

# Preparing a research grant application

We only fund the best quality research so that every penny donated towards research will benefit people with Parkinson's. We receive a high volume of applications in each grant round, so it's vital that you make your application stand out from the crowd. Below are some tips and pitfalls to avoid when preparing your grant application to give yourself the best chance of success.

## Make a good first impression

- Read the 'Information for applicants' document for the appropriate grant scheme.
- Read the Parkinson's UK research grant terms and conditions – make sure your requests are allowable by Parkinson's UK.
- Give all the information required in the correct format - Arial typescript, size 11pt.
- Ask at least one independent person to proofread your application – reviewers dislike typographical and grammatical errors.
- Ensure figures make sense and are correctly referenced in the text.
- Make sure everything in your research proposal is correctly referenced.
- Even if your ideas are excellent, a badly presented application may make reviewers wonder if this is an indication of how the research will be conducted.

## Patient and Public Involvement

- You can use [Patient and Public Involvement \(PPI\)](#) in research is when researchers and people affected by Parkinson's work in partnership. This could include identifying the most important research questions, helping you to design your research and planning how to disseminate your findings.
- Parkinson's UK offers researchers the opportunity to seek the input of people affected by Parkinson's prior to applying for funding. For example, one form of PPI is working with people affected by Parkinson's to ensure the plain English summary for your research proposal is the best it can be. This is important as, as well as being reviewed by our scientific panel, your proposal will also be scored by our lay grant reviewers, who bring the unique and valuable perspective of people affected by Parkinson's into the funding decisions made by Parkinson's UK.
- See our [Patient and Public Involvement Guidance for researchers](#) for more information and get in touch with the team for support with PPI at [researchinvolvement@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:researchinvolvement@parkinsons.org.uk).

## Write a good plain English summary

- Lay grant reviewers may have considerable personal experience but little specialised scientific knowledge, so it is important that you think carefully about your lay reader when writing your plain English summary.
  - The plain English summary must accurately reflect the research proposal and scientific abstract. Applicants should be realistic about the potential outcomes of their research and the likely timescales involved.
  - Avoid using jargon, abbreviations and technical terms wherever possible – if you have to use them provide a clear explanation.
  - Include a good glossary.
  - Avoid complicated English or uncommon words.
  - Avoid elaborate explanations of 'what is Parkinson's'. They are very likely to know a lot about this and want to know about the particular research project.
  - Use active not passive phrases, for example say 'we will do it' rather than 'it will be done by us'.
  - Keep sentences short - try not to use more than 15 to 20 words per sentence.
  - Break up the text, for example by using bullet point lists.
  - Ask someone without a scientific background to read your draft and advise if anything is unclear.
  - If your study involves participants, ensure you have included details of what will be involved for them and how they will be supported.
- You can find more tips on writing a good plain English summary on the [Make it Clear campaign website](#).

### **Clearly demonstrate how your research relates to Parkinson's**

- Parkinson's UK only supports research into Parkinson's. We want to fund research that has the greatest chance of improving the lives of people with Parkinson's.
- Applications at the 'pure science' stage must clearly demonstrate how their research relates to Parkinson's and how it could provide valuable insights for future research.
- Peer and lay reviewers have a lot of knowledge of Parkinson's and will usually have considered many applications over the years. They expect applicants to demonstrate a good understanding of Parkinson's. Applicants whose expertise and publications record primarily relates to another field should seek to collaborate with relevant experts in Parkinson's and people affected by Parkinson's where necessary.
- Parkinson's UK will consider applications which may provide insights into a number of neurodegenerative conditions, but again you will need to show the particular relevance to Parkinson's.

### **Ensure your research proposal is clear and logical**

- Make sure your hypotheses are clear and firm and are reflected clearly in the methodology.
- Show how the various experiments and stages of proposed research relate to each other.
- Give clear information on what the outcome measures will be.
- Identify and address any potential challenges or pitfalls – what will you do if your first proposed experiment doesn't result in the outcome you expected? Or if you have challenges with recruitment or retention of participants?
- Provide sufficient detail on the experiments and how they will be carried out to show your understanding of what you're doing.
- Give realistic sample sizes and power calculations based on evidence.
- Clearly describe the future clinical benefits and timescales of practical improvements that could result from the research.
- Ensure your application includes details of how the results of your research will be made available to others.