
Jointly-funded fellowship form
Timeline

- **10 February 2023 9:00am**
  Opening date

- **5 April 2023 4:00pm**
  Closing date

- **October 2023**
  Shortlisting decision meeting

- **15 to 16 November 2023**
  Funding decision meeting

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

- **21 July 2023 to 6 September 2023**
  Future round open for applications

- **13 October 2023 to 11 January 2024**
  Future round open for applications

- **9 February 2024 to 3 April 2024**
  Future round open for applications

Guidance on good research

Good research resource hub