Application instructions for Action Medical Research Project Grant round 2022

When preparing your application please adhere to this guidance – applications that are late, incomplete or do not follow the guidance may be rejected.

We recommend reading all instructions before starting the application - you may find it helpful to print a colour copy for reference. Frequently asked questions can be found at the end of this file.

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THE APPLICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

You should complete the web form including your supporting documents by the deadline of Thursday 14 July 2022 by 5pm, earlier applications are welcomed.

The form includes a section for files you will need to upload (including the protocol template, finance template and further details of Principal Applicant and Coapplicants template). These templates and other important documents you need to refer to (such as the example research agreement and grant policy) were sent to the Principal Applicant as a link in an email. Guidance on how to complete the templates is on pages 4-8 in this instruction file.

The web form is completely separate to the main charity website and you can only access the form via this link http://actionmedicalresearch-applications.org.uk/project/init.pl

Signature pages: You should send the signed further details of Principal Applicant and Coapplicants page and Excel finance sheet to us **by 31 July 2022**. See page 8 for more information.

Data Protection

Unless otherwise agreed, all information that the Applicants and/or Institution supply to the Charity relating to any applications or Grants awarded will be used for the purposes of processing the Application and/or Grant and for the purpose of peer review, audit and/or evaluation. All Shared Personal Data will be processed in accordance with Data Protection law. Data supplied in the application relating to the applicant(s) and/or individuals funded by the Grant may be used by the Charity for the purposes of grant administration. It may also be disclosed to and processed by external peer reviewers, government and other research and professional bodies including potential joint funding partners.

HOW TO COMPLETE THE WEBFORM

! This section contains important information. The Principal Applicant should Register the full application at **http://actionmedicalresearch-applications.org.uk/project/init.pl**

The Principal Applicant can give the login details to team members but **only one person should be in the webform at any one time to avoid overwriting what the other has entered.** A password reset function is also available on this login screen.

Applications list screen

Click New on this screen to begin your form. Once the application is started you can:

View your answers, Continue to the application form, Save & Exit the application form

Or 'change your password'.

Do **not** click Delete all as this will delete the application permanently.

If you need to PRINT a basic copy of your answers this can be done via a button on the View screen. Note you can only access the view button when the website is open for applications.

Navigating around the form

! Don't use the back button on your browser – please use the Previous, Next and Save & Exit buttons to move around the form. If you enter a page of information and then click the back button on your browser then you may **lose the information** typed on that page. Please complete the required fields first. These mandatory fields allow you to save all other answers on that page.

Save & Exit allows you to continue at a later time. When logging back in click on continue and **Do not press the Delete all button!**

What to do if your form has an error

If you are getting an error message please send us the error name. Contact details are on page 8.

Structure of the webform and import requirements

Some fields are required fields or have validation rules to enable successful importing into our database. Required fields on the webform are marked with an *. The form will not allow you to progress to another section and may delete information that you have entered if these fields are not correctly completed. If this happens a **red** error message will appear near the top of the screen, which indicates which question needs to be corrected.

- **Part A covers basic details of the application.** Required fields: Question A1 and question A2 – Project length (in months) and amounts requested from the charity for this project

- **Parts B1 to B9 cover Principal and Co-applicant contact details.** There is space for a maximum of eight co-applicants. Please leave blank any co-applicant sections you do not require. Applicants must be employed at a UK research institution such as a university or a hospital. Collaborators from outside the UK or not based at UK research institutions (including any patient representatives) can be named in part C of the form and their letters of support submitted as

described later in these instructions. Required fields: The Principal Applicant name, contact institution, address details and email address (**questions** B1, B4, B5 and B6)

- **Part C contains questions about the details of the application including a non-confidential lay statement (non-scientific description suitable for members of the public).**
- **Part D is the file upload section where you upload your completed additional files.** Required fields: The finance file and protocol must be uploaded
- **Part E is a tickbox** (required field) confirming that once the Submit form button has been clicked no further changes to the application can be made online.

The Review button and the Submit form button

At the end of section E there is a button called Review which allows you to carry out a final check before submitting your application. At the end of the review screen there are two buttons:

- The Edit form button returns you to the questions screen so that you can amend your answers
- The Submit form button **submits the application**. **Only click submit form when you are sure your application is ready for submission.** One submitted no further changes can be made online. If a half-completed application is submitted, it will be deleted from our system and then will need to be re-entered.

Once the application is submitted the website will send a copy of the application as a PDF. A word/pdf format that is easier to read (including the additional files submitted to us) will be produced by our database for the referees.

Symbols on the form

- ? can be clicked on to display additional help

Characters/symbols and the return key (new paragraph) not accepted by the form

! Please note that some characters/symbols are unfortunately not accepted by this version of the online form. Please separate information using punctuation such as commas, full stops, colons and the space bar. Do not use the return key (carriage returns) as unfortunately when we download into our database the carriage returns are automatically removed.

Standard bullet points are accepted by the form but please avoid unusual symbols such as

Less than or greater than symbols < > the euro sign €.

The apostrophe ‘ that is under the @ is accepted but a similar character on the top left of the keyboard may not work.

The files that you upload to the application form in Part D eg the protocol document **can** include these symbols

Maximum field lengths

Estimated word counts or character counts are given on some fields. This is normally based on 7 characters to a word. Spaces are counted as characters. Characters beyond the limit in the form can be rejected by the form.

The form will not allow you to progress and may delete information you have entered if these fields are not correctly completed. If this happens a **red** error message will appear near the top of the screen, which indicates which question needs to be corrected.

Uploading files including the protocol, finances and further details of Principal Applicant and Coapplicants file

-Please label your files with short descriptive names eg 'protocol' or 'finances' or 'publication'. Excessively long file names (such as publication titles) cause errors.

-Where possible it is preferable that we receive files in portrait orientation so that we can combine them into one file for the reviewers.

-PLEASE ONLY SUBMIT ONE COPY OF EACH FILE

How to upload files in part D of the webform

Click choose file and select the file you wish to upload. Click UPLOAD to upload the file. If the file has successfully uploaded a green message displaying the filename will appear. You will not be able to click into the file but can upload the file again if you are unsure whether you have uploaded the final version

You can only upload Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, Adobe PDFs and JPEG files.

Instructions for completing files that MUST be uploaded to your application

If these are not included your application will be considered incomplete

❑ **1. PROTOCOL**

Please name the file as 'protocol'

The protocol should NOT be more than six sides of A4 (minimum 1½ line-spacing, not smaller than size 12 font, margins not less than 1.5cm) so that reviewers can easily read the text. You may include references as additional pages (references are not included in the page count). If you have pictures, diagrams, preliminary unpublished data or other essential information necessary for the application these can be included as an appendix of no more than two A4 sides in total – this should not be used as an 'extension' to your protocol. Inclusion of preliminary data is strongly encouraged. Applications without feasibility data may not be judged as competitive. The protocol, references and appendix can be submitted as one file. Where possible please keep the file size below 5MB. **Applications that do not follow this page layout may be rejected.**

Please save images that you add to your protocol as a PNG file (this should retain more detail and be easily viewed) or JPG file. JPG may cause loss of detail on images with high contrast areas (such as text), although this can be mitigated by saving at a high-quality setting (90 to 95 will still reduce file size).
The protocol should include:

i. Background to this proposal and details of previous work you have undertaken in this field.

ii. Hypothesis or reasoning behind the proposal.

iii. Methods of research including overall study design, power calculations and numbers of patients / animals to be used, clinical / laboratory techniques, operative procedures and data analysis.

iv. How this proposal relates to other research being undertaken by a) the applicants and their departments and b) other workers in the field.

v. Description of any difficulties anticipated.

vi. Full justification for all salaried posts and expenses sought.

vii. Brief reference to any further work expected and pathway to clinical impact.

viii. Where do you anticipate securing any further funding that might be needed, following this Action funded project?

References can then be included as additional pages after the 6 page protocol.

❑ 2. FINANCES SHEET

! Please complete the supplied Excel template only – please don't tamper with the Excel template as it won't transfer properly into our system if modified. Please submit your Excel Finance sheet as a .xlsx file

! Please see the 2 pages of instructions at the top of the finances sheet about research costs.

! Important note regarding approval from your Institution

You should check the finances on your Excel finance sheet as soon as possible with your Research Services Office. You will need to send the "conditions for making a grant application", "example research agreement" and "MRC Good research practice- principles and guidelines" documents to your Research Services Office along with your application. The email we sent to the Principal Applicant contains a link to these files.

Please note, if applicable, a SoeCAT form may also be required. This calculates the different activities and costs associated with clinical research – see point 11 below for further information.

For information about the signatures process – see page 8.

❑ 3. Further details of the Principal Applicant and Co-applicants including previous Action Medical Research grants awarded in the last 10 years -please use the supplied Word template only – please upload as a Word file.

The template is available via the weblink in the email to the Principal Applicant. All applicants will need to enter details so we recommend you read/circulate the templates as early as possible. Where possible please avoid leaving large chunks of white space after answers.

For information about the signatures process – see page 8.

❑ 4. If a research worker is known and would be funded by the project, please provide a one page CV and name them on the finance sheet.

Please do not include CVs for supervisors/applicants as these are covered already in the Further details of the Principal Applicant and Co-applicants file. If the research worker is not yet known this is not applicable.

❑ **5. Salary scales – please ONLY send the page of the scale that is relevant to the salaried research worker(s) on the application.** If you do not have a copy of the relevant scale please speak to your research support team or finance office.

❑ **6. Collaborator letters** If the application includes collaboration with other researchers/groups/patient representatives please provide signed letter(s) of support – if possible please combine letters in one file.

❑ **7. If required please provide a 1 to 2 page justification for the use of animals.**

The charity will only support the use of animals where no viable alternative exists. The application must have regard to animal welfare and advances in the refinement, replacement and reduction of animal use.

You will need to answer all of the following questions and include:

i. Home Office licence numbers (institute, project and personal) covering the procedures outlined.

ii. Please indicate whether the necessary approvals have been given by an Animal Welfare and Ethical Approval Body.

iii. The types of animals to be used, numbers involved and costs.

iv. The source of animals and how they will be transported and maintained.

v. Please state the severity of the procedures (mild/moderate/severe) and then give further details of any moderate or severe procedures (no more than 250 words).

vi. A brief justification (one side of A4 maximum) on why alternatives, such as human tissue or other approaches, cannot be used, plus evidence that the species chosen is appropriate and the minimum number of animals will be used to give statistically valid results. Give details of any sample size calculation and statistical advice sought.

List of files that you CAN include in your application

These files may enhance your application if you are able to include them. We understand it is not always possible to obtain these documents prior to a grant being awarded but if your application is successful you would have to supply them before the grant is activated.

❑ **8. A copy of your written ethical approval letter as granted by your ethical committee if applicable to the proposed research. You may not be able to include this if you are in the process of applying or you are not yet able to apply.** Please contact your Head of Department or the university/hospital Research Services department if you are unsure whether you need to supply this document. Do not upload ethics application files, just the approval letter if you have one.

❑ **9. A sponsor letter (if applicable) for the proposed research from your institution.** Research that involves the NHS, for example patients, patient data, human participants, human tissue or human cells, requires a formal sponsor willing to take primary responsibility for monitoring and enforcement of the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research**.** Sponsorship may be dependent on gaining ethical approval, but we still need an appropriate organisation, such as a UK university or NHS trust, to confirm that they will act as sponsor. Action Medical Research is a funder not a sponsor. Please contact your university/hospital Research Services department if you are unsure whether you need to supply this document.

The link below provides a more detailed explanation of what a sponsor is. This policy framework sets out principles of good practice in the management and conduct of health and social care research in the UK.

https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/uk-policy-framework-health-social-care-research/

❑ **10. If applicable, a copy of the front page ONLY of the APPROVED Home Office project licence.** Please contact your Head of Department or the university/hospital Research Services department if you are unsure whether you need to supply this. Note: Do not upload the *application* for a Home Office licence.

❑ **11. If applicable, a SoECAT form. Please send us the 'study information' and 'summary' pages from your SoECAT form as a single PDF with your completed grant application. We may ask for the full form later in the application process.** This may or may not apply to your research proposal, further guidance can be found at https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/schedule-of-events-cost-attribution-template-soecat-guidance/23214 If relevant, you may wish to discuss this with your Finance Department and local AcoRD specialist.

Researchers applying for clinical research funding need to complete a Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT) to be eligible for the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) portfolio and the support this provides. This change came into effect on 1 October 2018. SoECAT is designed to make sure costs are attributed in line with the AcoRD framework and that this is consistent across the UK.

You must complete a SoECAT if:

- you're applying for clinical research funding
- you will carry out your research in the UK
- your research will use NHS resources
- your research requires Health Research Authority approval

You must complete a SoECAT even if you don't think your clinical research will involve excess treatment costs (ETCs).

These are the steps you need to take when you apply for a grant that includes clinical research.

- Complete a SoECAT, which you can download from the NIHR website https://www.nihr.ac.uk/researchers/collaborations-services-and-support-for-your-research/run-your-study/excess-treatment-costs.htm
- Get your form signed off by an AcoRD specialist. There are different ways to contact a specialist, depending on where you are in the UK:
    - England: NIHR website
    - Scotland: NHS Research Scotland website
    - Wales: email research.fundingsupport@wales.nhs.uk
    - Northern Ireland: HSC R&D division website.

You should contact an AcoRD specialist as early as possible in the application process.

- Send us the 'study information' and 'summary' pages from your SoECAT form as a single PDF with your completed grant application. We may ask for the full form later in the application process.
- If we award you a grant you must tell your AcoRD specialist. In England, very expensive ETCs may need further assessment by an NHS panel.

Further guidance on how to complete the form can be found here
https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/how-to-complete-a-soecat/23415

❑ **12. If needed, a copy of a supporting publication in press (up to two publications ONLY)**
Please use short file names to avoid errors.

❑ **13. Other supporting documentation (such as pilot data) may be included providing it is not more than two pages in total. This is intended to allow you to submit a document that is essential to understanding your project and not simply an 'extension' to your protocol document.**

List of files that we definitely DON'T want in your application

☒ **DO NOT** send multiple copies of each file
☒ **DO NOT** send us a covering letter unless you have an important point to address
☒ **DO NOT** send us a copy of your application for a Home Office licence or application for ethical approval
☒ **DO NOT** send CVs of any applicants who are not the salaried research worker on the application
☒ **DO NOT** send us full economic cost documents or other internal university/hospital research forms
☒ **DO NOT** send us volumes of extra information. We will not accept excessive additional information. Our external advisors have limited time to read applications.

Note about videos in applications: Videos can cause problems and are currently discouraged due to large file sizes and because reviewers may not have the software to open the files. If a video is essential, it should be brief, relevant and in a format that can easily be opened by most computers.

What happens after you submit your online form

Once your application has been submitted the Principal Applicant will receive an email containing a PDF of your webform answers for your files. *Please let us know if this email does not reach you as it may mean that the application has not been processed.*

How to submit your signatures

Please submit signature pages by 31 July 2022. We accept scanned signatures in the uploaded further details/finance files or scanned copies of the signature pages emailed to applications@action.org.uk

Ideally, we would prefer to have all signatures on one page but if you have a large number of Co-applicants in very separate UK locations, we accept separate signature pages provided the name of the Principal Applicant is clearly marked on the document. There is no need to re-send the whole application.

Who can sign as the Head of Department?

The person(s) responsible for the allocation of resources and staff for the project can sign as Head of Department. Typically, this would be the Head of Department but in some circumstances the acting Head of Department can sign. If the applicant is also the Head of Department, they can sign provided they have responsibility for the resources required to complete the project including their own time.

- **Finance file -** A copy of the finance sheet must be signed by the officer responsible for administering grants**.**

You may wish to keep a copy of the signatures for your records.

What happens after your application has been received

Over the next few months Action Medical Research will carry out a full peer review process. We will contact the Principal Applicant by email if further information is required. The outcome will be sent to the Principal Applicant by email.

Action Medical Research Contact details

Email: applications@action.org.uk Phone: 01403 327407/327416
Office hours: Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS/TROUBLESHOOTING

Login problems

I've tried everything and I can't get my password to work- what should I do?

- Please check that you are using this website http://actionmedicalresearch-applications.org.uk/project/init.pl. (This is not the main charity website).
- If you 'copy and paste' your password and your password is not recognised by the system it may be that some extra white spaces were caught on the end of the copy. Please try copy and paste again ensuring that white spaces are not included when copying. The password is also case sensitive.
- If the issue is not resolved please contact us.

Calculating finances

Should I use my current or future salary scale? Please calculate your finances in accordance with the salary scale that would be relevant at the time the research would start if awarded as this reflects the cost of the research to the charity. Your finance team will help and they can include an estimate for nationally agreed cost of living awards if appropriate. A likely start date for awards from this round would be from January 2023.

What costs can I apply for?

Two pages of detailed instructions about eligible costs are given on the first two pages of the Excel finances sheet. Please scroll up to the top of the spreadsheet.

Uploading files

- **Should I upload word files, Excel files or PDF files?** Please send the further details document as a Word file (.docx) and the finances file as an Excel file (.xlsx). Most other documents are usually submitted as Word or PDF files. Please don't submit multiple copies as different file types.