

MS Society ECR Skills Development Award

Applicant guidance

You should use this guidance document to help you prepare your application form.

Introduction

We're the largest charitable funder of MS research in the UK. And we're committed to supporting early career researchers (ECRs) throughout their careers in MS research. Through our ECR Network, we're providing career development training and resources. As well as ECR funding support and platforms to boost networking and mentorship.

What are ECR Skills Development Awards?

ECR Skills Development Awards are designed to enhance your skill set and advance your professional development as a researcher. They can be used for any career-related activity that helps you progress in your career in MS research. Such as specialist training courses or placements in a different research group to allow you to learn a new technique.

These Awards are intended to help develop you as a researcher. And you'll need to justify how the proposed activity will allow you to remain committed to MS research. But we'd like you to consider what support you need to advance your career and use these Awards to help you achieve your goals.

If you have an idea for funding but aren't sure whether it's eligible, you can email us at research@mssociety.org.uk.

Who is eligible to apply?

These Awards are open to any early career researchers working in an MS-related field. You must be based at a UK higher education or NHS institution.

What can I apply for?

You can apply for up to £2,000. You'll need to provide a breakdown of what the funding is being used for as well as justification for all costs. You can include reasonable travel and accommodation costs associated with your activity. In exceptional circumstances, where strong justification is provided, we'll consider budgets over £2,000. You should contact us **before** submitting your application if you'd like to apply for more than £2,000.

You can't use these Awards to request funding for conference registration or travel, laboratory consumables, salary support or publication costs. They also can't be used to replace training that should be offered by your institution or as bridging funding.

Key dates and information

We offer two Skills Development Award rounds each year. You must use the funds within 12 months of the award being made.

Round 1:

Applications open: Tuesday 5 March 2024

Applications close: Tuesday 7 May 2024

Funding period: July 2024 – June 2025

Round 2:

Applications open: Tuesday 24 September 2024

Applications close: Tuesday 26 November 2024

Funding period starts: January 2025 – December 2025

You **can't** use these awards for activities that have already taken place. Or for activities that happen before the funding period starts. You should check our funding dates align with your proposed activity before you apply.

You'll have to submit a short report (approx. 500 words) on how the funding was used and the impact it has had on your career. You'll also be asked to write a blog about your experience and career plans for our ECR Hub.

How will my application be assessed?

Your application is reviewed internally with input from The Expert Review Network and a person affected by MS from our Research Network.

We look at the following criteria:

- The quality of the writing
- A clear, concise and relevant case for support for undertaking the activity
- There is clear benefit to the applicant in how the proposed activity will further their career in both the short- and long-term
- The proposed activity will enable the applicant to stay committed to MS research
- Full and reasonable costings are provided

How do I complete my application?

Your application must be submitted using our online grants management system, [CC Grant Tracker](#). You'll need to upload your CV (max 2 sides) and a letter of support from your manager/Principal Investigator. If you're planning to do a placement in a different research group, you'll also need to include a letter of support from the host group too.

Completing the application form

- As the application form will be assessed by a person affected by MS, you **must** write it [using Plain English](#). This isn't the same as writing a lay summary but makes your application accessible to those without specialist knowledge.
- You have to explain the proposed activity in detail, how it'll help you develop as a researcher and allow you to stay committed to MS research.
- You need to provide a full budget breakdown of costs involved with the activity. You should provide exact costings and shouldn't apply for more than you need.
- You should focus as much as possible on your own career progression and how the funding will help you. While you can contextualise it to the activities of your lab or PI, you should emphasise how your career will be supported by the grant.
- When writing about 'impact and evaluation' (section 5), you should highlight the short-term learning you'll gain from the activity and its effectiveness. And the longer-term impact of the activity on your career plans.
- There is a section for you to add any other information you think might be relevant to the application.

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



Contact us

MS National Centre 020 8438 0700
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MS Helpline Freephone 0808 800 8000 (weekdays 9am-9pm)
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Multiple Sclerosis Society.
Registered charity nos. 1139257 / SC041990.
Registered as a limited company by guarantee
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 **Let's stop MS together**