

Project grants - information for applicants

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
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FIND A CURE.
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Parkinson's UK is the largest member-led charitable funder of Parkinson's research in Europe. So far, we've invested more than £85 million in ground-breaking research.

Purpose and scope

- Our [project grant scheme](#) tackles major research challenges. Funding is awarded for projects designed to answer a single question or a small group of related questions.
- The duration of a project grant is for a maximum of three years.
- There is no fixed maximum value for project grants, however, the cost of applications is usually between £100,000 and £400,000.
- We're keen to receive applications from researchers working across all fields of Parkinson's research.
- Funding for cohort studies is not available through this grant scheme. Please see our [website](#) for information on how we fund these types of studies.
- Drug discovery projects with solid target validation and identified early-stage chemical leads/hit-finding campaign, or early clinical stage drug trials may be considered for funding through the Parkinson's UK [Virtual Biotech Programme](#). Before making an application in this area, please contact the team on researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk.

Eligibility

- Grants are tenable at a UK university, NHS trust, statutory social care organisation or other research institution.
- Principal applicants should hold employment or honorary (if a clinical academic) contracts with the host institution that extend beyond the period of the grant.
- Applicants may be new to Parkinson's research.
- Co-applicants and collaborators may be based at institutions outside the UK and / or at pharmaceutical or biotech companies.
- Applicants should read [Research grant terms and conditions](#) before completing the application form.

Application procedure

- There is one application deadline per year in February, and applicants will receive funding decisions by the beginning of August. Closing dates for pre-proposal and full proposals can be found on the Parkinson's UK available [grants programmes pages](#). Application is by a two stage process, consisting of a pre-proposal and a subsequent full proposal. The full proposal stage is by invitation only for those applicants who have passed independent scientific and lay peer review at the preproposal stage. The pre-proposal application form can be obtained by contacting researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk.
- All applications must be made in English.
- Full grant applications to Parkinson's UK are made through the charity's [online grant application system](#).
- Applicants are not required to submit a hard copy application.
- In order to avoid formatting problems, text from other documents should be pasted into Notepad (or similar programme) before being copied into the application form.
- Details of any collaboration should be included and a letter confirming agreement from each collaborator should be submitted.
- If the project includes work with patients please ensure a letter of written support is supplied from a clinical collaborator.

- Any relevant 'in press' articles should be attached as appendices.
- Applicants will receive a confirmatory e-mail from the Research Grants Office at Parkinson's UK when a pre-proposal has been received.
- Applicants will receive confirmation from the online applications system once a full grant application is submitted. Unless the charity requires further information, no correspondence will be entered into until the results are notified. Applicants are requested not to initiate contact with the Research team during the review process.

Costing the full application

- Please include the relevant information for your plain English summary including a lay abstract, project background and impact. The scientific research proposal should include the following information: background and plan of investigation which should explicitly cover study design, methods of data collection analysis and time schedule.
- Applicants must justify the funds requested.
- The research budget in the pre-proposal should be realistic and be within $\pm 10\%$ of the allowable costing in the full application. Please note, costings at this stage do not need institutional approval.
- Applicants who are successful at the pre-proposal stage will be asked to submit a full application.
- Applicants must apply for funding in British pounds sterling.
- Applicants should seek the advice of their institution's Finance or Research Office on costing the full application well in advance of the application deadline. Online submissions of the application are sent directly to Parkinson's UK.
- In line with the Association of Medical Research Charities guidelines, Parkinson's UK will only reimburse directly incurred research costs for awarded grants as per the application submitted. **Please read our [guidance on research costs](#).**
- **Staff costs:** Basic salary should be stated for each individual. Provision for London weighting, superannuation and National Insurance should be shown separately in the space provided. An appropriate grading and salary must be quoted even where a named assistant cannot be specified; both grading and salary should have the approval of the appropriate administrative officer of the institution where the assistant would be employed. If appropriate, applicants can apply for support costs for PhD students.
- **Research expenses:** Details must be given. Project grants do not cover administrative expenses, costs for attending conferences or publishing costs. Please see our guidance on [open access publishing](#).
- **Animals:** The species, number and unit cost of all animals must be shown.
- **Biological materials (such as human tissue or cell lines):** Please specify.
- **Equipment:** Please specify each piece of equipment requested.
- **Inflation:** Inflation will not be paid in year one; inflation in years two and three is allowable up to 3%.

Review procedure

- Pre-proposals will be independently peer reviewed by three members of our external [College of Experts](#).
- Full applications will be independently peer reviewed by three members of our external [College of Experts](#) and at least four lay grant reviewers.
- All applications are reviewed using a ten point system, with 0=Unfundable and 10=Highly fundable/Highly competitive at International Standard.
- Applicants submitting pre-proposals with substantive scientific merit will simply receive an e-mail notification inviting them to submit a full application.
- Applicants submitting pre-proposals which lack scientific merit will receive an e-mail stating they are not being invited to submit a full proposal and a brief statement why they have been unsuccessful at this stage.
- Full application submissions will undergo an initial assessment of the plain English language sections to see whether the appropriate level of lay language is used and gives a realistic representation of scientific sections of the project in terms of potential outcomes and timescales. If the lay language sections are unsuitable you will be notified by the Research Grants Team that your application has been

withdrawn and that you have two weeks to re-submit an application with an improved plain English sections.

- For full applications the mean peer review scores from both the scientific College of Experts and lay reviewers will be utilised to identify a shortlist of highly ranked applications for further discussion at a panel meeting.
- Feedback from lay and College of Expert peer reviewers will be sent to principal applicants of shortlisted applications for review. Applicants will have at least one week to reply to the queries raised or provide clarification. Principal applicants will receive an email alerting them to the timing of the 'right-to-reply' period.
- The review panel of scientists from the College of Experts and lay members will discuss and identify applications which they recommend for funding to the Parkinson's UK Chief Executive Officer.
- Applications which involve non-human primates, cats, dogs or equines will be sent for additional expert 3Rs review by the [NC3Rs](#).
- Applications will be judged by three scientific members of the College of Experts against the following criteria:
 - importance and relevance of the research
 - potential impact of the research for people affected by Parkinson's
 - scientific quality of the proposal
 - quality of the researcher and team
 - value for money
 - budget and infrastructure
- A good plain English summary is essential for evaluation by lay grant reviewers (please see p4) who will judge applications against the following criteria:
 - the importance and relevance of the research for people affected by Parkinson's
 - the potential benefit of the research for people affected by Parkinson's
 - if the proposed research involves human participants, whether they think people would be likely to take part

Unsuccessful applications

- Pre-proposal applications that are unsuccessful will receive brief feedback comments from scientific members of the College of Experts and lay review.
- Full applications that are unsuccessful will be provided with comments from the combined reports of the College of Experts scientific peer and lay grant reviewers, and the review meeting discussions. No further discussion with Parkinson's UK staff or the College of Experts is allowed.

If you have further questions about making an application, please contact the Research team.

Email: researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk
Call: 020 7963 3950 or 020 7963 9376

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.

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.