

A large, stylized orange shape with a gradient from light yellow to dark orange, containing the title text. The shape is surrounded by thin orange lines that form a network-like pattern.

# **MS Society Grant Round 2022**

## **Applicant guidance**

You should use this guidance document with the 'help' sections on our online application system CC Grant Tracker.

January 2022

**Let's stop MS together**

# Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Key dates for 2022	5
3. Patient and public involvement (PPI)	6
4. Key Documents	8
5. Key Terms and Definitions	9
6. The Review Process	12
8. Criteria for review	13
9. Resubmission Policy	14
10. Finance and Costs	15
11. Co-funding applications	20
12. Use of animals	20
13. Use of human tissue	21
14. References	22
15. Contact us	22
Appendix 1: Scoring Guidance for reviewers	23
Appendix II Early Career Fellowships assessment framework	25

# 1. Introduction

We're the largest charitable funder of MS research in the UK. We welcome applications for projects that will increase understanding of the cause and find new effective treatments or prevention strategies for MS. And projects improving care and services for people affected by MS too.

We have an estimated budget of £2 million to spend on new research via our grant rounds this year.

Our Research Strategy 2018 – 2022 is at the heart of our approach to research and our mission to improve the lives of people with MS. This year, we remain focused on funding research questions relevant to our research strategy. We'd welcome proposals relevant to the prevention of MS as this is an area of our strategy that has received fewer applications in the past.

In 2022 we'll continue to support capacity building in MS research, encouraging Early Career Researchers and those new to MS research to apply to us.

Our Grant Round funding is a vital route for delivering our strategy for improving [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in MS](#). From this year we'll be placing greater focus in this area to support our [action plan for EDI in research funding](#).

Although many research questions related to COVID-19 and MS remain, we aren't prioritising funding in this area. Including a COVID-19 element in your proposed research won't make the project out of scope, but you'll need to clearly demonstrate how the project fits with our strategy and the priorities of people affected by MS.

We don't make any decisions on the scientific quality and relevance of applications. These are made by independent peer and lay reviewers. As members of the Association of Medical Research Charities we adhere to the Principles of Peer Review.

You should use this guidance document with the "Help" sections in the application forms on our online application system CC Grant Tracker:  
<https://research.mssociety.org.uk/>.

We try to make sure that the information in this guidance is accurate. But changes are possible and the most up-to-date guidance is available on our website.

**If you have any questions, please email us at [research@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:research@mssociety.org.uk) or call us on 020 8438 0822.**

## 1.1 Funding Rounds and Remit

We offer three funding rounds. All funding recommendations come from review panels drawn from The Expert Review Network (TERN), our independent group of experienced researchers, health care professionals and people living with MS. You can find more details on each Award type [on our website](#).

## 1.2 Catalyst Awards funding round

Catalyst Awards provide support for a short-term, small-scale pilot or proof of concept research project. These awards are 12 months in duration and have an upper funding limit of £50,000.00.

Catalyst Awards are reviewed by expert and lay members of TERN. This 'streamlined' review process is more efficient so we can make funding decisions quickly.

### 1.3 Project Awards funding round

Project Awards provide support for research projects designed to answer a single question or a small group of related questions. Such questions must be directed towards our Research Strategy. Applications should be hypothesis driven.

These awards have a maximum duration of 36 months and no upper funding limit.

### 1.4 Career Development Awards funding round

Career Development Awards include our PhD Fellowships and Early Career Fellowships. PhD Fellowships encourage the best graduates to join MS research. Early Career Fellowships aim to attract and retain talented scientists, early in their career in MS research.

PhD Fellowships have a duration of up to 36 months and Early Career Fellowships a maximum of 48 months.

### 1.5 Our Research and Organisational Strategies

Your application should fit with our Research Strategy. And you must explain how the project helps us to achieve these aims. We also have an organisational strategy to guide our work from 2020-2024.

We recommend that you read and strongly consider these documents when writing your application.

You can read our Research Strategy here: [www.mssociety.org.uk/mss-research-strategy](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/mss-research-strategy). And our Organisational Strategy here: <https://www.mssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/our-strategy>.

### 1.6 James Lind Alliance Partnership (JLA) research priorities

In 2013 we completed a James Lind Alliance Partnership (JLA) to identify research priorities that are important to people affected by MS and healthcare professionals. You can read more about this on our website:

<https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/explore-our-research/our-research-priorities>.

We don't exclusively restrict our funding to these priorities. We continue to support research into the causes of MS, and all aspects of treatment and care for people affected by MS. However, we do favour applications that specifically address these priorities. You will need to outline which, if any, of the JLA priorities your application addresses.

## 2. Key dates for 2022

### **Spring Catalyst Awards Round**

Applications open: 31 January 2022

Lay summary development deadline: 7 March 2022

Applications close: 27 April 2022

Decisions communicated: August 2022

Please note that the earliest start date for these Awards will be 1 September 2022.

### **Project Awards and Career Development Awards**

Applications open: early March 2022

Lay summary development deadline: 11 April 2022

Applications close: 7 June 2022

Applicant rebuttal: mid-late September 2022

Early Career Fellowship interviews: early November 2022

Decisions communicated: November 2022

Please note that the earliest start date for these Awards will be 1 January 2023.

### **Autumn Catalyst Awards Round**

Applications open: mid-June 2022

Lay summary development deadline: 11 July 2022

Applications close: 6 September 2022

Decisions communicated: December 2022

Please note that the earliest start date for these Awards will be 1 January 2023.

## 3. Patient and public involvement (PPI)

### 2.1 What is patient and public involvement?

Patient and public involvement (PPI) in research is when people with personal experience of health conditions work in active partnership with researchers or research funders like us.

Involvement isn't the same as recruiting participants to your study or sharing information with people through public engagement events. Involvement is about working in partnership with people affected by MS to shape, design and oversee a project.

1. In your application you need to describe: How people affected by MS have been involved in the development of your proposal (pre-application involvement)
2. How you plan to involve people affected in your ongoing study, if funded

#### **Pre-application involvement**

Before applying, we encourage you to involve people affected by MS in the development of your proposal. This helps to ensure:

- your research questions are relevant to their experiences
- you can demonstrate the relevance of your work to people affected by MS
- your study design considers the needs of people affected by MS

#### **Involvement in your ongoing study**

As well as working with people to develop your application, you should also plan for how you will continue to involve people affected by MS throughout the project. For example, people affected by MS could:

- Join an advisory group to provide their perspective throughout the course of a project - advising on challenges as they arise
- Review participant information materials such as leaflets, posters, webpages, questionnaires (for clinical projects)
- Advise on the best ways to communicate and disseminate your findings

Remember to include costs for any planned PPI activities in your application, for example:

- Travel expenses and refreshments for a face-to-face meeting
- Payment for people affected by MS as a recognition of their time and expertise

**Through our public involvement programme, we can support you to plan your public involvement, connect with people affected by MS and carry out activities.**

### 2.2 Lay Summary development

You also need to write a clear lay summary for your proposal. People affected by MS will review your application alongside experts in your field. If your lay summary is too brief or too complex, it will be difficult for them to comment and score your

application. And this will have an impact on whether it might be funded. Our Lay Summary Development scheme can help you. People affected by MS from our Research Network can provide feedback on your application before you submit, focusing on how well you have communicated your research proposal and the importance of the topic to people affected by MS. This isn't part of our review process, but is intended to help you to improve your lay summary before you submit.

If you'd like to go through Lay Summary Development, you'll need to submit a completed Lay Summary Development request form to [researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk).

You must submit your completed form by the deadline for the award type you are applying for. You will receive the feedback on your summary approximately four weeks before the deadline for submitting your grant application (see table below for exact dates).

<b>Award type</b>	<b>Deadline to apply for lay summary development</b>	<b>Deadline for receiving feedback on your lay summary</b>
Spring Catalyst Awards round	7 March 2022	28 March 2022
Data Discovery Awards (see our website for remit)	1 April 2022	25 April 2022
Project Awards	11 April 2022	9 May 2022
Career Development Awards	11 April 2022	9 May 2022
Autumn Catalyst Awards round	11 July 2022	8 August 2022

You can find guidance notes and the request form on our website:

<https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/for-researchers/funding>

You can also find 'Tips for writing a good lay summary' to download from the sidebar of this page.

For all enquiries about involving people affected by MS in any stage of your research, please contact the Public Involvement Manager: [researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk)

### 2.3 Resources to help you plan your PPI

You should consider the following resources to plan effective involvement:

- [NIHR – guide to public involvement in funding applications](#)
- [NIHR INVOLVE – payment and recognition for public involvement](#)
- [A practical guide to patient and public involvement in lab-based research](#)

## 4. Key Documents

You should read the following documents before submitting any applications to us:

<b>Award terms and conditions</b>	<p>Our grant award conditions can be found here:  <a href="https://www.mssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/MS%20Society%20Award%20Conditions%20and%20Policies%202020.pdf">https://www.mssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/MS%20Society%20Award%20Conditions%20and%20Policies%202020.pdf</a></p> <p>This document contains our:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Open Access Policy:</b> We're committed to open and unrestricted access to the results of our funded research. We require any research papers based on our funded research to be published in an open access environment.</li> <li>- <b>Grant Award Conditions:</b> The Award Conditions, together with the Award Letter and the Policies, set out the terms and conditions on which we make Awards.</li> <li>- <b>Intellectual Property Policy:</b> This Intellectual Property (IP) Policy document sets out principles that we're guided by when considering questions relating to intellectual property and research matters.</li> </ul>
<b>The Expert Review Network (TERN): Terms of Reference</b>	<p>You can find more information and Terms of Reference for our members of TERN here:  <a href="https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/researchers/funding/expert-review-network-tern">https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/researchers/funding/expert-review-network-tern</a></p> <p>You can also find our Conflicts of Interest guidance for our review panels <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<b>Our 2018 – 2022 Research Strategy</b>	<p>This document outlines our Research Strategy 2018 – 2022:  <a href="http://www.mssociety.org.uk/mss-research-strategy">www.mssociety.org.uk/mss-research-strategy</a></p>



## 5. Key Terms and Definitions

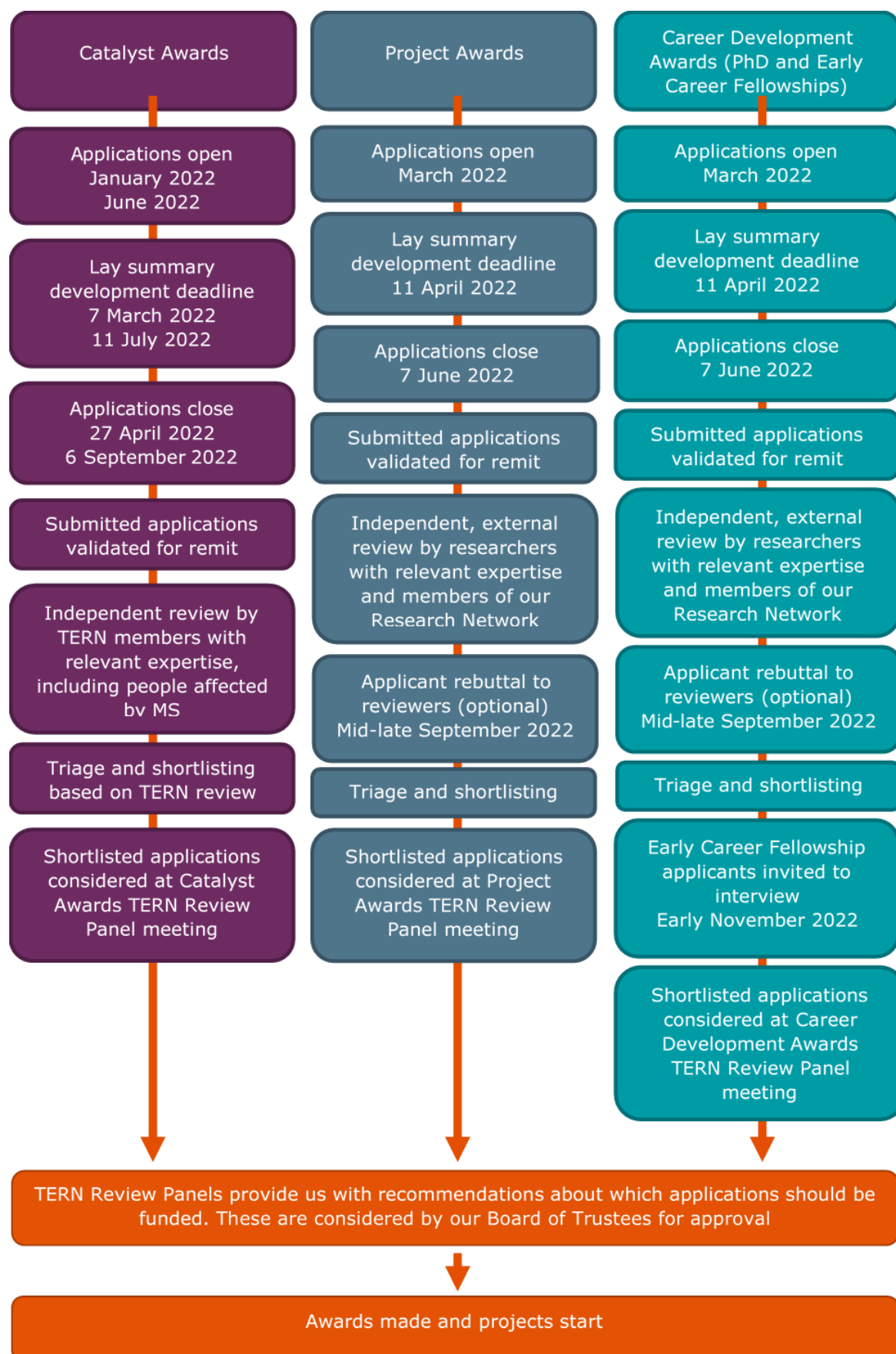
This is a list of key terms and definitions used in this applicant guidance document

Term	Definition
<b>3Rs</b>	The principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) were developed over 50 years ago as a framework for humane animal research. Find out more information on the NC3Rs website <a href="http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/">http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/</a>
<b>AMRC</b>	Association of Medical Research Charities. We're a member of the AMRC and our funding process complies with their regulations and guidance.
<b>Adviser</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You can add Advisers to your application. The adviser can view and edit the application, and provide comments.</li> <li>- Advisers don't need to be actively involved in the project.</li> <li>- Advisers' CVs will be included in the application PDF and will be seen by reviewers.</li> <li>- Advisers don't need to sign off the application before it's submitted.</li> </ul>
<b>Co-applicant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A co-applicant is a researcher who'll be actively involved in the project should the funding application be successful.</li> <li>- Co-applicants can view and edit applications.</li> <li>- Co-applicants have to approve applications before they can be submitted.</li> <li>- On Early Career Fellowship applications co-applicants are co-supervisors.</li> </ul>
<b>Finance Officer</b>	A member of the host institution who is responsible for confirming and approving financial details of applications. They will be responsible for administering the grant if it is awarded.
<b>The Expert Review Network (TERN)</b>	A group of experts and people affected by MS brought together to contribute to the funding of high-quality research. TERN members may be selected as Reviewers/Panel Members for our Grant Round(s) if they have relevant expertise to applications received.
<b>CC Grant Tracker</b>	We use the online grants system, Grant Tracker. You can access it via the following link to submit your application: <a href="https://research.mssociety.org.uk/">https://research.mssociety.org.uk/</a>

<b>Indirect costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Indirect costs are non-specific costs charged across all projects.</li> <li>- These costs are necessary for underpinning research but can't be allocated to individual projects. These costs account for things such as computing and information support, central services, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs and will be calculated separately by each Higher Education Institution (HEI), according to TRAC methodology.</li> <li>- Note <b>we won't cover any indirect costs</b>, in line with AMRC guidance. Examples of indirect costs are listed in the 'Finance and Costs' section of this document.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead Applicant</b>	<p>The named lead applicant is considered to be the project leader.</p> <p>In addition, the lead applicant will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be the contact person for all correspondence relating to the application.</li> <li>- Must accept overall responsibility for the award, if granted, and must be actively engaged in its direction.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Engagement</b>	<p>Where information and knowledge about research is provided and disseminated. Examples of engagement are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- science festivals open to the public</li> <li>- open days at a research centre</li> <li>- raising awareness in the media</li> </ul> <p>To find out more about engagement, see <a href="http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/">http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/</a></p>
<b>Public Involvement (PPI)</b>	<p>Where members of the public are actively involved in research projects and in research organisations. Examples of involvement include when people affected by MS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- are involved in identifying research priorities</li> <li>- are members of a project steering group</li> <li>- comment on patient information materials</li> </ul> <p>To find out more about involvement, see <a href="http://www.invo.org.uk">www.invo.org.uk</a></p>
<b>Public Participation</b>	<p>Where people take part in a research study. Examples of participation include people being recruited to a clinical trial or other study, or completing a questionnaire as part of a study.</p> <p>To find out more about participation in trials, see <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-trials/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/clinical-trials/</a></p>

<b>Supervisor (for Early Career Fellowships)</b>	Supervisors must be actively involved in the Fellowship and are responsible for the ongoing support of the Fellows. Supervisors must approve an application before it can be submitted.
<b>Research Network</b>	The Research Network are a passionate group of individuals living with MS or caring for someone with MS. They're not required to have specialist scientific knowledge, but are trained to use their personal experiences of MS to review applications, ensuring that the research we fund is of the highest importance to people with MS.
<b>Triage</b>	<p>Triage is a stage in our review process that takes place after applications have been reviewed. This involves a sub-group of the TERN review panel, including the Chair, Vice Chair and people affected by MS, identifying applications that have received low peer and lay review scores. These applications are removed from the process before the Panel meeting.</p> <p>Triage allows us to more quickly communicate decisions to unsuccessful applicants and improve overall efficiency of the review process.</p>

## 6. The Review Process



## 8. Criteria for review

Your application will be scored on the quality of science and relevance to MS. Applications will be reviewed and scored by both external peer and lay reviewers and by relevant funding Review Panels.

You should suggest up to three potential peer reviewers for your application in the “Project Details” section of the online application form. You can also tell us any reviewers you don’t want to review your application, with justification.

Your application will be reviewed by members of our Research Network, therefore the lay sections of your application must be well written and easy to understand for lay audiences.

The TERN Review Panel will judge applications for their fit with our Research Strategy, JLA Priorities and our organisational strategy.

Your application will score highly if:

- The research questions are very important. And likely to result in significant benefit for people affected by MS or advance our scientific understanding of MS
- The potential impact is highly significant and appropriate to the grant type. The pathway to impact must be clear and realistic.
- You’ve actively involved people affected by MS at all stages of project (PPI)
- The research team is strong with all relevant expertise
- There’s excellent research design, appropriate to the grant type applied for
- There’s good value for money
- It’s clear and well written

The scoring guidance used by our reviewers is found in Appendix 1.

## 9. Resubmission Policy

Unless we explicitly invite you to resubmit your application, we only allow **one** resubmission of any previously unsuccessful application. If you are resubmitting an application, you should indicate this in the '**Other Support**' section of the application form and complete the text box according to the guidance.

### Why?

Over the past five years, only 8% of resubmissions have been successful.

We expect your applications to be carefully considered and show a high level of grantsmanship. You should thoroughly review them before submission, and ask any co-applicants to do the same.

Our resubmission policy aims to promote a culture of high-quality submissions and high-quality reviews that will benefit you, our reviewers and us alike. This will benefit the MS community too, by helping us select and fund high quality and relevant research that has an impact on people with MS.

### What constitutes a resubmission?

A resubmission is any application that was previously submitted to our Grant Rounds. This includes if you submit the same application under a different name. Or if you submit the same application under a different funding stream (e.g. changing a PhD Fellowship to a Catalyst Award).

### Exceptions

We may invite a small number of further resubmissions if there is compelling evidence from peer review, if advised by the TERN Review Panels.

### Preparing a resubmission:

If you're preparing a resubmission, you must include the following in the 'Other Support' section

- Responses to any of the comments or considerations previously provided during the review process
- A summary of any substantial changes to the application

### What constitutes sufficient change to qualify as a new submission?

We'll only qualify applications as a new submission if they contain major changes. It's not sufficient to include only minor changes or considering reviewer comments as a new submission.

### Consequences of an Uninvited Resubmission:

If we feel that a new application is a resubmission, or if you submit an uninvited resubmission that has already been submitted twice, then we'll automatically reject it.

## 10. Finance and Costs

### 4.1 Acceptable/ unacceptable costs

You should work with finance offices, clinical trials units, local NHS trusts and the local NIHR CRN network to ensure that all costs of research have been identified and appropriately paid for.

Please ensure that your application complies with the following financial criteria:

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
<b>Staff members</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salaries for staff who work specifically on the funded project, employed at the host institution.</li> <li>- Staff may include research, technical or other roles such as a project manager.</li> <li>- Staff time at other institutions for specific project work packages, such as specialist statistical analysis, etc, should be included as a non-salary "Consultant" cost in Consumables.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Salary for the applicant team (lead applicants, co-applicants, advisers, supervisor) isn't permitted, with the exception of Early Career Fellowship lead applicants.</li> <li>- In exceptional circumstances, excluding PhD Fellowships, a proportion of salary for up to <b>one</b> member of the applicant team may be considered where their salary for research is reliant on grant funding. Any such request must be strongly justified for the potential benefit to MS research and confirmation of applicant salary circumstances from the institution will be required before any award is made.</li> <li>- Apprenticeship levy.</li> <li>- Once the award has been made, we will not increase the Award to reflect increased research costs, including increased salaries due</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All applications must have an applicant that holds a tenured position for the duration of the intended project.</li> <li>- You should provide a copy of current salary scales in the 'Attachments' section at the end of your online application for all salaried staff.</li> <li>- An appropriate grading and salary, approved by the administrative office of the host institution, must be quoted even where staff members cannot be named.</li> <li>- It's the responsibility of the employing institution, not us, to provide for maternity benefit and increases in salary costs other than annual increments and cost of living awards.</li> <li>- Salaries must show the separate amounts claimed for basic pay, national insurance (showing % salary and total amount, at current</li> </ul>

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
<b>Staff members (cont.)</b>		to nationally agreed pay awards/inflation.	rates), London weighting allowance where applicable and superannuation (which will not be higher than the rate used by the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) or NHS pension scheme)
<b>Consumables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Laboratory chemicals and materials (e.g. reagents, isotopes, peptides, enzymes, antibodies, gases, proteins, cell/tissue/ bacterial culture).</li> <li>-Data collection materials, if specific to the project.</li> <li>-Where justified, personal computing costs for named individuals engaged to work specifically on the grant.</li> <li>-Patient and public involvement (PPI) costs.</li> <li>-Consultant costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Article publishing or open access charges.</li> <li>- Standard per unit IT charges.</li> <li>- Phone/ computer accessories (drivers, cases, chargers, batteries).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For further guidance on PPI costs please visit: <a href="http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment-and-recognition-for-public-involvement/involve-ment-cost-calculator/">http://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment-and-recognition-for-public-involvement/involve-ment-cost-calculator/</a></li> <li>- A full justification is required for all consumables.</li> </ul>
<b>Equipment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Equipment that is specific to the grant and greater than £1000 in value (excluding VAT) should be listed here. Equipment less than £1000 in value may be classed as a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equipment cannot be requested for routine or service use.</li> <li>- Equipment becomes the responsibility of the host institution, which must be responsible for its accommodation, operating and servicing costs, and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All equipment should be entered net of VAT.</li> <li>- Any single piece of equipment costing in excess of £1000 and funded by the Award is our property.</li> <li>- Equipment access costs: Awards cannot be used for Directly</li> </ul>



CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
<b>Equipment (cont.)</b>	<p>consumable, and listed accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Costs may include purchase, delivery and installation of scientific equipment where that equipment is specific to the grant.</li> <li>-Each piece of equipment should be fully justified.</li> </ul>	<p>for any insurance that may be necessary.</p>	<p>Allocated Costs, other than fees relating to the use of core equipment/ services/research facilities that are essential to the project. For such fees, the cost per sample/time period should be stated.</p>
<b>Animals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Animal purchase and transportation costs, maintenance (including food) and experimentation costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Home Office Licences and animal handling training costs are not covered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The species and number of animals to be used must be stated. A full justification for their use must be provided in the project details section of the application.</li> <li>- See the 'Use of animals' section below.</li> </ul>
<b>Human Tissue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cost for the provision of human tissue.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If human tissue from the MS Society Tissue Bank is to be used in the grant, please include an estimate of the costs according to the tariff found on the Tissue Bank <a href="#">website</a>.</li> <li>- See the 'Use of human tissue' section below.</li> </ul>
<b>Conferences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Conference costs can cover a maximum of £1,000 per year for each member of salaried staff on the application, for each year the salary is supported by the grant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First class travel or accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conference costs need to be split evenly across the three years e.g. money cannot be transferred from Year 1 to Year 2.</li> <li>- Conferences costs are pro rata i.e. if a salaried member of</li> </ul>

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
<b>Conferences (cont.)</b>	- Conference costs can be used to cover travel, registration fee and/or accommodation for meetings/conferences.		<p>staff is 50% part time, they can claim up to £500 of fees in one year.</p> <p>- Only meetings/conferences directly related to the funded research.</p>
<b>PhD Fellowship costs</b>	<p><b><u>PhD Stipends</u></b></p> <p>Outside London: Year 1: £15,999 Year 2: £16,399 Year 3: £16,809</p> <p>Inside London: Year 1: £17,999 Year 2: £18,399 Year 3: £18,809</p> <p><b><u>PhD tuition fees</u></b> Maximum of £7,000 per year.</p> <p><b><u>Running costs</u></b> Maximum of £15,000 per year.</p> <p>Running costs include costs in the following categories (only):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumables</li> <li>• Equipment</li> <li>• Animals</li> <li>• Human Tissue</li> </ul>	<p>Running costs do not include tuition fees or Conference costs.</p>	<p>- Stipends are in accordance with MRC guidelines, are tax-free and include a 2.5% inflationary increase per annum.</p> <p>- Awarded grants will include the host institution's tuition fees at home student rates.</p> <p>- We won't be responsible for any increase in fees once an award has been made. We recommend that you seek advice from your institution when estimating the future level of fees for your application.</p>
<b>Other</b>	- The inclusion of funds for computer equipment or software is permissible only if absolutely essential for the project. However, such costs should not exceed £1,000 per item unless absolutely	<p>- Excess treatment costs.</p> <p>- Institutional overheads</p> <p>- Financial services</p> <p>- Personnel services</p> <p>- Recruitment costs</p> <p>- Public relations</p> <p>- General institution libraries</p> <p>- Departmental services</p>	<p>- The NHS should fund excess treatment costs</p> <p>- Researchers applying for clinical research grants will need to complete a Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Template (SoECAT) to be eligible for the NIHR portfolio and the</p>

CATEGORY	ACCEPTABLE COSTS	UNACCEPTABLE COSTS	NOTES
<b>Other (cont.)</b>	necessary and a robust justification is provided (excessive costs may be reduced or removed).	(administration, secretarial, printing, photocopying) - Telephone charges and postage or courier services - Journal subscriptions - Furniture - Annual software licencing fees	support this provides including ETCs. - You will need to factor in the time to complete a SoECAT and have an AcoRD Specialist sign it so that you can upload it as part of your application.

If you believe that any of the 'unacceptable costs' above should be seen as direct costs for your project you must provide full and detailed justification for this in your application.

## 4.2 Increase in costs

We won't be responsible for any increase in the costs of research (whether caused by increased consumables costs, increased personnel costs or otherwise). We won't increase the award to reflect increased research costs, once the award has been made.

## 4.3 Full economic costs

Unlike some other funding bodies, such as the research councils, AMRC member charities, including us, won't fund the full economic costs of research (fECs), or a proportion of these. We'll only pay for the Directly Incurred costs related specifically to the planned research to be undertaken in this grant.

Please see below for guidance on the types of costs. Your institution's finance team should be able to provide further guidance on costings. If you are unsure please get in touch with us. Including ineligible costs may delay application submission or approval of award.

<b>Directly Incurred</b>	These include the familiar direct costs of research such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff (e.g. research assistant salaries)</li> <li>- Travel and subsistence</li> <li>- Equipment</li> </ul>
--------------------------	--

<b>Directly Allocated (Previously called "in-direct costs")</b>	<p>These are shared costs, based on estimates and don't represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis.</p> <p>Previously, these costs came under the 'indirect costs' heading but the following items are now calculated separately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Applicants: the time spent by the applicant and co-applicants will be calculated and costed.</li> <li>-Estates: the way these are calculated may vary between institutions. Different categories of space will be costed differently, for example laboratory space will be different to office-based costs.</li> <li>-Other Directly Allocated: these include the costs of shared resources, such as staff and equipment.</li> </ul>
<b>Indirect Costs</b>	<p>These costs are necessary for underpinning research but can't be allocated to individual projects. These costs account for things such as computing and information support, central services, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs and will be calculated separately by each Higher Education Institution (HEI), according to TRAC methodology. We won't cover Indirect Costs or any other non-attributable overhead costs in your budget. However, such costs may be eligible under the <a href="#">Charity Research Support Fund</a>.</p>

## 11. Co-funding applications

We're open to co-funding applications with other funders. You should provide full details of the co-funder and amount they would be contributing.

## 12. Use of animals

If your research project uses animals, you must complete the Justification for Animal Use section of the application form.

You should review our policy on animal research:

<https://www.mssociety.org.uk/research/latest-research/animal-research>.

As members of the AMRC, we fully support their statement on animal research:

<http://www.amrc.org.uk/publications/statement-on-the-use-of-animals-in-research>.

We won't support the use of animals in research unless there is no alternative. Animal use procedures will be carefully considered in review of grant applications. We'll only support research using animals if:

- All animal use falls within the regulations laid down by Government, including the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006. You, along with your institution, are responsible for making sure all relevant Home Office licences are held for the duration of the intended projects. Any research conducted outside of the UK using animals meets the EU directive

minimum standards. Please follow [this link](#) for the full Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes.

### 6.1 The 3Rs of animal research

You must address the 3Rs in the Project Details section of the application. You're required to explain how you've considered each of the following:

- **Reducing** the number of animals used to the minimum necessary for a valid result
- **Refining** experiments to minimise any pain, suffering or distress
- **Replacing** animal experiments with alternatives wherever possible.

The NC3Rs have an extensive library of [resources](#) for you to implement the 3Rs in your research. When planning animal studies, you should read their [experimental design guidance](#).

### 6.2 Justifications

You must clearly state and justify the following in your application:

- The relevance to humans and why there is no alternative to the use of animals
- The species and number of any animals that could potentially be used
- Any refinement procedures to minimise any pain or distress
- Measures taken to avoid bias (e.g. blinding, randomisation)
- Number of experimental and control groups and sample size per group
- How the sample size was calculated, showing power calculations and including justification of effect size
- Overview of the planned statistical analyses in relation to the primary outcomes to be assessed
- Frequency of measurements/interventions to be used
- If necessary, circumstances in which power calculations aren't appropriate to determine sample size

If these aren't addressed, we'll return the application to you.

### 6.3 Considerations

You should also consider that we support the AMRC's signing of the Concordat on Openness in Animal Research. This encourages grant holders to be open about their use of animals in research. More information on the Concordat and resources are here: <http://www.understandinganimalresearch.org.uk/policy/concordat-openness-animal-research/>

The [ARRIVE \(Animal Research: Reporting In Vivo Experiments\) guidelines](#) have been developed by the NC3Rs to improve how *in vivo* studies are reported. They ensure that data from animal experiments can be fully evaluated and used by other researchers. We fully endorse these guidelines. We expect our researchers to comply with them designing your experiments and reporting your research. You can find the [full list of guidelines](#) on the ARRIVE website.

## 13. Use of human tissue

Donated human tissue is a vital and precious resource, therefore you must justify why human tissue will be used in your research. If your research uses human tissue, you must confirm that you will comply with the appropriate legislation and follow the relevant Codes of Practice issued by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA). The type of tissue and quantity must be fully justified in your application.

## 14. References

You should cite all essential references relevant to your proposal. Please enter all references in the following format:

1st Author: Year: Title: Journal: Volume: Pages

Copies of in-press or submitted publications relevant to the proposal should accompany the application, please add these in the "Attachments" section.

## 15. Contact us

Please let us know if you have any questions or need help.

Email us at: [research@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:research@mssociety.org.uk) or call us on **020 8438 0822**.

**Thank you for your interest in our research funding.**

## Appendix 1: Scoring Guidance for reviewers

Generic criteria	Project grant specific	Catalyst Award specific	PhD Fellowship specific	Early Career Fellowship specific	Rating	Score	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research question(s) are likely to result in significant benefit for people affected by MS and/or advancement in our scientific understanding of MS</li> <li>Research team is very strong, containing all relevant disciplines to deliver project outcomes</li> <li>Very good value for money</li> <li>Proposal is clear and well written</li> <li>People affected by MS are actively involved and influencing project at all relevant stages (PPI)</li> <li>Proposal has a clear and realistic pathway to impact. Potential impact is highly significant and appropriate to grant type.</li> <li>Research design is excellent, appropriate and highly feasible for the Award type.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed study design, methods and analyses are adequately developed, well integrated and well-reasoned.</li> <li>Design, methods and analyses are appropriate to the aims of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project develops or employs novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies for the area.</li> <li>Proposed research is highly innovative or high-risk, high-reward and if successful, has great potential for further development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent training and educational environment. The supervisory team are well placed to support student in their career development</li> <li>The proposed design, methods and analyses are well developed.</li> <li>The work is achievable within the timeframe of a PhD</li> </ul>	<p><b>You should use these criteria alongside our Early Career Fellowships Assessment Framework (Appendix II).</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All or most ECR Framework competencies fully demonstrated with clear plans for how to achieve those outstanding (if any) and maintain these throughout the duration of the Fellowship</li> <li>Excellent training and educational environment for the candidate with high quality career and network development opportunities.</li> <li>The proposed research design, methods and analyses are well developed</li> <li>The work is achievable within the timeframe of an Early Career Fellowship</li> </ul>	Exceptional	10	Highly fundable
					Excellent	9	
					High quality	8	
					Good	7	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research question(s) are likely to result in benefit for people affected by MS or some advancement in the scientific understanding of MS</li> <li>Research team has relevant experience and contains most of the relevant disciplines to deliver project outcomes</li> <li>Acceptable value for money</li> <li>Some elements of involving people affected by MS, where appropriate, but not well integrated or well supported</li> <li>Elements of the application are unclear</li> <li>Project would only be fundable with some changes</li> <li>Proposal has a reasonable pathway to impact. Potential impact is significant and mostly appropriate to grant type.</li> <li>Research design is acceptable for the Award type</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acceptable research design for a Project Award</li> <li>Proposed study design, methods and analyses are acceptable but they are only partially integrated.</li> <li>Further explanation for how design fits with the aims of the project is required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research design is acceptable and appropriate for a Catalyst Award</li> <li>Proposed concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies are not particularly novel for the area</li> <li>Proposed research is innovative and if successful, has potential for further development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Acceptable training and educational environment. The supervisory team are able to support the student in their career development</li> <li>The proposed research design, methods and analyses are acceptable but require some further explanation.</li> <li>The work is achievable within the timeframe of a PhD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some competencies demonstrated with some plans for how to achieve those outstanding and maintain these throughout the duration of the Fellowship</li> <li>Good training and educational environment for the candidate with good quality career and network development opportunities.</li> <li>The proposed research design, methods and analyses are acceptable but require some further explanation</li> <li>The work is achievable within the timeframe of an Early Career Fellowship</li> </ul>	Above average	6	Potentially fundable
					Acceptable	5	
					Borderline acceptable	4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research question(s) are irrelevant with no tangible benefit to people affected by MS.</li> <li>Key skills missing from the research team</li> <li>Poor value for money</li> <li>Unclear application</li> <li>Involvement of people affected by MS inappropriate or limited/ lacking</li> <li>Pathway to impact is unclear and/or unrealistic. Little or no potential impact or poorly described/not appropriate to grant type.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research design is unsuitable for a Project Award.</li> <li>There are serious scientific concerns about the proposed research (it is poor/ flawed/ duplicative)</li> <li>Research design, methods and analyses are not well developed or integrated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research design is unsuitable for a Catalyst award.</li> <li>The proposed concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools, or technologies are not novel for the area</li> <li>Proposed research isn't innovative and there is</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor training environment and educational environment. The supervisory team can't support the student's career development</li> <li>There are serious scientific concerns about the proposed research (it is poor/ flawed/ duplicative)</li> <li>The proposed research design, methods and analyses are not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few or no competencies demonstrated with no plans to achieve those outstanding.</li> <li>Poor training environment and educational environment for the candidate without career and network development opportunities</li> <li>There are serious scientific concerns about the proposed research (it is poor/ flawed/ duplicative)</li> </ul>	Below acceptable	3	Not fundable
					Many identified flaws	2	
					Serious scientific weaknesses or other	1	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research design is unsuitable for the Award type.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further explanation is needed for how design fits with the aims of the project.</li> </ul>	no potential for further development	well developed. •The work is not achievable within the timeframe of a PhD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed research design, methods and analyses are not well developed.</li> <li>The work is not achievable within the timeframe of an Early Career Fellowship</li> </ul>	major concerns		
					Definitely not fundable	0	



## Appendix II Early Career Fellowships assessment framework

This Assessment Framework outlines the skills and training researchers applying to our Early Career Fellowship Awards are expected to demonstrate in their application and interview. Career breaks, part-time working and changes in discipline will be taken into consideration by our panels and committees to make appropriate adjustments when assessing your record of outputs, research achievements and career progression.

Key competencies Candidates should:	
<b>Research vision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a high commitment to MS research with a clear understanding of how their research contributes to our Research Strategy.</li> <li>• Demonstrate independent research ideas that are likely to result in significant benefits for people affected by MS; including, but not limited to, addressing fundamental gaps in our knowledge of MS pathophysiology, development and implementation of novel treatments, risk factors and prevention, or improved care and services for people affected by MS.</li> <li>• Be able to describe the long term plans for their research, including a route for the findings to be implemented to realise the benefits for people affected by MS.</li> <li>• Have an awareness of research in other fields and embrace opportunities for collaborative and interdisciplinary working.</li> </ul>
<b>Research experience and potential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have prior experience in MS research or personal motivation to work in MS and evidence of work in a related and relevant research field.</li> <li>• Hold a PhD, if they are a non-clinical researcher or be able to demonstrate equivalent research experience, if they are clinically qualified.</li> <li>• Have delivered previous research project(s) and show evidence of impactful outputs*, for example, first author publications or critical contributions to multi-author publications, conference presentations or policy outputs.</li> <li>• Actively be enhancing their growing "tool-box" of skills, which will serve as a strong basis for future independent research activity, whilst being increasingly recognised for their specialist expertise.</li> <li>• Be establishing and able to demonstrate their own network(s) of research contacts independent of the current group leader/supervisor (e.g. through multicentre collaborations)</li> </ul> <p>*Research outputs may include but are not limited to preprints, contribution to consortia, patents, key datasets, software, novel assays and reagents and publications. When considering research publications, our reviewers will recognise that the content of a scientific paper and its influence in the field holds more significance than publication metrics or where it was published.</p>
<b>Personal development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe how they have designed their proposal to include research and credible plans for a training and educational programme that will support further career development and networking with peers and superiors.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate appropriate selection of supervisor(s) and project team that will enable them to gain the specific skills needed to deliver their current and future research plans.</li> <li>• Have identified and be pursuing opportunities to access career development support, such as mentoring, learning new skills, and spending time in or collaborating closely with other research groups or settings, either within the UK or overseas. These opportunities can either be within the research institution the Fellow has worked in, or through multicentre collaborations.</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show evidence of leading and inspiring, for example through organisation of peer activities, workshops, journal clubs, or supporting individuals at earlier career stages such as Masters and PhD level students or clinical trainees.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication and engagement skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have excellent communication and interpersonal skills across different audiences, including academic and public, demonstrated, for example, through presentations at scientific conferences and involvement at public meetings (for example, those organised by us or one of our local groups).</li> <li>• Demonstrate enthusiasm for active involvement (PPI) of people with MS in the development of their specific project and wider research plans.</li> <li>• Show how their research outcomes will be communicated and disseminated within and outside the research community</li> <li>• Be prepared to demonstrate how their research aligns with our mission and our promise to people with MS.</li> </ul>
<b>Profile and influence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a strong, practical sense of how they will develop their careers to become leading independent researchers.</li> <li>• Be supportive of the wider research agenda through, for example, peer review activity, providing lectures/seminars, teaching/clinical duties and participation in internal committees.</li> </ul>

## **We're the MS Society.**

Our community is here for you  
through the highs, lows and  
everything in between.

We understand what life's like with MS.

Together, we are strong enough to stop MS.

[mssociety.org.uk](http://mssociety.org.uk)



## **Contact us**

MS National Centre 020 8438 0700  
[info@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:info@mssociety.org.uk)

MS Helpline Freephone 0808 800 8000 (weekdays 9am-9pm)  
[helpline@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:helpline@mssociety.org.uk)

### **Online**

[www.mssociety.org.uk](http://www.mssociety.org.uk)  
[facebook.com/MSSociety](https://facebook.com/MSSociety)  
[twitter.com/mssocietyuk](https://twitter.com/mssocietyuk)

### **MS Society Scotland**

0131 335 4050  
[msscotland@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:msscotland@mssociety.org.uk)

### **MS Society Northern Ireland**

028 9080 2802  
[nireception@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:nireception@mssociety.org.uk)

### **MS Society Cymru**

[mscymru@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:mscymru@mssociety.org.uk)

Multiple Sclerosis Society.  
Registered charity nos. 1139257 / SC041990.  
Registered as a limited company by guarantee  
in England and Wales 07451571.

▶ **Let's stop MS together**