Information for applicants: Drug accelerator awards

Parkinson's UK is the largest charitable funder of Parkinson's research in Europe. So far, we've invested more than £120 million in ground-breaking research.

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1. Purpose and scope

We're looking to fund projects that will push research forward with the aim of bringing new drugs to people with Parkinson's in the future. This funding will help teams generate the essential data and bridge the data gaps to help progress their novel drug down the drug discovery pipeline. This could be through biotech, pharmaceutical industry or other funding agencies such as the Parkinson's Virtual Biotech programme.

We're looking to attract applications from pioneering scientists from UK academic centres or small biotechs with exciting new ideas for developing drugs, who need further funding and technical assistance from our drug discovery team to develop their ideas. This new funding scheme will help bridge the gaps in their data package and accelerate the transition into a full drug development programme.

- The duration of a Drug Accelerator Award is between 12 to 18 months.
- There will be two grant rounds a year
- There is no minimum value for the Drug Accelerator Award, however, the maximum cost of applications is up to £150,000.

- For projects involving *in vivo* work, an award amount of up to £200,000 will be considered.
- If you have any queries on making an application in this area, please contact the team on researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk.

2. Eligibility

- Applicants should read the relevant documents before completing the application form:
  - Drug accelerator award grant academic terms and conditions
  - Drug accelerator award grant commercial terms and conditions
  - Drug accelerator award grant cost guidance
- Grants are tenable for academics based at a UK university, NHS trust, or other UK research institution or small biotech (which may be based outside the UK).
- The principal applicant must have a permanent contract (honorary contract for clinicians) within their institution or a senior position in a biotech that extends beyond the period of the grant.
- Principal applicants (as the grantholder) will be responsible for the intellectual leadership and overall management of the grant. Principal applicants must have the relevant skills and experience to carry out this role.
- Principal applicants who are funded by a fellowship must hold a senior level fellowship (a fellowship that has been extended beyond an initial 3 year term), and provide a letter of support for their application from the host institution. Individuals who hold a junior level fellowship (that is still within its initial 3 years) are not eligible to apply as a principal applicant. Applicants should contact the Research grants team if they are unsure whether their fellowship is of a suitable level that makes them eligible to this scheme.
- Only one principal applicant can be listed on a drug accelerator award grant application.
- Applicants may be new to Parkinson's research, but must have relevant Parkinson's experience within the proposed project team.
- Applicants may have previously spent time away from research (for example a career break, maternity / paternity leave, or long-term sick leave). Our reviewers will allow for this when the application is considered.
- A co-applicant is a person who will assist the grantholder (the principal applicant) in the management and leadership of the grant. Co-applicants must have the relevant skills and experience to carry out this role.
- Applicants must demonstrate that they have incorporated the appropriate roles and balance of expertise / experience to successfully undertake the project.
- Please make sure you include all co-applicants and collaborators on your preproposal that would be included in a full application. Additional collaborators may only be added at the full application stage in response to suggestions from the reviewers
- Co-applicants and collaborators may be based at institutions outside the UK and / or at pharmaceutical or biotech companies. There is no upper limit to the number of co-applicants / collaborators that can be added to an application.

- Applicants are also expected to ensure that they create a suitably diverse research team, taking into account issues such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief. They will be asked to justify the team makeup in the application.

3. Application scope and eligibility

Laboratory work can run in academic laboratories with a strong track record in the proposed techniques or at contract research organisations. This is not an exhaustive list but if you are unsure whether your project is suitable for the grant call contact: researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk

Eligible projects could consist of the following approaches or combination of approaches:

- Generation of target engagement and neuroprotection efficacy data in highly characterised relevant *in vitro* models of Parkinson's, particularly patient derived cell lines.
- *In vitro* mechanistic studies to validate mechanism of action, for example utilising target knock-out/knock-down approaches.
- Generation of target engagement and neuroprotection efficacy data in highly characterised relevant *in vivo* models of Parkinson's, particularly alpha-synuclein based models.
- Replication of key datasets in independent research facilities to support the robustness of the drug approach.
- Rodent *in vivo* pharmacokinetic studies to generate data on the ability of the test compound to penetrate into the brain in sufficient concentrations for target engagement and its metabolic fate.
- Off target safety screening.
- De-risking strategies - such as genetox, selectivity screening.
- Further development of existing assays to show their suitability for a screening programme.
- *In vitro* profiling of existing compounds to show scope for further optimisation.

Examples of ineligible projects:

- Broad screens to identify new targets
- Development of novel drug delivery approaches
- Repurposing of existing drugs
- Reformulation of existing drugs
- Preclinical development studies to initiate clinical trials (e.g. bulk synthesis/manufacture to GMP, toxicology etc.)
- Development of biologics are generally not in the remit. Exceptions to this - please approach us to discuss further.

4. Application procedure

- All applications must be made in English.
- Applications will be submitted via a 2 stage process, with a preproposal and a full application stage Applications will be reviewed on 4 key criteria:
    - importance and relevance of the research to people living with Parkinson's
    - preliminary evidence of validation of drug target for Parkinson's
    - pilot data demonstrating target engagement/efficacy
    - a clear plan for the commercial development of the drug if the research is successful
- Closing dates for preproposal and full proposals can be found on Parkinson's UK website. Deadlines may be subject to change. Any changes will be shared widely via the charity website and relevant newsletters.
- The full proposal stage is by invitation only for those applicants who have passed scientific review at the preproposal stage.
- Both preproposal and full grant applications to Parkinson's UK are made through the charity's online grant application system.
- Applicants will receive confirmation by email from the online grant applications system once a grant application is submitted.
- Applicants are not required to submit a hard copy application.
- Details of any collaboration should be included and a letter confirming agreement from each collaborator should be submitted.
- Any relevant 'in press' articles should be attached as appendices.
- Covering letters are not required.
- Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools - when developing proposals, applicants must ensure that any generative AI tools they utilise are used responsibly and in accordance with relevant legal and ethical standards where these exist (or as they develop). Any outputs from generative AI tools in applications should be acknowledged.
- 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.
- Please include the relevant information for your plain English summary including a lay abstract, project background and impact. Please ensure that the potential benefits and timescales for when the proposed research may benefit people affected by Parkinson's are realistic and not overinflated.
- 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 are also expected to ensure that they create a suitably diverse research team, taking into account issues such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, where appropriate They will be asked to justify the team makeup in the application.

5. Costing the application

- Applicants must justify the funds requested.
- The research budget in the preproposal should be realistic and be within ±10% of the allowable costing in the full application. Please note, costings at this stage do not need formal institutional/company approval.
- Applicants who are successful at the preproposal stage will be invited to submit a full application.
- Applicants must apply for funding in British pounds sterling.
- Applicants should seek the advice of their institution's/company Finance or Research Office on costing the 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 the grading and salary should have the approval of the appropriate administrative officer of the institution where the assistant would be employed. Parkinson's UK will not pay salaries for principal investigators, co-applicants or collaborators named on the funding applications unless their salaries are dependent on grant funding. In these cases the charity would require a letter from the Institute confirming this to be included in the appendices at both the preproposal and full application stage.
- **Research expenses:** A detailed breakdown of intended expenditure must be given.
- **Open access publications:** Costs related to open access publishing may be included. Please see our guidance on open access publishing. The costs requested must be fully justified.
- **Animals:** The species, number and unit cost of all animals must be shown. Please also see our policy on the use of animals in research.
- **Biological materials (such as human tissue or cell lines):** Please specify the type of tissue or cell lines involved.
- **Patient and public involvement (PPI):** If appropriate, you may include costs for any planned patient and public involvement (PPI) activities in your application for all types of research projects, for example travel expenses for a face-to-face meeting. Please see our PPI guidance on how to involve patients and the public in your research in a meaningful way.
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI): If appropriate,** you may also include costs for any planned activities in relation to EDI, for example consultation with an EDI specialist on delivery support and advice. Please see our Race Equality in Research project webpage for guidance on how to think more about ethnicity and inclusion when planning and designing your research.
- **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%. In the financial schedule of the application form, inflation should be shown separately from the research costs. The research costs should be entered into the application form excluding inflation. The level of inflation requested for years two and three can then be added separately for the 'Salaries and related costs', 'Research expenses' and 'Equipment' sections (applicants can select none, 1%, 2% or 3%). The inflation will be calculated automatically at this rate and the correct amounts will be added on to the costs as a separate 'Inflation' line in the table.

6. Review procedure

- Preproposals will be reviewed and triaged by an in-house panel of experts.
- Full applications will be reviewed by a grants panel of industrial, academic, Parkinson's UK experts and people affected by Parkinson's. The panel will make recommendations for funding to the charity.
- All applications are reviewed using a ten point system, with 0=Unfundable and 10=Highly fundable/Highly competitive at International Standard. **(see Appendix)**
- Applicants submitting preproposals with substantive scientific merit and deemed likely to have a meaningful and translatable impact on the lives of people affected by Parkinson's, will receive an e-mail notification inviting them to submit a full application.
- Applicants submitting preproposals which lack scientific merit, are out of scope and or lack potential impact for people affected by Parkinson's, will receive an email stating they are not being invited to submit a full proposal and a brief statement why they have been unsuccessful at this stage
- Feedback from the grants panel of industrial, academic, Parkinson's UK experts and people affected by Parkinson's will be sent to principal applicants of shortlisted applications for review at the panel meeting. Applicants will have at least one week to reply to the queries raised or provide clarification. 'Right-to-reply' responses from applicants should be no longer than one side of A4. Principal applicants will receive an email alerting them to the timing of the 'right-to-reply' period.
- For full applications, the mean review scores from the grants panel will be used to identify a small shortlist of highly ranked applications for discussion at the panel meeting.
- Unsuccessful applicants at the full application stage will receive brief feedback from the grants panel as to why they were unsuccessful.
- Successful applicants will be given feedback from the panel meeting and the opportunity to respond and develop areas of the application, with input from appropriate experts as necessary. Funding may be awarded on the condition that particular areas of the application are developed as suggested by the funding panel.
- Successful applicants (grantholders) will submit a short progress interim report and a final report upon completion of the project, detailing results of the research against project milestones as per the Parkinson's UK research grants terms and conditions. Reports will be reviewed by an in-house panel of experts. Comments will be fed back to the grantholder who will be required to respond to them and make amendments to the study as appropriate. Grantholders will be asked to attend a virtual meeting at the interim stage and the end of the project.

- Applications will be judged by the grants panel members against the following criteria:
    - importance and relevance of the research to people living with Parkinson’s
    - preliminary evidence of validation of drug target for Parkinson’s
    - robust pilot data demonstrating target engagement/efficacy
    - scientific quality of the proposal
    - clear plan for the commercial development of the drug if the research is successful
    - quality of the researcher and team
    - value for money
    - budget and infrastructure

- A good plain English summary is essential to communicate the project to external audiences and to the people affected by Parkinson’s who will be reviewing applications and sitting on the panel. It should contain 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
    - potential benefits and timescales must be realistic and not overinflated.

7. Patient and public involvement (PPI)

- Patient and Public Involvement is when researchers and people affected by conditions work in partnership to plan, design, manage, evaluate and communicate about research.
- Where appropriate, **applicants are advised to seek lay input on their research proposal as early as possible when devising their research questions, study design and PPI plans,** in a way that adds value to the project and, if successful, throughout each stage of the research process.
- PPI in research leads to higher-quality, more efficient research focused on what matters most to those living with the condition.
- There are a number of ways that applicants can involve people in their research, including, but not limited to, in identifying and prioritising research questions, shaping study design and helping to write plain English summaries. Read this article for more information on how PPI can strengthen your application.
- Parkinson’s UK can support researchers to involve people affected by Parkinson’s through our patient and public involvement (PPI) programme, including by helping to plan meaningful involvement activities and find people to involve.
- **If appropriate,** remember to include costs for any planned PPI activities in your application. This includes necessary expenses incurred by PPI contributors as a result of being involved in a PPI activity. Parkinson’s UK also considers it best practice that PPI contributors are offered an honorarium for their involvement in research where the PPI activity requires a substantial time commitment. For more information please read our guidance for researchers on payment and recognition and INVOLVE’s ‘Budgeting for Involvement’ document and ‘Cost Calculator’.

- See our PPI Guidance for researchers and also our PPI tools for lab based researchers for more information, and get in touch with the team for support with PPI at researchinvolvement@parkinsons.org.uk

8. Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Parkinson's UK is here for everyone in the Parkinson's community. The Parkinson's UK Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy sets out our overarching goal, ambitions and EDI promise. The charity wants equity for everyone who lives with Parkinson's, and the people in their lives, in the UK. Parkinson's affects all sections of the community, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic group, religion or belief. Responses to Parkinson's treatment can be different depending on a range of factors. We believe Parkinson's research should involve, include and represent all members of the community. By having a diverse network of people involved with research, we're more likely to make breakthroughs that change the lives of all people with Parkinson's.

All applicants are encouraged to use an inclusive research design approach. If you are involving human participants or tissues, please address how these factors will be considered in your experimental plan. The charity's Race Equality in Research project sets out our long-term strategy to increase engagement and participation in Parkinson's research with people from Black, Asian and Mixed Race backgrounds. Please see the 'Writing a research grant application' section within the Appendix to this document for further details on how to consider equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of your research.

We actively encourage people from all sections of the community, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic group, religion or belief. Please explain how you have considered these issues when creating a diverse research team. EDI data will be collected for all staff and students named in the research team via an online survey as part of the charity's monitoring processes.

We understand that different people choose different career paths, so we want to provide flexible research career opportunities. If you're funded by us, you can request flexible and part-time working. We always try to accommodate requests, as long as they fit in with the needs of employing organisations.

We consider the needs of everyone who applies for a grant at Parkinson's UK. If you have a disability, long-term health condition, mental health condition, are neurodivergent, or have care responsibilities and need support at any point during the application process, please get in touch and we'll be happy to help. You can email researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk.

9. Unsuccessful applications

- Comments from the reviewers will be made available to unsuccessful applicants. No further discussion with Parkinson's UK staff or the drug accelerator award panel is allowed.
- On occasion, applications may receive high review scores but still be unsuccessful. Parkinson's UK are within their rights to choose to fund the drug accelerator award that will have the most impact and most closely aligns with charity's strategy in increasing capacity

in Parkinson's research and has the most potential benefit to people affected by Parkinson's, based on the recommendations of the funding panel.

10. Resubmissions

Only one resubmission is allowed. This includes instances where the application has previously been submitted via another Parkinson’s UK grant scheme.

For unsuccessful applications, it is possible to submit a revised application at the preproposal stage of the following round of the drug accelerator awards (if it still fits within the scheme’s remit). Resubmitted applications must be significantly different from the original application and incorporate changes based on the feedback provided during the review process.

- Applicants are required to note in the declarations for the application that the proposal has previously been submitted to Parkinson's UK.
- Applicants must specifically include as an appendix an annotated version of the research proposal, showing where changes have been made, and a list of bullet points indicating the changes.

11. Contact us

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

Email:researchapplications@parkinsons.org.uk

Writing 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

- Ensure that you are fully familiar with all sections of the 'Information for applicants' document.
- Read the Parkinson's UK research grant academic terms and conditions, commercial terms and conditions and costs guidance – make sure your requests are allowable by Parkinson's UK.
- 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.

Write a good plain English summary

- It is important that you think carefully about your lay reader when writing your plain English summary.
- Lay grant reviewers may have considerable personal experience of Parkinson's but little specialised scientific knowledge.
- The plain English summary must accurately reflect the research proposal and scientific abstract.
- Although the summary should be written in simple terms, please make sure that it contains enough detail for a lay grant reviewer to make an informed decision about the project.
- 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 and include a good glossary.
- Define any abbreviations in full words the first time you use them, in addition to including them within the abbreviations section.
- Avoid complicated English or uncommon words.
- Avoid elaborate explanations of 'what is Parkinson's'. Lay grant reviewers are very likely to know a lot about this already but 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.
- If your study involves participants ensure you have included details of what will be involved for them and how they will be supported.
- Ask someone without a scientific background to read your draft and advise if anything is unclear.
- Applicants can request lay feedback on their plain English section by contacting our patient and public involvement (PPI) programme at least three weeks prior to the deadline.
- You can find more tips on writing a good plain English summary on the NIHR guidance for writing plain English summaries and the 'Plain English Campaign'.

Clearly demonstrate how your research relates to Parkinson's

- Parkinson's UK only supports research into Parkinson's and Parkinson's like disorders. We want to fund research that has the greatest chance of improving the lives of people with Parkinson's.
- Applications for lab-based projects must clearly demonstrate how their research relates to Parkinson's and how it could provide valuable insights for future research.
- Scientific and lay grant 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 that these 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 does not 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.

Consider equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of your research

Parkinson's UK is here for everyone in the Parkinson's community. The Parkinson's UK Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy sets out our overarching goal, ambitions and EDI promise. The charity wants equity for everyone who lives with Parkinson's, and the people in their lives, in the UK. Responses to Parkinson's treatment can be different depending on a range of factors. We believe Parkinson's research should involve, include and represent all members of the community. By having a diverse network of people involved with research, we're more likely to make breakthroughs that change the lives of all people with Parkinson's. The Parkinson's UK Race Equality in Research project sets out our long-term strategy to increase engagement and participation in Parkinson's research with people from Black, Asian and Mixed Race backgrounds.

Parkinson's affects all sections of the community, irrespective of race, ethnicity, sex, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic group, religion or belief. There are also a broad range of factors that can impact the metabolism and response to treatments including physiology and genetics. These differences in response to treatments can be related to issues such as race, ethnicity (Ben-Joseph et al., 2020 and Sauerbier et al., 2018) and sex (Cerri et al., 2019). There can also be biases in medical devices and technologies against individuals of different ethnicities, sex, genders and other socioeconomic groups that may need to be mitigated (Equity in Medical Devices: Independent Review). For example, some devices employing infrared light or imaging may not perform as well in people with darker skin pigmentation - this would need to be taken into account in the development and testing of the devices. AI-enabled medical devices and use of polygenic risk scores in genomics may be particularly prone to biases against certain groups in the population. The 'STANDING Together (STANdards for data Diversity, INclusivity and Generalisability)' initiative led by the University of Birmingham has published recommendations on ensuring that the benefits of AI in healthcare are available to all. The social aspects of diversity also need to be considered, especially in relation to how this impacts on the way individuals are diagnosed and treated. Without a diverse group of individuals participating in research, researchers will not know if their results can be applied to all people equally.

Parkinson's UK is committed to supporting research that is inclusive, in both design and practice, and gives appropriate consideration to equality, diversity and inclusion issues to be beneficial for everyone. Applicants are therefore asked to consider and explain how they have taken these factors into account in all relevant aspects of their work. This could include:

- **Inclusive research design** - When designing research projects with human participants, applicants must consider factors such as sex, gender, age, ethnicity in their research questions, methods, implementation, outcomes and reporting. If your research involves animal models, cells, human tissue samples, or human participants, and you are not proposing to use both sexes, you will need to justify why. Applicants may wish to refer to the guidance provided by the MRC on sex in experimental design, the Sex Inclusive Research

Framework for preclinical work developed by a working group led by AstraZeneca, and also the toolkit produced by NIHR and CEHR that includes help in developing research questions that are more relevant to ethnic minority communities.

- **Participation and use of human tissue** - Applicants must consider how they will ensure that the participant groups and human tissue samples used reflect the diversity of the population. This could include carefully considering the eligibility criteria for study participants and the recruitment processes; developing study materials with inclusion in mind; ensuring the research team is aware of relevant cultural issues; and building partnerships with community organisations / trusted advocates. Applicants should consider if there are any issues that would impact the diversity of people with Parkinson's that would be willing and comfortable to take part (are there any barriers that would stop certain sections of the community from participating). Please refer to the guidance produced by the NIHR INCLUDE project on improving inclusion of under-served groups in clinical research, the NIHR video introduction on cultural competence in research and the NHS guidance on increasing diversity in research participation. Applicants should also refer to the toolkit developed in partnership with NIHR on increasing participation of Black and Asian minority ethnic (BAME) groups in health and social care research.
- **Research team** - Applicants should consider the expertise required to carry out inclusive research and the diversity of their team, including a balance of gender, ethnicity and career stage. Researchers from under-served groups are more likely to be familiar with, and motivated to develop solutions for, health issues facing the demographic groups to which they belong. If appropriate it may be helpful to include those researching social and health disparities in under-served groups in your team. If relevant to the study, then it can also be helpful to include bilingual staff in the research team. When recruiting to your team you should consider diversity and follow best practice as advised by your Institution's HR department, including mitigating the impact of unconscious bias. It can also be helpful to consider how you will build an inclusive team environment where all feel valued and supported, with equal access to development opportunities.
- **Patient and public involvement (PPI)** - Applicants must consider how they will involve the Parkinson's community in their research. When planning involvement activities, applicants should consider diversity and take steps to ensure they are as inclusive and representative as possible. You can find out more about how to address potential barriers in the HRA guidance on people-centred research.

You can also learn more in the Parkinson's UK blog post on increasing diversity in research. Please find below some specific examples of steps that researchers can take to increase diversity in Parkinson's research:

- Recruiting staff (clinicians, coordinators, researchers) who reflect under-served communities.
- Developing relationships with communities over the long term.
- Engaging with communities early to make sure the research questions asked are things that the community really wants to see addressed.
- Going beyond translating clinical tests and resources by also making sure they are culturally appropriate.

- Having open lines of communication to ensure people can discuss their concerns about taking part.
- Recruiting diverse teams of clinicians and researchers from the local community and training them.

Drug accelerator awards - Parkinson's UK Scientific reviewer scoring system

The listed characteristics are for guidance only. The characteristics are general statements on the overall quality of the application in each funding category. They are not a checklist of minimum criteria for the funding category.

Funding category	Characteristics for Panel Members	Rating scale	
Highly fundable	• Well characterised drug target likely to translate to a therapy which will markedly improve QoL of people with Parkinson's. • Convincing pilot data demonstrating target engagement/efficacy. • Excellent and appropriate methods and milestone driven research design. • A robust plan for the commercial development • Very strong, internationally competitive team and diverse team containing all relevant disciplines. • Very good value for money. • Clear and well written proposal. • Plain English summary accurately reflects the research proposal and is realistic about potential outcomes and timescales involved.	Exceptional	**10**
		Excellent quality research	**9**
		Very good, bordering on excellent	**8**
Potentially fundable	• Partially characterised drug target. • Partial pilot data demonstrating target engagement/efficacy. • Good quality and appropriate methods and milestone driven research design. • A partially formed plan for the commercial development. • Competent and appropriate and diverse research team containing all key disciplines. • Good value for money. • All key aspects of application are clearly presented • Plain English summary accurately reflects the research proposal and is realistic about potential outcomes and timescales involved.	Good quality research	**7**
		Above average quality research	**6**
		Acceptable quality	**5**
Not fundable	• Poorly characterised drug target. • Poor pilot data demonstrating target engagement/efficacy. • Inappropriate plan for the commercial	Borderline quality research	**4**

	development. ● Inappropriate methods and research design of only modest or poor quality. ● Applicants without relevant research experience or key disciplines not represented. ● Poor value for money. ● Key elements of the application are unclear. ● Plain English summary is unclear, does not accurately reflect the research proposal	Below acceptable quality	**3**
Definitely not fundable	● Irrelevant drug target. ● Lacking pilot data demonstrating target engagement/efficacy. ● No plans for commercialisation ● Poor/flawed/duplicative methods and research design. ● Key skills missing from the research team. ● Very poor value for money. ● Unclear application. ● Plain English summary is unclear, does not accurately reflect the research proposal	Many identified flaws	**2**
		Serious weaknesses or major concerns	**1**