



## **Review process for requests to extend or amend research awards**

Expert review is central to the Trust's decision-making processes for the annual Sir Jules Thorn Award and the Research Infrastructure Fund. In assessing new applications for funding, the Trust abides by the [AMRC's six principles](#) of expert review and the assessment process for each programme is set out in our [Peer Review Policy](#).

This document sets out the processes the Trust will follow if a grant holder makes a request to extend an award beyond the end date agreed at the start of the project, to amend the budget, or to make changes to the research plan described in their original application.

## **The Sir Jules Thorn Award**

New applications are assessed by the Trust's Medical Advisory Committee and are also subject to peer review by external experts in the relevant field. Funding is awarded for a period of up to 5 years, with a maximum award value of £1.7 million. The Trust recognises that large, complex research programmes may encounter delays, and that plans may evolve as research progresses. If a grant-holder asks the Trust to extend or make amendments to an existing Award, the processes we follow will be determined by the significance of the proposed change. In all cases, we will assess:

- the progress and quality of the ongoing research
- whether the proposed amendment represents good strategic use of the Trust's funding.

### *Significant amendments*

If the Award-holder requests a significant amendment to an existing Award, this will be considered by the Medical Advisory Committee. A significant amendment is defined as:

- a request for a no-cost extension of more than 12 months, beyond the agreed end date for the Award
- any request to amend the research aims, experimental design or research methods set out in the Award-holder's original application for funding
- a request for additional funding, beyond the agreed budget
- any request that would require an amendment to the terms and conditions of the Award.

The Award-holder must provide a written proposal for the Committee setting out:

- the significant amendment being requested
- the rationale for the proposed amendment
- any impact the proposed amendment may have on the research aims, experimental design or research methods described in the original application

- the impact of the proposed amendment on the agreed budget and/or the timetable and key milestones for the remainder of the project.

The Committee will consider the proposal at its next scheduled meeting, or by correspondence. Where appropriate, the Committee may delegate members with specific expertise to undertake further review, or to advise on any additional information requested from the PI following the MAC's discussion.

The Board has delegated responsibility for assessing Sir Jules Thorn Awards to the Committee, but approval for financial and contractual matters rests with the Trustees.

If, based on its expertise and knowledge of the research programme, the Committee concludes that a request to extend or amend an Award is justified:

- the Committee may approve no-cost extensions or requests to amend the experimental design or research methods. The Committee will inform the Board of any such changes in its next scheduled report to the Trustees
- any request to amend the key research aims of a project should be referred to the Trustees, together with the Committee's scientific advice
- any request for additional funding or to amend the terms and conditions of an Award should also be referred to the Trustees, together with the Committee's assessment of the scientific case.

The Trustees will consider any recommendations or advice from the Committee.

#### *Other amendments*

Responsibility for assessing minor amendments is delegated by the Committee to the Director and Trust team. Minor amendments are defined as:

- a request for a no-cost extension of up to 12 months beyond the agreed end date for the Award, where there is no change to the research aims, experimental design or research methods set out in the original application
- a request to reallocate funds within the agreed budget for an Award, and there is no change to research aims, experimental design or research methods.

#### **Research Infrastructure Fund**

New applications for capital funding are assessed by the Trustees, informed by peer reviews from external experts in the relevant field. The Trustees may also seek advice from members of the Medical Advisory Committee, where appropriate. The terms and conditions for the Fund state that funding should be drawn down within 2 years of the award date, and the value of awards is between £150K and £500K. The Trust recognises that capital projects may encounter delays due to the lead times for purchasing specialist equipment or other factors. As for the Sir Jules Thorn Award, if a grant-holder asks the Trust to extend or make amendments to an existing grant, the processes we follow will be determined by the significance of the proposed change, and we will assess:

- the progress of the underlying research supported by the grant
- whether the proposed amendment represents good strategic use of the Trust's funding.

### *Significant amendments*

If the grant-holder requests a significant amendment to an existing pledge, this will be considered by the Board of Trustees. A significant amendment is defined as:

- a request for a no-cost extension of more than 12 months, beyond the 2-year deadline for drawing down the funds
- any request to apply the funds to a different use than described in the original application. This would include any significant change to the specification of the equipment or facilities to be funded by the grant, or a request to apply the funds to an alternative project
- any request that would require an amendment to the terms and conditions of the Award.

The Award-holder must provide a written proposal for the Board setting out:

- the significant amendment being requested
- the rationale for the proposed amendment
- the impact of the proposed amendment on the agreed budget and/or timetable for the project
- any impact the proposed amendment may have on the underlying research described in the original application.

The Board will consider the proposal at its next scheduled meeting, or by correspondence. Where appropriate, the Board may request advice from the Medical Advisory Committee or other experts.

### *Other amendments*

Responsibility for assessing minor amendments is delegated by the Trustees to the Director and Trust team, who will report any request to the Chairman of the Board. Minor amendments are defined as:

- a request for a no-cost extension of up to 12 months, beyond the 2-year deadline for drawing down the funds
- a request to reallocate funds within the agreed budget, where there is no change to the specification of the equipment or facilities to be funded from the grant.

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