



**THE SIR JULES THORN AWARD  
FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH**

**GUIDANCE NOTES  
FOR SUBMISSION OF INITIAL APPLICATIONS**

[www.julesthorntrust.org.uk](http://www.julesthorntrust.org.uk)

# THE SIR JULES THORN AWARD FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH

## GUIDANCE NOTES

These notes are for guidance of all applicants competing for The Sir Jules Thorn Award for Biomedical Research. They must be read by all those concerned with preparing an application – the Principal Applicant, any Co-applicants and the Head of the Department in which the work will be undertaken.

A copy of the Terms and Conditions under which the Award is made (available on the Trust's website) must be read in conjunction with the application form.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

1. At the discretion of the Trustees one Biomedical Research Award of up to £1.7 million is offered to support an original programme of translational biomedical research, extending for up to five years. The Award enables successful applicants to pursue their own independent research programme.
2. UK medical schools and NHS organisations are eligible to apply, provided that they are able to demonstrate:
  - a) a track record in international cutting edge clinical translational research,
  - b) robust research infrastructure to support the proposed programme; and
  - c) institutional commitment to support the Principal Applicant's research.
3. Only one application per eligible institution/organisation is permitted and must be selected following an internal competition coordinated by the Research Dean, Head of the Medical School, or other appropriate person who must provide written support for the submission on behalf of the institution/organisation.

Where a medical school and affiliated NHS organisation both have a prospective proposal, they must coordinate the selection process to decide which one should be submitted.

Information about the initial application procedure is given on page 3.

4. The work must include research involving patients. There must be a clear specification of the hypothesis based on pre-clinical experimental data supporting the rationale of the clinical study, arising from the applicant's own work (and not derivative of someone else's observations). Further work to support the hypothesis in the early phase of the grant or to substantiate questions arising from clinical experiments may be supported by experimental animal models.
5. There must be a clear strategy defining how the research will translate into benefit for patients and the timescale within which this will take place.
6. The studies might include for example:
  - significant proposals which could lead to improved diagnosis and/or prognostic methods and to new treatments
  - concept validation
  - intervention trials.

All proposals must be based on appropriate bio-statistical analysis.

7. The research must have a justifiable claim to be at the leading edge of international science and must be led by a clearly identified Principal Applicant of outstanding quality in the early years of an established research and academic career.
8. The work involved must be the major commitment of the Principal Applicant, comprising at least 70% of his/her research time or 50% of his/her total time, whichever is greater.
9. Any co-applicants are expected to be actively involved in the work. Their precise role and time commitment must be stated in the application.
10. The Award may not be used to meet the salary costs of the applicant(s) who should be in institutionally-funded posts for the duration of the grant.
11. There must be visible strategic commitment to the research by the host institution.
12. Funding is restricted to work, including data collection, carried out in the United Kingdom.
13. The Trust does not fund the overheads of the host institution or any costs incurred by the sponsoring organisation. The Trust is an NIHR Non-commercial Partner in England and its equivalent elsewhere in the United Kingdom.
14. The Trust is unable to provide a grant for an existing project, to cover expenditure already incurred, or to supplement support provided by other funding bodies.
15. Applications submitted concurrently to other funders will be accepted but subsequent short-listing would be conditional upon any such applications being withdrawn unless the Trust agrees otherwise. It is essential that any related applications are noted in the answer to Question 7 in the application form.
16. The Trust's charitable status does not permit the provision of a grant which might, whether directly or indirectly, contribute to a profit for a commercial company. An application cannot, therefore, be considered where a company is supplying a cash grant, equipment, materials, drugs etc. at no cost, whether express or implied, for commercial use of the findings of the project.
17. The Award will be subject to the Trust's Terms and Conditions. The successful institution/organisation will be required to enter into the Trust's standard:
  - Intellectual Property Agreement defining the management of any IP Rights arising from the research, and the sharing of any resulting income
  - Sponsor Responsibility Agreement, accepting the responsibilities of Sponsor for any research involving human participants, their tissue or information as defined in the [UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research](#). The Trust will not act as Sponsor for any project.
18. The Trust has an Open Access Publishing Policy for all publications arising from work funded under the Biomedical Award programme. A copy of the Policy may be downloaded from the [Resources](#) section of the Trust website.

## APPLICATION PROCEDURES

There is a two-stage application process running from July in the year preceding the Award to November in the year in which the Award is made:

- a. A short preliminary submission leading to long-listing; and
- b. A full application leading to short-listing, followed by detailed discussions and a decision on the award of the grant.

### Timetable for the 2022 competition:

#### 2021

July 2021	Call for preliminary applications.
1 November 2021	Closing date for the receipt by the Trust of preliminary applications (applications should be received by 12:00)

#### 2022

January 2022	Announcement of long-listing and issue of invitations to submit full application.
30 April 2022	Closing date for receipt by the Trust of full applications (applications should be received by 12:00).
End July 2022	Announcement of short-listed applications.
Early autumn 2022	Presentation of short-listed applications to Medical Advisory Committee.
End November 2022	Announcement of the outcome of the competition.

### Preliminary Applications

1. Eligible institutions are expected to advertise widely for expressions of interest and to undertake a competitive process to select the strongest research programme which meets the Trust's criteria.
2. The Trust may advertise the call for applications on its website, and in scientific journals, to encourage investigators to contact the office of the Research Dean (or equivalent) if they wish their work to be considered for selection by the institution/organisation.
3. Preliminary applications should be submitted using the online application form, which is available on the Trust's website. In completing the form, institutions/organisations will need to provide:
  - i. a 2000 word summary of the proposed research, explaining why it would be suitable for a translational study, the timescale for clinical applicability, the unmet need which is to be investigated and how the research will meet that need.
  - ii. key references (maximum of 30) supporting the proposed research. Each reference to include PubMed ID number, title, name of first author and number of citations,
  - iii. a short CV of the principal applicant, including major publications relevant to the application, a list of current grant awards and a list of grant applications awaiting decision. CV, publications list and grant list not to exceed 3 pages in total.
  - iv. a single page appendix containing figures/diagrams may be included, if appropriate.

- v. confirmation of the process that the institution/organisation has used to select the submitted research programme.
4. The application form should be accompanied by a letter of support from the Research Dean/Head of Department or equivalent indicating why the proposal was selected and its relevance to the institution's research strategy.
5. The Trust must receive the application form and letter of support by midday (12noon) on 1st November 2021.
6. Preliminary applications will be evaluated by experienced assessors and long listing will be decided on the relative merits of the submissions. The Trust will not provide feedback at this stage of the competition or enter into discussion about the reasons for decisions.

### **Full Applications**

1. Institutions whose preliminary submissions are long listed will be invited to complete a full application within the timetable above.
2. The following documents should be submitted with the completed form:
  - a. Covering letter from the applicant addressing any specific questions contained in the invitation to submit a full application,
  - b. A letter of support from the Research Dean / Head of Department or equivalent indicating how and why the proposal was selected, including its relevance to the institution's research strategy,
  - c. A letter from the Sponsor in accordance with question 17 of the application form and point Q17 on page 8 of these guidelines, confirming that it is willing and able to take on the responsibilities of the sponsor,
  - d. If the project proposed to use animals or animal tissue – a copy of the relevant Home Office Licence in accordance with question 18 of the application form and point Q18 on page 8 of these guidelines.
3. The completed application will be subject to the Trust's normal selection procedure and will be considered in competition with other applications for the Award. Rigorous peer review of all applications is undertaken.
4. **Applicants will need to provide the name and institutional email of scientific referees whom they feel would be suitable to comment on their application.** These must not include colleagues from their own institution or those with whom they have collaborated in the last five years. Please note that the Trust may or may not choose to approach some or all of the individuals identified. It is the Trust's policy to seek opinions from whichever authorities it considers to be most appropriate, and it cannot accept requests from applicants to proscribe certain referees.
5. The final decision will be recommended to the Trustees by the Trust's Medical Advisory Committee after a review process aided, but not determined exclusively, by external referees. The Trust may seek further information during the process. There could be many reasons why an application is unsuccessful and these will not necessarily be explained in full but the Trust may provide some feedback at the conclusion of this stage of the application process.

6. Grants are awarded entirely at the Trustees' discretion, and they reserve the right not to make the Award following completion of the review process in any particular year.

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

1. A **principal applicant** is the lead researcher who has the main intellectual input into, and ownership of, the research if the application is successful. This individual will be both responsible and accountable for the management of the research programme, and will normally be considered by the Trust to be the "holder" of the grant.
2. A **co-applicant** is a researcher who will have significant intellectual input into, and part ownership of, the research if the application is successful.
3. A **collaborator** is an individual named in the body of the application who will supply technical advice or reagents, but who would not normally be involved in the day-to-day execution of the work.