



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

**GUIDANCE NOTES
FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS**

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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) Adequate infrastructure support; and
 - c) The commitment of internal resources for the synergy required.
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 having delegated authority, who must provide written support for the submission.

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.

For more information about the application procedures please see page 4.

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, (not derivative of someone else's observations). Further work to support the hypothesis in the early phase of the grant or, indeed, 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.
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 commercial profit for a manufacturer. An application cannot, therefore, be considered where a manufacturer is supplying a cash grant or equipment, materials, drugs etc. at no cost, whether express or implied, for commercial use of the findings of the project.
17. The Trust has developed an explicit Open Access policy for all publications arising from work funded under the Biomedical Award programme. A copy of the Trust's Open Access Publishing 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 2020 competition:

2019

July 2019	Call for preliminary applications.
31 October 2019	Closing date for the receipt by the Trust of preliminary applications (applications should be received by 12:00)

2020

January 2020	Announcement of long-listing and issue of invitations to submit full application.
30 April 2020	Closing date for receipt by the Trust of full applications (applications should be received by 12:00).
End July 2020	Announcement of short-listed applications.
Early autumn 2020	Presentation of short-listed applications to Medical Advisory Committee.
End November 2020	Announcement of the outcome of the competition.

Preliminary Applications

1. Before submitting proposals it will be expected that eligible institutions will advertise widely for expressions of interest and that a competitive process will be used to select the research programme which is judged to fit best with the Trust's criteria. The Trust should be informed of the process which took place leading to the selection of the proposal.
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 when the institution selects its research proposal.
3. Eligible institutions who wish to apply should submit the following within the aforementioned timetable:-
 - a) Responses to a series of questions relating to the project and principal investigator on our online application form including;
 - i. 2000 word summary of the proposed research, and 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. 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 also be included.
- v. The application should be accompanied by 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.

The Trust must receive submission of the application form by midday (12noon) on 31st October 2019.

4. 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 the decisions.

Full Applications

1. Institutions whose preliminary submissions are long listed will be invited to complete a full application within the aforementioned timetable.
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. When received the 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. **Please provide the name, full postal address and institutional email of scientific referees whom you feel would be suitable to comment on your application.** These must not include colleagues from your institution or those with whom you 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 you have selected. 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.

NOTES ON COMPLETING THE FULL APPLICATION FORM

1. Applications must be completed in a typeface of adequate size (no smaller than 11 point Arial font).
2. Abbreviations should not be used unless fully explained.
3. The application must be complete in itself. No additional pages will be accepted unless specific instructions are given.

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.

NOTES RELATING TO QUESTIONS ON THE FULL APPLICATION FORM

Q5 Proposed start date

Please take into account the timetable for the assessment of applications, and the expected lead-time for recruitment of staff who would be working on the project.

Q6 Proportion of working time

Please see item 8 under “General Information” above regarding the minimum proportion of working time the Principal Applicant and Co Applicants should spend on research funded by the Award.

Q7 Related applications

Please see item 16 under “General Information” above regarding applications submitted to other funders.

Q9 Research question

Please state what you consider to be the key question you will address with your proposed study. For non-hypothesis research please state the impact of the proposed studies on a particular field. Applicants should demonstrate that they have made a critical assessment of literature cited in support of their ideas.

Q11 Details of research project

No more than 5,000 words should be used to describe the research proposal. Please state the word count at the end of the response to this question.

Applicants must provide all information pertinent to the grant proposal within the application form, unless directed otherwise.

Q12 References

Reference may be made to papers “in press”. Copies of referenced papers that have been accepted for publication but are awaiting distribution in paper or online should also be submitted. Manuscripts which are “in preparation” or “submitted for publication” must not be included.

Q13 Curriculum Vitae of applicant(s)

Sub Paragraph d - If the source of personal salary support is indicated as “other”, please provide details.

Sub Paragraph h - Please summarise what you consider to be your key scientific achievements and state to which periods of your career they relate. You do not need to list all of your positions.

Q14 Financial details of support requested

The excel spreadsheet should be completed to detail the full costs of the project up to the maximum award amount of £1.7 million.

Salaries (see note 10 in the general information section of these Guidance Notes)

- i. Please detail salaries requested for all staff to be funded on the grant.
- ii. Salary support will be cash limited at the point of the award. The institution should factor in a compound inflationary allowance for each post to cover the cost of future pay awards. The percentage used for the calculation must be the same as the most recent pay award agreed by the institution for the grade on which the individual is to be employed. Please confirm the percentage figure in the appropriate box.
- iii. Salary costs should include any London/Regional weighting allowances, contributions towards an institutional pension scheme, and employer’s national

insurance payments. The Trust is not able to provide funding for personal pension schemes held by the individual.

Research Expenses – entitled; Materials & Consumables, Miscellaneous, Animals and Equipment

- i. The Trust will only provide the direct costs of the research proposal. It does not meet the overhead costs of the host institution, the cost of NHS service support, or sponsorship costs (see Q17). The Trust is an NIHR Non-commercial Partner , which ensures that NHS service support costs incurred in the research will be met.
- ii. Requests for publication costs may not be included.
- iii. Where animal experimentation costs are involved, applicants should complete this table after reference to their animal house or biological services manager.
- iv. Expenses for travel which is to be undertaken for the immediate purposes of the project may be included for consideration. They will not normally be paid where the person is already eligible to claim them by reason of his or her office.
- v. An Award may include the cost of equipment, but it must satisfy the following criteria:-
 - a) The equipment must be essential to the research.
 - b) The reason for using the equipment must be justified in question15 (f).
 - c) Equivalent equipment must not be available to the applicant elsewhere in the institution.
 - d) The cost should exclude VAT where exemption is applicable.
 - e) No equipment is purchased within the last six months of the grant.

Q15 Sub Paragraph e - Animals

It is the Trust's policy only to support the use of animals where no viable alternative exists. Applicants must have regard to animal welfare and to advances in the refinement, replacement and reduction of animal use. The following questions should be addressed specifically:-

- i. Does the work proposed involve the use of protected animals in regulated procedures under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986?
- ii. If so, what species, and how many animals? See also Q14 (d)
- iii. Are any of the procedures of substantial severity?

It would be appropriate for the justification for the use of animals to cover:-

- i. How the benefits outweigh the costs.
- ii. Why animals are necessary, and why non-animal alternatives are not possible.
- iii. How the experimental and statistical design has been used to optimise/minimise the number of animals used.
- iv. What steps have been taken to refine procedures to reduce discomfort?

See also **Q18**

Q16 Research on human participants or human tissue

Approval from the appropriate research ethics committee is required for all research involving human participants or biological samples. Approval from other regulatory bodies should also be sought where necessary. For research carried out at multiple sites, ethics committee approval must cover each site.

Q17 Research using NHS facilities or patients

If the research is covered by the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research, a letter from the intended sponsor, if identified, should be included, confirming that the research proposal is consistent with the Framework and that the sponsor is willing to undertake the responsibilities stated in the Framework and applicable clinical trial regulations. The Trust is unable to fund any research which does not have such sponsorship. The Trust does not cover costs incurred by the sponsoring organisation in discharging its sponsorship obligations.

Q18 Experiments on animals

The institution must ensure that research involving the use of animals complies with relevant laws and regulations. Copies of relevant licences should be included. While the Trust will consider proposals awaiting Home Office authorisation, no award may be activated and no animal experiments may commence until the appropriate licences have been granted.