



Guidance Notes for Applicants

These notes have been prepared to help you write your application. Please read through this guidance and refer to our website and the documents listed below before commencing your application:

- Visit our [website](#) to review the scope, eligibility, and timetable of the grants round
- Terms and Conditions of Grant Aid (for information only)
- Policy on the Use of Animals in Research
- Jessica Bethell MenB Research Grant Application Form (and if applicable, the Proposals Using Animals Form)
- Code of Conduct for Scientific Advisors, External Referees, Applicants and Foundation Staff.
- Peer review procedures

If you would like to check your proposed project is in scope before preparing an application, please e-mail Amelia Slay: amelias@meningitis.org including a brief description of your intended submission.

General guidance

- Before you submit your application, we would like to draw your attention to the Foundation's Terms and Conditions of Grant Aid, which applicants should ensure that they and their institution will be able to sign up to before they submit their full application.
- Use a standard font (no smaller than 10 point).
- Do not reorder the sections in the application form; it must be completed as laid out. Incomplete or incorrectly presented applications will be returned to the applicant and this will mean that consideration of the application will not be possible at the intended meeting.
- A complete application to Meningitis Research Foundation consists of the following:
 - Jessica Bethell MenB Research Grant Application Form (including a detailed account of proposed research, see section 7)
 - A CV for each applicant and for any named staff for whom salary support is requested.
 - Proposals Involving Animals form (if appropriate)
 - Supporting letters (if appropriate)
 - Completed collaboration forms (if appropriate)
 - Copies of ethics approval and licences for animal research (if appropriate)
- Applicants working in **public sector research institutions**, including UK- Health Security Agency (UK-HSA), Health Protection Scotland and the Health Protection Surveillance Centre, as well as research council units must submit a letter of support from the director of their unit or institution, and from the appropriate administrator at the research council's

or institution's head office explaining that the proposal is outside their unit's/institution's remit for funding.

E-mail the completed application to amelias@meningitis.org. If your file is too large to send via e-mail as a Microsoft Word file, please convert it into a pdf, ensuring that text is still able to be copied and pasted. This is to expedite review by external referees.

- **Digital Signatures** of any collaborators on the proposed project (section 4), applicants (section 13) and Head of Department and Administrative Authority (section 14) are required on the digitally submitted application form. Please allow sufficient time for this.
- **Please note that applicants should not, under any circumstances, directly approach members of the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Panel in connection with their (or another's) research application.** The Panel's judgments are final and no subsequent correspondence will be entered into. Applications which are rejected will not be reconsidered unless resubmission is specifically invited or permitted.

Specific Instructions for Completing the Application Form

(Numbered according to section on form)

1. Title of investigation

The title should not exceed 120 characters including spaces.

2. Applicants

Applicants are expected to be actively engaged in the project. Both established and early career researchers are welcome to apply for funding. The Principal Applicant need not be an established scientist, but those who are Early Career Researchers should provide evidence of established co-applicants or collaborators to ensure appropriate mentorship and support is in place from the wider project team. An early career researcher is defined as being:

- within eight years of their PhD award (this is from the time of the PhD 'viva' oral test), or equivalent professional training
- within six years of their first academic appointment (the first full or part time paid employment contract that lists research or teaching as the primary function).

These periods exclude any career break, for example due to: family care/ health reasons / reasons related to COVID-19 such as home schooling or increased teaching load.

Applicants should have an assured source of salary support, but under some circumstances, requests for salary or a portion of salary support, for one or more applicant on a research team will be considered.

3. Institutions

For applications involving more than one **institution**, if a grant is awarded, the host institution of the Principal Applicant will normally take responsibility for administering the grant on behalf of the other centres, including invoicing for grant payments.

4. Collaboration on a research project

Any collaborators (NOT applicants) in the research application should complete and sign a copy of this section. Additional copies of the form are available on our website to download in cases of multiple collaborators.

5. Research Summary

The **start date** of the grant is defined as the first date an individual supported by the grant starts to work on the project. A realistic starting date should be chosen, allowing time for Terms and Conditions to be signed and returned, paperwork completed, and if applicable, new staff to be recruited to work on the project. Please also give a **scientific abstract** of the research you propose to do of a maximum of 250 words; this should include a structured scientific summary of the important background, hypothesis/hypotheses, and outcomes for the project.

6. Summary of research proposal for the layperson

The Foundation also requires a summary of the proposal in **layperson's language** to form the basis for publicity and information materials. This should be written under the four headings as indicated and should summarise the actual work proposed, explain the problem being addressed, and set out the objectives and expected benefits of the project in relation to future protection against meningococcal group B (MenB) disease, which may include prevention, early recognition, diagnosis and/or management. Grant-holders are expected to refer to these objectives and expected benefits when discussing outcomes of the project in their final report. Lay summaries of funded projects will be published on Meningitis Research Foundation's and Jessica Bethell Charitable Foundation's websites.

7. Proposed Investigation

The statement of **proposed investigation** should be self-contained so that reference to any papers cited is not essential to understanding the proposal. It should be set out under Purpose; Aims, Objectives and Key Milestones; Background; Plan and Methods; Potential outcomes, Dissemination and Communication, and References. Please integrate these pages into the application form, rather than sending them as a separate document.

Purpose (max. 500 words): should include a brief description of the specific hypothesis/hypotheses to be tested, and how the research fits within the scope of the call

Aims, Objectives and Key Milestones: should include a list of aims and objectives for this projects and the milestones for achieving them. The listed objectives should address the hypothesis/hypotheses provided in the section above. The Gantt chart should also be completed detailing the related timescales for achieving the project objectives.

Background (max. 500 words): should be a concise description of the relationship of the proposed research to the present body of knowledge on the subject, including previous work carried out by the applicant(s) and/or other workers. Only essential references to published work should be included; where reference is made to papers submitted for publication or 'in press', a summary of the work in question should be given and copies of relevant manuscripts or preprints enclosed.

Plan and Methods (max. 1000 words): The plan of the project should be outlined and the experimental design, methods and techniques to be used during the course of the project should be described. When the use of survey, questionnaire or protocol is an integral part of the research these should be included in your application form, or submitted as a separate attachment. Where appropriate, power calculations should be shown to justify the proposed size, duration and design of the study.

Potential outcomes (max. 250 words): Potential short term and long term outcomes must be explained, including how this project could lead to future projects, either with MRF or other funding bodies.

Dissemination and Communication (max. 250 words): The Foundation has a responsibility to ensure that all useful knowledge acquired from research it funds is appropriately shared with those able to utilise and benefit from it. The required dissemination plan therefore needs to include details of how the research findings will be communicated both to the scientific community and the public.

With regards to communicating with the public, The Foundation actively encourages applicants to propose novel ways of sharing research findings with the public (e.g. through social media, video, blog posts, etc...). The Foundation's communication team can offer expertise on how best to achieve this. To enable appropriate measures to be put in place, all grant holders are asked to inform the Foundation of any plans for research dissemination.

An Interim and Final Report are required which specifically indicate the relevance of research progress and outcomes to MenB and include details of dissemination and communication activities. Grant holders are expected to seek publication of findings in peer reviewed journals as soon as possible, even where results prove negative. These publications are to be made in an Open Access manner, wherever possible. The Foundation must be notified in advance of publication and acknowledged in all publications and presentations arising from research it funds. The Foundation is able to offer expert advice on how best to engage audiences with your research. The support of Meningitis Research Foundation must be acknowledged in all published communications, publications, presentations and posters arising from work on the grant.

References: There is no word limit for the completion of a reference list – which may include data tables, graphs, photographs and pilot data where appropriate. Any photographs (e.g. electron micrographs or photographs of histological sections) should be provided in colour.

8. Support requested in £ sterling and detailed justification of support

Grants are intended to cover all the **direct** costs attributed to a research project apart from premises costs and the costs of established academic staff. Please note that amounts should be indicated in **pounds sterling** and **rounded to the nearest pound**. Please ensure that all the totals in the 'Cost' column are filled. Alongside the costs requested, you must provide a detailed justification for support: The particular type of support sought, e.g.: items of equipment, travel, staff, etc. should be justified in relation to the demands of the work. Sufficient detail is essential to enable the Panel to assess the realism of the financial support requested.

Provisions may be made for:

Salaries for research, technical and/or other staff to work full-time or part-time on the research (as outlined in section 4 of the Terms & Conditions of Grant Aid). All costings should take account of expected salary increments. The Foundation will not cover recruitment costs. For each member of staff requested, please state their role in the project and justify the level of funding sought.

Equipment: including computers and software. The Foundation will not cover the cost of insurance, which is the responsibility of the host institution. If the Institution is a registered charity, it should be possible to obtain exemption from the payment of VAT within the UK for equipment donated for medical research. The Foundation will not normally reimburse for VAT, but may reimburse for delivery costs if specified in the approved application. Equipment requested should be essential to the research outlined in the application. The Foundation reserves the right to require a full or partial repayment of this request should the equipment cease to be used for research into meningitis and associated infections

Consumables: required to carry out the research including laboratory materials

Animal costs

Travel and subsistence: for **working visits** for scientific collaboration on a specific project or the learning of special techniques are acceptable. The Foundation will not normally meet costs associated with travel to conferences.

Exceptional items: costs which do not fall under any of the above headings

Research expenses outside the scope of the project

Meningitis Research Foundation as a rule will not meet costs associated with:

- employment of established academic staff
- general premises costs including:
 - construction and maintenance of the building
 - animal houses and glass houses
 - land purchase/lease
 - refurbishment/renovation/adaptation
 - basic services and utilities
 - office furnishings
 - lease/rent/rates
 - insurance
 - cleaning/portering/security/safety
- the cost of unspecified research work
- the cost of work already done or the cost of writing up such work
- remuneration of undergraduates (other than payment for vacation work under an existing award if such earnings are allowed by the host institution)
- the cost of host facilities to which the investigator normally has free access
- removal costs incurred in filling posts
- costs associated with travel to conferences
- overseas PhD or higher degree tuition fees (although Home/ EU fees may be eligible if justified)

Meningitis Research Foundation will not make a contribution to the indirect costs of the research project (overheads). This includes:

- Central institutional libraries
- Departmental services: administrative and secretarial (where not included under direct support), local finance, minor consumables, printing/photography, minor store items and laboratory and workshop support
- Financial services (finance, accounting, tendering, marketing)
- Personnel services
- Public relations

- Recruitment costs (advertising etc.)
- Staff development (including training)
- Staff facilities (transport, health and safety, welfare services, laundry)
- Part-time staff effort on research projects which cannot easily be identified or allocated to the research project but are assumed to contribute a general background level of departmental administrative/secretarial/technical support.

For Institutions Applying from within the UK

When calculating research budgets, UK universities are expected to consider the Full Economic Costs of their research. Full Economic Costs are composed of Directly Incurred Costs, Directly Allocated Costs, and Indirect Costs. **In line with other Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) members, Meningitis Research Foundation does not provide Full Economic Costs: we pay Direct Costs (Directly Incurred Costs) and may exceptionally contribute to Directly Allocated Costs in particular circumstances. Charities do not pay Indirect Costs.** The government has an additional stream of funding to support charity research, the Charity Research Support Fund (CRSF) in England and there are similar funds in the devolved administrations. **As a member of AMRC, Meningitis Research Foundation meets the eligibility criteria for the CRSF.**

<https://www.amrc.org.uk/charity-research-support-fund-crsf>

As a member of AMRC, Meningitis Research Foundation is also exempt from funding the 'direct' costs of clinical research in the NHS, as this can be covered by NIHR Clinical Research Networks under the **Attributing the costs of health and social care Research and Development** (AcoRD) agreement developed by the Department of Health and Social Care. For research requested to be undertaken in the NHS, applicants are encouraged to contact their local NIHR CRN early to help with study design, cost attribution and availability of resources. Applicants need to complete a Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Template (SoECAT) in order to be eligible for the NIHR portfolio and the support this provides. Read more here: <https://www.amrc.org.uk/attributing-the-costs-of-health-and-social-care-research-and-development-acord>

See guidance below from the Department of Health in England and the equivalent bodies in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland outlining the conditions that apply in each place:

England: the funder is a medical research charity that is a member of AMRC and the activity is undertaken by existing staff employed by the NHS, NIHR Clinical Research Network or other organisations funded by the NHS to provide patient care services. Under these circumstances, the cost of the activities in Part B will be met by the Department of Health. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-attributing-the-costs-of-health-and-social-care-research>

Northern Ireland: the funder is a medical research charity that is a member of AMRC and the activity is undertaken by existing staff employed by the NHS or through HSC R&D Division funding.

<http://www.nicrn.hscni.net/2012/09/attributing-the-costs-of-health-and-social-care-research-development-acord-for-northern-ireland/>

Wales: For studies funded by a charity that is a member of the AMRC, data collection performed by existing members of staff employed by an NHS organisation will be met through funding allocated through NHS Local Support and Delivery funding. Funders may require you to demonstrate that funding for NHS resources is available. Applicants are advised to consult with the NHS R&D Departments prior to the submission of the grant/research funding application to ensure all relevant costs are calculated correctly and will be met

<https://healthandcareresearchwales.org/researchers-support-and-guidance-researchers-finances-and-funding/identify-study-costs-nhs-and>

Scotland: the funder is a medical research charity that is a member of AMRC **and** the activity is undertaken by existing staff employed by the NHS or through NRS Funding. (NRS funding encompasses all of the funding that the Chief Scientist Office allocates in support of clinical research both to NHS Boards in the form of Support Costs, Researcher Support and Infrastructure funding, and to Scottish Clinical Research Networks.) Under these circumstances the cost of the activities in Part B will be met through the NRS funding already allocated.

<https://www.nhsresearchscotland.org.uk/education-and-funding/funding-for-nhs-research-infrastructure/acord>

9. Use of human participants or human tissue

Ethics Committee approval is required for research that involves human subjects (patients or healthy individuals) or tissue, and the Foundation needs to have evidence of this approval before funding can be released. It is important that such evidence shows that approval applies specifically to the research proposed in the application. If the research you are proposing involves human material, copies of your submission to the relevant research ethics committee should be included with your application, along with the letter of approval, if this is available at the time of applying. If not, please forward this as soon as possible. Where ethics committees will not consider applications until funding has been secured, the Foundation would normally expect a copy of the ethics approval letter to be forwarded within three months of notification of grant.

Enough information should be included in the application to enable Meningitis Research Foundation to evaluate any physical or medical hazard to which subjects may be exposed. The nature, purpose and duration of the investigation should be specified and information provided on proposed techniques. Each proposal should also specify the number, sex, age range, and state of health of the human subjects, and indicate if informed consent will be obtained and whether the subjects are, for example, hospital patients, members of the armed forces, medical students, or volunteers.

Note: Meningitis Research Foundation reserves the right to refuse on ethical grounds alone to make an award even if the agreement of the local ethical committee has been obtained.

10. Experiments involving animals

If your project does not involve the use of animals, you need only fill in questions *a* and *b*. If animals are being used in the proposed research, applicants must complete a copy of the 'Proposals Involving Animals' form in line with the AMRC statement on the use of animals in medical research: <https://www.amrc.org.uk/position-statement-on-the-use-of-animals-in-research> and with the Foundation's Policy on the [Use of Animals in Research](#). A copy of the front page of the Home Office Project Licence, authorising the

proposed experiments, should be attached. Where a Project Licence has not yet been secured, this must be obtained and a copy sent to the Foundation before any grant funding will be issued.

11. Intellectual Property

Please answer these questions to the best of your knowledge. It may be difficult to predict whether any IP will arise from the research you are planning, but Meningitis Research Foundation needs to know about any pre-existing agreements that may affect revenue sharing and/or dissemination of information before a grant is awarded.

12. Other Research Grants and Grant Applications

Meningitis Research Foundation needs to know about grants you hold on similar topics. Please provide history of grant funding, current grant funding and make note of grants - past or present - on topics relevant to meningitis research.

13. Applicants' declaration

Applicants must read the Foundation's Terms and Conditions of Grant Aid and agree to abide by them if a grant is made.

14. Signatures of support

The complete application and the Foundation's Terms and Conditions of Grant Aid must be read by your Head of Department and the appropriate university, research institution, or medical school administrator, who must then sign the complete application. Please allow sufficient time for this.

15. Curriculum Vitae of applicants/staff

A **CV** is required for each applicant on the proposal as well as any named staff for whom salary support is being requested in section 14. Once appointed, CVs of persons subsequently employed on the grant must be forwarded. CVs should be restricted to **one page per person**, but their respective lists of publications may be carried on to a second page if necessary.

16. Scientific Integrity

Host institutions are expected to have in place a policy on scientific integrity. These expectations are established in the Foundation's [Research Integrity Policy](#). Please direct us to the precise URL on your Institution's website where the policy on good research practice/scientific integrity is located (and ensure that the URL is not password-protected). Otherwise, please attach one copy of your institution's policy. If attaching the policy document, please send it as a separate file and do not integrate it into the text of this application form. The policy document does not need to be included in the paper copies of the application form that you send to us.

17. Safeguarding

The Foundation's [policy and procedures](#) outlines our commitment to safeguarding and our utmost assurance to protect everyone that we assist and all those in contact with MRF's work from deliberate or inadvertent actions and failings that place them at risk of abuse, exploitation, injury or any other harm. Partner organisations which are awarded funding by the Foundation, will be asked to adhere to and sign a copy of the [Foundation's code of conduct](#).

Please direct us to precise URL on your Institution's website where the policy on safeguarding is located (and ensure that the URL is not password-protected).

Otherwise, please attach one copy. If attaching the policy document, please send it as a separate file and do NOT integrate it into the text of this application form.

18. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Foundation's Trustees have a responsibility to ensure that work of the highest quality is produced. The Foundation therefore requires that the Research Institution ensures that all funded work is adequately supervised at all times, monitored and evaluated. The results of the research must be subject to proper evaluation before they are published. The Foundation will request a mid-point progress report once a grant is awarded, and a final report at grant end which will be reviewed and assessed by our Scientific Advisory Panel. To help us capture any late developing impacts, we will also request updates from you 12 months after grant end, for up to 3 years.