

Starter Grants in the Medical Humanities/Social Sciences - Scoping Exercise

Summary

The Academy of Medical Sciences is inviting tenders to conduct a scoping exercise for a new scheme of starter grants to support early career researchers in the medical humanities and medically-related social sciences.

Commissioned by	Academy of Medical Sciences	
Aim	The aim of the scoping exercise is to inform the development of a scheme of starter grant awards to support early career researchers (specifically lecturers or equivalent) in the medical humanities and medically-related social sciences.	
Timescale & deliverables	Invitation to tender	17 June
	Tender submission deadline	3 July
	Interviews	8 July
	Appointment of contractor	10 July
	Delivery of objectives and Final report	11 September
Working arrangements	The contract will be managed by Dr Rachel Macdonald, Head of Grants & Programmes. The successful contractor will work closely with Academy staff throughout the project; meetings will be held at key stages.	
Costs	Tenders invited up to a maximum of £20,000 (inclusive of VAT)	

1. Introduction

The Academy of Medical Sciences is the independent body in the UK representing the whole spectrum of medical science. Our mission is to promote medical science and its translation into benefits for society.

We achieve this by:

- Promoting excellence
- Influencing policy to improve health and wealth
- Nurturing the next generation of medical researchers
- Linking academia, industry and the NHS
- Seizing international opportunities
- Encouraging dialogue about medical science

Fellowship

The Academy has 1168 Fellows, who are elected on the basis of their outstanding contribution to the advancement of medical science, for their innovative application of existing knowledge, or for their conspicuous service to medical science and healthcare through their leadership or administrative prowess. It is the unique diversity of talent amongst the Fellowship, and their collective experience and professionalism, which enables the Academy to address complex issues in science and healthcare with expertise and authority. In this way, the Fellowship is a national, public resource of independent, expert advice on medical science and healthcare. Academy Fellows are drawn from biomedical research, veterinary science, dentistry, medical and nursing care and other professions allied to health science including ethics, social science and the law.

2. Starter Grants in Medical Humanities and Medically-Related Social Sciences

One of the Academy's strategic goals is to develop the next generation of leading medical researchers. We do this through our grants schemes for early career researchers, and also through mentoring, skills development, networking and policy work.

Background – Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers

Since 2008 we have offered a scheme of Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers to provide modest 'pump-priming' funds to enable research-active Clinical Lecturers (who hold a PhD or MD) to pursue their research work. Clinical Lecturer posts provide a salary but often do not come with funding to support research costs; our Starter Grants help to bridge this gap. Awards of up to £30,000 are available towards research costs for up to two years. Awardees can also benefit from mentoring by one of the Academy's Fellows through our acclaimed 1-2-1 mentoring scheme, and are invited to attend regional career development events, and an annual dedicated national science meeting. The Starter Grants for Clinical Lecturers scheme is now generously funded by a consortium consisting of the Wellcome Trust, Medical Research Council, British Heart Foundation, Arthritis Research UK, Prostate Cancer UK, Diabetes UK and the Royal College of Physicians. The scheme has awarded over £7.5 million to 272 awardees to date, and has a success rate of ~40%.

Background – Starter Grants for Biomedical Scientists Transitioning to Independence

In May 2015, we secured agreement with the Wellcome Trust to initiate a new scheme of starter grants to support early career (non-clinical) Biomedical Scientists, which will provide competitive funding awards of £70-100k over two years to researchers within two years of appointment to their first lectureship post (or equivalent). Applicants should not be in receipt of any other substantive funding, excluding personal salary and awardees may use the award to cover: research consumables, equipment, research assistant time, contribution to the costs of a PhD student or postdoctoral researcher, travel costs for meetings and

collaborations. Awardees will be invited to join the Academy's 1-2-1 mentoring scheme and to attend our various regional and national career development events.

Academy staff are currently working with Fellows and others to design the scheme in detail, including how to identify those researchers in most need of support and how to manage the likely high levels of demand.

We aim to launch the first call for applications in Autumn 2015. Thereafter, there will be one round of funding per year. Under the current agreement with the Wellcome Trust, £5 million is available for these awards over three years. We hope to encourage other funders to support this scheme in the same way that they support the Clinical Lecturers scheme.

Background – Starter Grants for Lecturers in the Medical Humanities and Medically-Related Social Sciences

As part of the agreement with the Wellcome Trust to support Starter Grants for Biomedical Scientists Transitioning to Independence, we have been asked to devise a similar scheme for Lecturers in the Medical Humanities and Medically-Related Social Sciences. A total of £1 million will be available for these awards over three years.

These awards would target researchers at a similar career stage, i.e. within their first 2-3 years of appointment to a lectureship post (or equivalent), with the aim of helping them to transition to independence.

Awardees would be offered mentoring and career support appropriate to their needs, potentially through a partnership between the Academy and an organisation(s) with access to research leaders in the medical humanities/medically-related social sciences, or more widely, in order to support interdisciplinary understanding and collaborations.

3. Aims of the scoping exercise

The overall aim of the scoping exercise is to generate an evidence base to support the development and implementation of a new scheme of starter grants for lecturers in the medical humanities and social sciences. Specifically:

Objective 1: *To gather, analyse and present data to enable the Academy to understand the cohort of researchers eligible to apply:*

- To gather data on the numbers, distribution across UK universities and institutes (including identification of centres of excellence) and composition of lecturers or equivalent posts (within 2-3 years of appointment) in the medical humanities and social sciences.
- To understand the career trajectories and aspirations of this cohort including qualifications gained to reach current role, duties encompassed by role including teaching and research, typical length of service and next steps.
- To gather data on the current funding available to this cohort (including, for example, funders supporting this field, types and value of awards, eligibility criteria, success rates and perception of funding availability by researchers), to understand how a new scheme of starter grants would contribute to this landscape and the potential demand for a new scheme of starter grants in this area.

Objective 2: *To gather data on grant making in this field and to investigate the potential form of a new small grants scheme:*

- To gather data on the needs of this cohort in terms of the level and duration of starter award that should be offered, and how the award might be used (excluding personal salary), for instance: research consumables, equipment, 'buying out' teaching time, research assistant time, contribution to the costs of a PhD student or postdoctoral researcher, travel costs for meetings and collaborations.
- To explore best practice in grant-making in relation to the proposed scheme, in terms of demand management, review, composition of an assessment panel (including identification of experts in the field to approach), follow up and evaluation, including identifying appropriate markers of success for the scheme.

Objective 3: *To explore the career paths of this cohort and suggest appropriate ways that the Academy could support them.*

- To gather data on the relationships this cohort has with HEIs, research funders, national academies, learned and professional societies and others, how/where they currently access career support and whether there are needs not currently being met.
- To understand what should be offered to this cohort in terms of mentoring and career support, beyond the financial award, and how the Academy could build on its existing programme of mentoring and career development events, whether the principles of this scheme would be relevant to this cohort and who would be the most appropriate mentors if needed.
- To consider who the Academy might seek to partner with in providing mentoring and programmatic support to this cohort.

Objective 4: *To identify appropriate channels for communication and publicity for the scheme, once developed.*

4. Methods

We would expect the exercise to incorporate desk-based research, alongside extensive consultation with researchers in the target cohort, their supervisors, department heads etc, as well as representatives from relevant funders, societies and other stakeholders. Consultation is likely to involve gathering quantitative and qualitative data. Broadly, a range of methodologies would be considered, provided justification is given.

Please note that tender documents should make clear any research challenges which the project raises and how these will be addressed.

5. Details of services required

The Academy is looking for an individual or organisation to deliver all the objectives.

Key deliverables:

- Full anonymised data set, appropriately presented in tables, charts etc.
- Final, full detailed review report including a summary of no more than 2 pages.

- Power point presentation, including a summary, data presented as tables and charts, and conclusions.

The contractor will be required to agree a final list of scoping work questions, as well as a detailed project plan, with members of the Academy once the contract has been awarded. The contractor will also be expected to be in regular communication with Academy staff by telephone and/or email. A schedule of update meetings/phone calls will be set out by the Academy post appointment.

The contractor must undertake all aspects of the evaluation, including data collection, collation and analysis. Any support required from Academy staff should be explicitly stated in the tender document.

The Academy will be responsible for the all communication activities relating to the scoping exercise and its findings.

6. Timescale

Invitation to tender	17 June
Tender submission deadline	3 July
Interviews	8 July
Appointment of contractor	10 July
Delivery of objectives and Final report	11 September

7. Budget

A total budget of up to £20,000 (inclusive of VAT) is available for the scoping exercise.

Applications should detail a breakdown of costs, including staff time. The Academy is unable to provide subsidised room hire at its offices in central London.

The Academy will pay up to 40% of the total cost of the project upon signing of the evaluation contract and receipt of an invoice. The remaining 60% will be paid on delivery of the final reports and evaluation strategy.

8. Tender submission

Tenders should be emailed to Dr Rachel Macdonald at Rachel.Macdonald@acmedsci.ac.uk by **Friday 3 July (16:00)**. Tenders should not exceed 6 pages (12 sides) in length (excluding appendices) and should include a proposed methodology, timeline and budget. The methodology should detail the roles of each member of the evaluation team and the expected length of time to complete the various tasks. Appendices should include short biographies of members of the team, their experience and examples of similar work.

Applications will be assessed on the following criteria (this list is not exhaustive, nor in order of importance):

- Understanding of the aims and objectives of the Academy.
- Understanding of the aims and objectives of the scoping exercise.
- A clear, thoughtful scoping methodology which meets the aims and objectives.
- Consideration of any risks involved in the work and measures proposed to reduce these risks.
- Track record of the team in work of this type.
- Value for money.

To discuss the brief and tender process further please contact:

Dr Rachel Macdonald
Head of Grants and Programmes
The Academy of Medical Sciences
41 Portland Place
London W1B 1QH
Tel: +44 (0)20 3176 2185
rachel.macdonald@acmedsci.ac.uk

Further information on the Academy of Medical Sciences can be found at <http://www.acmedsci.ac.uk>.

The Academy of Medical Sciences

The Academy of Medical Sciences promotes advances in medical science and campaigns to ensure these are converted into healthcare benefits for society. Our Fellows are the UK's leading medical scientists from hospitals and general practice, academia, industry and the public service. The Academy seeks to play a pivotal role in determining the future of medical science in the UK, and the benefits that society will enjoy in years to come. We champion the UK's strengths in medical science, promote careers and capacity building, encourage the implementation of new ideas and solutions – often through novel partnerships – and help to remove barriers to progress.