



MRC/DFID/NIHR/ESRC Call for research to improve adolescent health in an LMIC setting

Adolescent Health Research Grants: Outline Application Guidance

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1. Important Outline Grant application information

Research Grants are focused projects usually up to 3 years' duration with a maximum of 5 years' duration. Small and larger-scale projects are invited to apply, the minimum size for projects to be considered is £150k (amount requested from funders taking into account FEC rates) and 12 months duration. We also encourage larger proposals over £1 million to apply. As a guide, applicants should note that up to £8million is available for Research Grants under this call and the funders would envisage funding 8-12 projects. It is expected that the awards funded will be of varying sizes.

MRC administers the call for proposals on behalf of the funders and so all applications should be submitted to the MRC and will be awarded according to MRC Terms and Conditions. Funding for projects awarded under this call for proposals is jointly provided by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), and the Medical Research Council (MRC) in partnership with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

General information about how to apply to the MRC can be found in the MRC Guidance for Applicants and Award Holders

<https://www.mrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/>

Where guidance in the present document differs from that in the MRC Guidance for Applicants and Award Holders, you should follow the directions in this scheme specific document.

The submission deadline for applications is:

16:00 BST Thursday 16 July 2019.

All projects must have a Principal Investigator (PI) based at either an eligible UK Research Organisation (RO) or an eligible RO in a Low/Middle Income Country (LMIC). It will be the ROs hosting the successful PIs that receive the funding and manage distribution of the funding to any Co-Investigator RO. PIs from High Income Countries outside the UK are not eligible to apply for this scheme.

The application/review process in summary:

1. Outline Grant application deadline: **16:00 BST 16 July 2019**
2. Panel meeting of academic experts **September 2019**
3. Successful applications will be notified and given Panel feedback in **early Sept 2019** to be incorporated into full applications with a deadline for **late October 2019**
4. Full applications will be sent out for external peer review and the applicants will be given the opportunity to respond to those comments in early February 2020 prior to a final Panel meeting March 2020
5. Final decisions to be relayed in **March 2020** and successful projects will be expected to start after **April 2020**

2. Who can apply?

This programme allows academics from developing and developed countries to work together in partnerships that build on existing relationships or represent the development of a new collaborative relationship.

The intellectual challenge should be the determining factor when configuring appropriate partnerships and collaborations. Proposals must demonstrate meaningful quality collaborations or partnerships, demonstrated through clear leadership roles across the proposed partnership, and balance and proportionality in partners' roles, responsibilities and costs.

Principal Investigators (PIs)

This call differs from the standard MRC rules as for this call Principal Investigators can be based either in the UK (as per usual MRC rules) or in a LMIC.

Projects with PIs from LMICs are strongly encouraged and all proposals must include Co-Investigators (Co-Is) from the LMIC in which the research is taking place. Funding is not dependent on the involvement of a UK-based research organisation.

The PIs are responsible for the intellectual leadership of the research project and for the overall management of the research. The PI will be the funding agencies' main contact for the proposal.

Applicants without experience of UK funding are encouraged to seek mentorship or guidance on grant writing from colleagues with experience of winning UK funding.

For administrative purposes when completing the Je-S form you will only be able to list one PI. While there is formally only one PI, you can make it clear in your Case for Support that the scientific leadership is shared and that in this respect the applicants listed are Co-Principle Investigators.

It is not permitted for the same person to be PI on any more than two proposals submitted to this call.

Co-Investigators (Co-Is)

The PIs may be supported by a number of Co-Investigators named on the application. A Co-I assists the PI in the management and leadership of the research project.

All UK and International PIs and Co-Is must have verified Je-S Accounts and must be added to the Je-S form under “Co-Investigator”. Please see section 5 [Creating a Je-S Account](#) for information on how to add an organisation on Je-S.

Other support

For information on other parties involved in research e.g. Project Partners, please see section 1 in the [Guidance for Applicants and Award Holders](#).

Research Organisation Eligibility

Principal Investigator’s **must** be based at one of the following:

- Higher Education Institutions
- Independent Research Organisation (IRO)
- UK Government Funded Organisation (other than MRC funded Units and Institutes)
- MRC Units/Institutes
- University Units (former MRC Units)

For researchers based in [low- or middle-income countries](#), eligible institutions include higher education institutions and non-profit research institutions.

Many non-UK institutions and some UK organisations will not currently be recognised to hold UK Research Council grants. Lead institutions which are not recognised to hold UK Research Council grants will have to obtain Research Council recognition before any grant can be confirmed. In order to minimise administrative burdens and costs to both applicants and funders, formal recognition will only be pursued if the grant is successful.

For further information on eligibility for research funding see: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/how-to-apply/eligibility/>

If you are unsure about your organisation’s eligibility, please [contact us](#)

3. Required documents for Outline applications

Only applications submitted through Je-S will be recognised: <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>

Applications must be submitted by the PI on behalf of the research team. Outline applications must include the following:

- A completed application form on Je-S: All investigators **must** be included. This form reflects the project costs so please include **all** costs, UK or otherwise. See 'Costs' section for clarification
- A jointly prepared Outline Case for Support (see additional guidance below) must be uploaded as a Word or PDF attachment
- CV's and publication lists must be uploaded for all named investigators

There is scheme specific guidance for the Case for Support that is outlined below. Further guidance and details for all of the other above content can be found in the [Guidance for Applicants and Award Holders](#).

All attachments should be completed in 11-point Arial typeface, with a minimum of 2cm margins. Applications will not be accepted where smaller or narrow typefaces have been used. If you exceed the maximum page length or attach extraneous documents we may reject your application or return your application to you for amendment.

Attachments

Mandatory Attachments	Conditions
CVs	A maximum of two sides of A4 per person
Publications	One side of A4 per named person
Case for support	Five Sides of A4 (Plus one for references)
Letters of Support	Two sides of A4 per letter

At the outline stage you do not need to submit a Justification for Resources, a Pathways to Impact statement or a Data Management Plan, these will only be required to be completed by successful outline applicants, when they submit to stage two of the call. If your proposal is a resubmission, an additional cover letter should be included as a mandatory attachment which can be up to two sides of A4, see section below.

The online Je-S form requests information such as administrative details of the investigators, financial information and summaries of your research. We recommend that applicants access the Je-S form well in advance of the deadline so that they can see the specific information that they will need to enter and can ensure that they and their Co-Is are registered on the system. It is fine to copy information between your pdf attachments and the Je-S form where there is overlap in information requested.

Outline Case for Support: Scheme specific guidance

Your Case for Support is a document including your scientific proposal, details of the research environment, people involved and references. Your Case for Support should indicate how your proposal fits the call specification for this scheme.

The outline Case for Support **should not exceed five sides of A4** plus one additional page of references (Six pages in total). **Additional annexes are not permitted**, this includes the reproducibility and statistical design annex. Any applications with additional annexes will be returned to the applicants for removal.

Please use the following headings when preparing your outline Case for Support:

I. Research Project summary information

- Full title of the project (no more than 150 characters)
- In which country(ies) will the project take place?
- Duration in months
- Total amount requested from this funding scheme
- Goals & principal research question to be addressed; please identify a concise and clearly articulated ultimate aim of the project. Describe how achieving this goal will address the key problems or needs stated in the call for proposals.

II. Project description

Please describe your proposed research project, ensuring that you cover the following points:

- Which stakeholders will be consulted and when?
- Which setting will the research take place? Where a particular setting is proposed which excludes the most vulnerable, for example the school setting, considerations should be made to include vulnerable groups or justify the choice not to.
- Who will the research participants be and why?
- What questions will be addressed?
- What are your research plans to address those questions?
- Give details of the methodological approaches, study design and techniques that will be used.
- Enough detail must be given to show why the research is likely to be competitive in its field.
- Particular care should be taken to explain any innovation in the methodology or where you intend to develop new methods.
- What pilot or preliminary information do you have available to help the panel assess the feasibility of the proposed study?
- If you are testing delivery of an intervention, please be clear about what that intervention will consist of and why.
- If the research involves data collection or acquisition you must demonstrate that you have carried out a datasets review, and explicitly state why currently available datasets are inadequate for the proposed research.
- What is the proposed timeline?
- How will you evaluate the outcomes of the study?

III. Importance: why is this study needed now and in this proposed location?

- Please consider issues such as burden of disease and priority for the relevant local, regional and national health services.
- What evidence is there that the answer to your research question is needed and wanted by relevant users, for instance, policy-makers?

IV. How will the results of this study be used?

- What changes might be implemented as a result of the study?
- Who will make those changes happen and how?
- Might the results be generalizable beyond the immediate research setting?
- What is the social impact envisaged of the project?

V. Research Project Team

- Details of people involved
- How does the team of investigators incorporate the range of discipline and experience necessary to carry out the study?

VI. Capacity Building

- Details of capacity building needs and opportunities
- What are the capacity building plans within the research project?
- Who will participate in delivering these activities and who will benefit from them?

VII. Ethical implications

- What are the ethical implications of the research?
- How will these be managed?

VIII. Financial Information

- Are other funding partners involved? Who are the partners and what is the status of the discussions?
- In addition to the costing you have provided on Je-S, please provide a breakdown of the funding request per institution using the below table.

Organisation name	Total project costs (GBP)	Total cost requested from this scheme (GBP)

IX. Proposal history

Has an application for funding for this project been submitted previously to DFID, MRC, NIHR, ESRC or another funding organisation? If so, please indicate the status of the previous application.

CVs (including publication lists) of investigators

Please submit a maximum of **3 pages per investigator in each country**: 2 pages CV and a 1 page publication list.

Please compile all the documents into one PDF file and include the documents in the same order as the investigators are listed on your Je-S application form. Each publication list should immediately follow its corresponding CV.

Letters of Support

At the outline stage, letters of support can be included in the application where available. These letters should come from relevant academic and non-academic stakeholders such as local or national government authorities, other public sector actors and project partners (e.g., industrial partners, NGOs). Each letter of support should be no longer than **2 pages A4**.

Please see [Section 2.2.7](#) of the MRC Guidance for Applicants for the full details on the requirements for Letters of Support for Project Partners.

Covering Letter

You may wish to provide a cover letter with your full stage application, maximum **2 pages A4**. Please see [Section 2.2.6](#) of the MRC Guidance for Applicants for full details on the requirements for the Covering Letter.

For resubmissions, the cover letter is mandatory and should detail how the proposal has developed since the previous submission. If peer reviews or panel feedback were provided, your bulleted response to comments should be included in the cover letter.

4. Assessment Criteria

General information on the MRC's approach to peer review is provided in the MRC Guidance for peer reviewers:

<https://www.mrc.ac.uk/funding/peer-review/guidance-for-peer-reviewers/>

There is a two-stage application process for this scheme. Applicants are initially invited to submit outline proposals, which will be assessed by an outline review panel. Those selected at the outline review panel will be invited to submit full applications, which will undergo external peer review and be reviewed by a full panel.

The outline review panel for this scheme will consider whether outline applications are of world-class standard (being intellectually innovative, well-focused and methodologically sound), and whether the research has the potential to make a real improvement to health outcomes in LMICs.

Panel members will be asked to comment on the following criteria in assessing the outline proposals:

Research agenda

- Is there a real need for this study in the proposed location?
- Is the research question important and appropriate?
- Is an answer to the research question needed by policy-makers and other stakeholders beyond the academic community?

Project plans

- Is the proposed study feasible?
- Is the proposed study innovative, internationally competitive, and methodologically sound?
- Have appropriate capacity building activities been presented?

Project team

- Is there an appropriate balance of academic leadership from all partners?
- Are the credentials of the investigators and host institutions appropriate to deliver the project?
- Is there an understanding of and sufficient involvement of the local research context and decision-makers?
- Does the proposed team of investigators possess the necessary range of expertise and experience to successfully carry out the proposed study?

Research impact

- Does the project have real potential to improve health outcomes for adolescents?
- Is there clarity as to how, and by whom, the research findings will be used?
- Does the application demonstrate that there is demand for the research from policymakers and other stakeholders beyond the academic community?

Ethics

- Is the work ethically acceptable?

Value for money

- Is the budget appropriate and reasonable for the proposed programme of work?

5. Creating a Je-s account

All proposals submitted to this scheme are required to include investigators based in the low or middle income country where the research will take place.

All Overseas Research Organisations/Institutes and individual applicants (Principal and Co-Investigators), are required to be registered on the Je-S system. Please note that a self-registration for overseas organisations process is available to follow from the [Je-S login page](#), or alternatively by following this direct link to Je-S organisation set-up page: <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/TermsConditions.aspx?mode=orgsetup>.

Therefore, both UK organisations and overseas organisations are encouraged to contact the Je-S helpdesk as soon as possible before the call deadline of the 16 July 2019, so we can ensure that the overseas organisation, either Lead or Non-lead, has been correctly added to the Je-S System. Any delays could mean the proposal being rejected because of late submission.

Please login to your Je-S account using the username and password you have chosen (if you do not have a Je-S account, or have forgotten your password, please see the guidance provided further below).

<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/>

- New Je-S Users: In order to gain access to the Je-S System, [Create an Account](#).
- Je-S users having problems successfully completing login to their Je-S account: [Retrieve User Name/Password](#).
- Select 'Documents' from left hand menu list from your Je-S account home page
- Select 'New Document' from within the Functions/create section of your documents page

Creating your Je-S application:

- Select Council: **MRC**
- Select Document Type: **Outline Proposal**
- Select Scheme: **Standard Outline**
- Select Call/Type/Mode: **Adolescent Health Outline July 2019**
- Select '**Create Document**' option

Please telephone Je-S Helpdesk +44 (0) 1793 444164 should you require any assistance with the Je-S System.

Please complete the administrative, summary and financial information as requested by the online Je-S form. The following information provides guidance on specific sections of the Je-S form which we note that applicants frequently required further assistance with.

Entering costs in Je-S

UK research will be funded at 80% of the Full Economic Cost (FEC). Research incurred by overseas ROs and investigators is eligible to be funded at 100% of FEC. Please see section 5. Resources – Full Economic Costing in the [Guidance for Applicants](#) for information on FEC.

Funding for non-UK research institutions that have not previously received funding from MRC will be dependent on further eligibility and financial checks, to be conducted if the proposal is selected for funding. For further advice on eligibility, please contact; International@mrc.ukri.org

Funding available:

Costs	Funding available
Research costs:	
Staff – directly incurred post	Yes
Staff – directly allocated posts (PI and Co-I time)	Yes
Other research costs (including equipment, consumables)	Yes
Studentships (PhD)	No
Travel and subsistence for exchange/mobility activities	Yes
Cost of workshops, meetings etc.	Yes

Please note that research teams should consider the breakdown of budgets between UK/high income costs and LMIC project costs keeping in mind the aims of the call.

Direct (salary) Costs:

Lead/Principal Investigators (PI's) & Co-investigators (Co-I's), can be based in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), as per usual MRC funding rules. LMIC PI's & Co-I's can claim 100% of their direct costs (direct costs = the total salary costs for each 'Investigator'). These costs should be entered as Exceptions and claimed at 100%.

Principal-investigators (PIs):

Principal-investigators can be based in the UK as per usual MRC funding rules or in low- and middle-income countries as per usual MRC funding rules. LMIC PI's can claim 100% of their direct costs and up to 20% of costs as indirect costs (for further guidance on these direct and indirect costs, please see the detailed guidance below).

Principal-investigators cannot be based in high-income countries outside of the UK as per usual MRC funding rules.

Co-investigators (Co-Is):

Co-investigators can be based in the UK as per usual MRC funding rules or in low- and middle-income countries as per usual MRC funding rules. LMIC Co-I's can claim 100% of their direct costs and up to 20% of costs as indirect costs (for further guidance on

these direct and indirect costs, please see the detailed guidance below).

Co-investigators can be based in high-income countries outside of the UK as per usual MRC funding rules. They can claim 100% of their direct costs but no indirect costs.

However, as the scheme is intended to fund work in low- and middle-income countries, high-income country applicants are advised to keep their costs claimed to a minimum.

Indirect (infrastructure) Costs:

MRC will also allow overseas institutions to request indirect costs. Each LMIC research organisation participating in the project can request indirect costs to cover the cost of hosting researchers participating in the project. Each LMIC RO can request up to 20% of their direct costs as additional indirect costs.

Example (LMIC institution indirect costs):

Each LMIC research organization can request 20% of their direct costs as additional indirect costs to support hosting the research project at their organization.

An example of direct costs for an LMIC RO may be as follows:

- Overseas Lead Investigator (PI), total salary costs for the project = £20,000
- Overseas Co-Investigator (1), total salary costs for the project = £15,000
- Overseas Investigator Travel & Subsistence + Fieldwork costs = £15,000

With all these above overseas costs being requested as 'Exceptions' (100%), the total costs claimed would equal £50,000. 20% of these total costs would equal £10,000, therefore the LMIC RO is allowed to claim up to £10,000 in indirect costs.

MRC will expect these indirect costs to be requested as '**Exceptions**' (100%) and detailed within the '**Other Directly Incurred Costs**' section of the Je-S form.

Please note that if you are successful at the outline stage, all costs requested on the Je-S form will need to be broken down and fully justified within the Justification for Resources, which will be requested as part of your full submission.

Costing guidelines

For overseas PI's and Co-I's all travel and subsistence costs can be claimed at 100%. UK based researchers can only claim 80%, even if they are travelling to a LMIC for the project.

For overseas institutions all other exceptional costs associated with the overseas organisation should be claimed under the appropriate fund heading as "exceptions" and entered as "Other Directly Incurred Costs". These include consumables, consultancy fees, field work fees, equipment (under £10,000) and subcontracting.

Indirect and Estates Costs cannot be claimed by investigators in a high income country based outside of the UK.

If any of the investigators want to enter time allocated to the grant that they will actually spend on the project which could be different from the actual costs worked, this should be

specified as there is a separate section for hours worked and hours charged in the budget. This can be found on the investigator section in the main document menu in Je-S.

Project Partner/s

A Project Partner is an organisation or individual who is providing substantial contribution to the project and will not take any funds out of the project. Therefore, any persons already named on the proposal (E.G. as PI, Co-I or Named Researcher), should NOT also be included as a Project Partner.

For further guidance regarding Project Partners, please see the [Guidance for Applicants](#).

Submitting your application

Please ensure you comply with your research organisation's rules with regards to application submission.

The deadline for submission to the MRC is 16:00 BST 16th July 2019. You may need to submit your proposal to colleagues within your research organisation several days before the deadline so that they have time to approve the proposal for submission to the MRC.

Once you have completed the Project Details section of the Je-S form you are able to find out the submission arrangements for your organisation. **Select the Document Actions Button** and then **Select Show Submission Path**.

If the screen shows **With Owner** and **With Council** then the proposal will be submitted directly by you.

If the screen shows **With Owner** and **Submitter Pool** (there should be names listed against this section) and **With Council** then the proposal has to be approved and submitted by one of your research organisation's (RO's) named submitters. You should allow at least 48 hours for them to do this, your RO may require longer, and we would strongly advise you check this.

Please check that at least one of your organisation's named submitters will be available on the day you plan to submit it. Please note that they will need to do this no later than 16.00 BST UK time on 16th July 2019.

6. Contacts

Dr Caroline Harris, MRC Global Health Strategy Programme Manager,

Caroline.Harris@mrc.ukri.org

+44 (0)1793 41 6363

Aaron Holliday, MRC International Strategy Manager,

Aaron.Holliday@mrc.ukri.org

+44 (0)20 7395 2370

Donna Trueman, MRC International Strategy Support Officer,

Donna.Trueman@mrc.ukri.org

+44 (0)1793 41 6395

General Queries can also be sent to International@mrc.ukri.org

7. Data Protection

Privacy Notice

All personal data provided to the MRC as part of UK Research and Innovation via the Je-S form will be processed in accordance with current UK data protection legislation. Please see Je-S terms and conditions for guidance on how personal data collected from applicants is used (<https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/Index>). Further information on how we use personal data can also be found in the UK Research and Innovation Privacy Notice (<https://www.ukri.org/privacy-notice/>). Information on the terms and conditions that guide the general management of funded grants can be found in the MRC's Guidance for Applicants (<https://mrc.ukri.org/documents/pdf/guidance-for-applicants/>).

What will be shared and with whom?

As the MRC/DFID/NIHR Call for research to improve adolescent health in an LMIC setting scheme is a jointly funded scheme, information will be shared between the partners, the Department for International Development (DFID), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Medical Research Council (MRC) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR).

The data that you provide will be held securely in accordance with the MRC IT and Records Management policies. It will be retained in accordance with the Medical Research Council's disposition schedule for the following schedules:

Business process	Record type	Retention
10.1 Grants	Grant programme policy file	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Grant programme board agenda, minutes and papers (e- volume/CD)	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Grant programme board assessment	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Grant programme board administration and correspondence	3 years

10.1 Grants	Triage meeting agendas, minutes and	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Triage decision spreadsheet	Permanently
10.1 Grants	Application processing statistics and summaries	20 years
10.1 Grants	Successful applications	20 years
10.1 Grants	Unfunded applications (unsuccessful, withdrawn, not accepted)	3 years
10.1 Grants	Grant summary record (Siebel etc.)	Permanently
10.6 Research Management	Clinical trials oversight and monitoring information (incl. protocols and annual	Permanently
10.6 Research Management	Research management	3 years
10.6 Research Management	Systems training	1 year
10.6 Research Management	Information Systems manuals/guidance	1 year
10.6 Research Management	Induction material	1 year
10.6 Research Management	Council Operating Procedures/Standard Operating Procedures	1 year
10.6 Research Management	Interfaces with other organisations	7 years
10.6 Research Management	Research Portfolio files	Permanently
12.1 Strategy	Research strategy documentation	7 years
12.1 Strategy	Internal working groups meeting agendas, minutes	7 years
12.2 Evaluation	Corporate reports (scorecard, economic impact etc.)	Permanently
12.2 Evaluation	Data analysis and reporting (eVal raw data, SQL queries, reports)	Permanently
12.2 Evaluation	Commissioned evaluation and bibliometric reports	Permanently