

Spark Grant

Research Grant Policy and Information

Please read this document before completing the outline and full application forms

Heart Research UK

The Charity's objects are restricted to the promotion and furtherance of medical research into the prevention, treatment and cure of heart disease and related conditions including practical help with the prevention and treatment and the rehabilitation of those with such diseases.

Applying for a grant

- 1) Research proposals that are relevant to our [research strategy](#) will be considered.
- 2) The Lead Applicant and point of contact must be based in a UK academic/research institution.
- 3) Lead applicants must be early- or mid-career researchers. Established academics are permitted as co-applicants.
- 4) The Lead Applicant is expected to have a contract (fixed term or tenure) which covers the proposed duration of the grant.
- 5) Applicants must register and apply online for a grant through Flexi-Grant®.
- 6) Full applications must be submitted by **5pm, 1st December 2026**.

Funding details

- 1) The maximum funding available is **£25,000**.
- 2) A full breakdown and detailed justification of the funding requested must be included and costings will be scrutinised by our reviewers.
- 3) Accurate costings must be provided at the time of application as supplementary funding is not permitted following an award.
- 4) Funding for salaries of Principal Applicant, Co-applicants or Collaborators who are currently funded by the university, NHS or equivalent, should not be included.
- 5) When calculating salaries for research staff, annual increments and cost of living increases should be factored into the calculations where applicable.
- 6) Grants do not cover the Apprenticeship Levy, which was introduced in 2017, as this is not a direct cost of research.
- 7) Items of equipment may be included if specifically required for the project. Costs should exclude VAT (unless the item is non-exempt), Suppliers' quotes for equipment or other evidence of cost must be included with the application.

- 8) Costs of non-recoverable VAT should be included. Certain goods and services purchased by an eligible body, when they are paid for using charitable or donated funds have a zero rate of VAT. See [HM Revenue & Customs website](#) for more information
- 9) Publication costs and staff recruitment costs are not covered by HRUK grants and should not be included in the application.
- 10) AMRC member charities have a policy of not paying the indirect costs of medical research and only directly incurred research costs should be included in the application. Therefore any indirect costs such as contributions towards the Applicants' salaries, administrative costs or other overheads/infrastructure costs imposed by the Institution must not be included in the application. **The government-funded Charity Research Support Fund (CRSF) is available to help universities cover the indirect costs of charity-funded research.**
- 11) Funding requests for attendance at conferences or scientific meetings should not be included in the application. HRUK grant holders may apply for a travel grant by returning a completed HRUK Travel Grant Request Form at least six weeks before the event. A maximum of £1,000 per grant is allowed for authorised attendance at meetings or conferences relevant to the grant. Receipts or other evidence of the costs of travel must be provided and reimbursement will be made after we have received a 1-page report on the event.

Grant selection process

- 1) Heart Research UK is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) which is now widely accepted as a 'mark of quality' by universities, government, other funders and research organisations. In compliance with AMRC-membership criteria, HRUK uses expert review to decide how to allocate funding for medical research.
- 2) Grant applications are assessed by carefully selected, independent external peer reviewers. External reviewers assess the value, quality and potential impact of the science, and provide a written report of their expert opinion to the HRUK Spark Medical Review Panel (MRP).
- 3) The HRUK Spark MRP meets on an annual basis to consider the grant applications and makes recommendations for funding to the HRUK Trustees.
- 4) Applicants for HRUK Spark Grants will be informed about the outcome as soon as possible following the meeting of the HRUK MRP.

Determining whether an application is suitable for a Spark Grant

The Spark Grant scheme is a flexible scheme which allows researchers to generate the necessary data to de-risk their project and increase the likelihood of securing project or programme grant funding. We envisage the grant funding projects which include, but are not limited to:

- Testing a novel hypothesis and deliver the preliminary data required for significant basic research funding.
- Demonstrating proof-of-principle following the completion of a basic research project to start the translation pathway by enabling larger, proof of concept funding.

The following projects are not eligible for Spark funding:

- Projects including data access charges.
- Projects to de-risk commercial technology. We will accept projects including early-career researchers funded by industry as lead- or co-applicant, but the project cannot further the interests of the company funding the researcher.

Disclaimer

A grant application will not be accepted unless the Principal Applicant and their Host Institution agree to and agree to abide by our Terms and Conditions.

HRUK cannot and does not give any undertaking that they will fund any research in any round of funding applications. HRUK regularly receives more entirely worthwhile and fully justified applications for funding than they can possibly support. Any failure to secure funding is in no way any criticism of any research proposal, any researcher, supervisor or department or indeed any institution. Sadly, applications are more often unsuccessful than not and research opportunities that the Trustees would like to support cannot always be supported. The deliberations of HRUK and the Spark Grant Medical Review Panel are confidential.

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