

## **AMS Springboard – FAQs for Champions and Research Offices Round 6**

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This document summarises our responses to frequently asked questions. Should you have any questions that are not covered in this document, please contact Dr Marilia Ioannou ([marilia.ioannou@acmedsci.ac.uk](mailto:marilia.ioannou@acmedsci.ac.uk); 020 3141 3236) if you are located in the South, the Midlands or Yorkshire and the Humber. Alternatively, please contact Holly Sinclair ([Holly.Sinclair@acmedsci.ac.uk](mailto:Holly.Sinclair@acmedsci.ac.uk); 020 3141 3269) if you are located in the North of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales.

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## 1. Eligibility

To be eligible to apply applicants have to:

- Hold an academic post that incorporates research.
- Be in their first independent (salaried) position (i.e. group-leader level, line managed not supervised) and
  - Be within **four years (FTE)** of appointment to this position.
  - Have sufficient time remaining in their current post to complete the proposed Springboard project.
- Be based within one of the eligible higher education institutions (HEIs).

And they must **not**:

- Hold a clinical contract.
- Be in receipt of substantial research funding as the Principal or Co- Investigator exceeding **£150,000** for the two year Springboard award (excluding their personal salary, overhead and indirect costs). Please see [section 1.7](#) for details.

### 1.1 What qualifies as a 'first independent position'?

We appreciate that independence is a difficult term to define. For purposes of this scheme, we consider candidates who are within their first salaried, group-leader position, where they are line-managed rather than supervised. As such, Research Fellows may be eligible depending on the nature of their position. If you are employed as a Research Fellow on a grant in the name of another PI, you cannot be considered to be fully independent. Research Associates are not eligible for the scheme as they are still under someone's supervision. Applicants having already secured a promotion onto a second independent post are also not eligible for the scheme (this does not include proleptic appointments or candidates who previously held a very short post). Please contact the office if you are unsure whether you meet this eligibility criteria.

### 1.2 How is the four years within current post calculated?

The applicant should be no more than four years (FTE) into their first independent research post *by the application deadline, which for round 6 is **24 June 2020***. For round 6, the earliest eligible appointment start date for a researcher working full-time is **June 2016**. Time taken out for career breaks such as parental or sickness leave does not count towards the time already in post; periods of part-time working should be counted *pro rata*.

### **1.3 What is the latest possible appointment start date?**

Applicants must be in post by the Panel date at the latest. For round 6, the latest eligible appointment start date is **11 November 2020**. If a selected applicant will not yet be in post by the application deadline, they should provide an official letter from their institution confirming their start date along with their application form.

### **1.4 What are the eligible appointment start and end dates?**

Outcomes for round 6 are due to be released by end of January 2021. Awardees must start their award within six months of the award letter (February –July 2021). Applicants will confirm the award start date through the submission of a Grant Acceptance Form if successful.

Springboard awards have a duration of two years FTE and as such are expected to end two years after the start date given by the applicant in the application form. Any changes to the original start date through the Grant Acceptance Form will result in a shift in the award end date, such that the award duration remains at two years. Applicants must have guaranteed salary support (which may come from the institution or a personal fellowship) that will cover the duration of their Springboard award. Their appointment end date, if they have one, should not fall before the earliest possible award end date.

### **1.5 What if my current appointment does not cover the duration of the award?**

If your current contract ends before the expected end date of the award, your host institution must extend your position accordingly. The contract extension must occur regardless of the outcome of the application and *must be confirmed before the application deadline (for round 6: 24 June 2020)*. The Academy also expects any further change to the start date after acceptance of the award will result in an appropriate additional extension to cover two years FTE.

### **1.6 Are certain types of clinical contracts permitted?**

Researchers holding a clinical contract of any kind, including honorary contracts, are not eligible for the scheme – this is a non-clinical scheme. Clinically-qualified researchers who do not hold a clinical contract, and who would not take up such a contract during their award, are eligible.

### **1.7 What counts towards the substantial research funding limit?**

The limit of £150,000 over two years is applied to the funding that the applicant has already secured and that they are projected to receive *over the two year award period*. For the purposes of determining eligibility for round 6, these dates are February 2021 to January 2023. Please do not include any funding that is not secured or will have expired before the start of a Springboard award.

- The applicant's personal salary *should not* be included.
- Overhead and indirect costs *should not* be included.
- Staff salaries, PhD student stipends and consumables *should* be included. However, overheads or PhD student fees *should not* be included.
- If the applicant is a co-investigator on a grant or co-supervisor studentship, please count their projected % share of the grant minus overheads and indirect costs.

### **1.8 How do pending applications count towards the substantial research funding limit?**

Only funds that have already been secured will be considered when determining whether a candidate is above/below the substantive funding limit. Before the Panel meeting, the Academy will ask applicants to provide an update on funding received since the Springboard application submission. If an applicant has now secured funds exceeding the £150,000 limit, they will be deemed ineligible.

### **1.9 Do I already hold a fellowship that makes me ineligible for the Springboard award?**

Springboard is targeted at those who are in the early stages of their first independent post and have limited funding. Candidates who have already secured significant fellowships are not considered to be in the spirit of the scheme. Therefore, if you hold the following fellowships/awards or equivalent you will be deemed ineligible:

- Cancer Research UK (CRUK) Career Development Fellowship
- CRUK Career Establishment Award
- Medical Research Council (MRC) - Career Development Award
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Future Leaders Fellowship
- Wellcome Trust Royal Society Sir Henry Dale Fellowship
- Wellcome Trust Seed Award

If you are unsure about your eligibility, please contact the office to seek confirmation.

## 2. Reapplication

### 2.1 Under what circumstances is a second application permitted?

Unsuccessful applicants are limited to one resubmission in any future round, provided that they are once again shortlisted by their institution and continue to meet all eligibility criteria (including time constraints and substantive funding limits). Each resubmission counts towards the institution's four selected applications. Successful applicants cannot reapply.

The Panel may recommend specific applications for resubmission but this is not an assurance that these applications will be funded upon resubmission, nor does this imply that it discourages resubmissions from other unsuccessful applicants.

### 2.2 How will resubmitted applications be assessed?

Applicants who resubmit an application must complete an additional section detailing how the application has been adapted in response to feedback and how this application differs from their first application. Panel members and peer reviewers will be asked to consider this section when assessing the new application. The office will endeavour to receive comments from previous assessors however, we cannot guarantee that proposals will be reviewed by the same individuals.

Personalised feedback is provided to all applicants and will be shared with their Springboard Champions.

## 3. Research remit

### 3.1 What types of projects fall within the remit of the scheme?

The scheme welcomes applications from a broad range of research fields and supports both experimental and theoretical approaches; the key criterion is that the proposed project must demonstrate clear relevance to *human health*.

## 4. GCRF remit

### 4.1 What is the GCRF?

The Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) forms part of the UK's Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment, which focuses on outcomes that promote the long-term sustainable growth of countries on the Organisation for Economic Co-

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operation and Development ([OECD Development Assistance Committee \(DAC\) list](#)). GCRF funding is awarded in a manner that fits with official ODA guidelines.

Research that is eligible to receive funding through GCRF will focus on promoting the welfare or economic development of a country on the DAC-list, addressing one of the identified global challenge areas.

## **4.2 How do I know if my research falls within the GCRF remit?**

*We are asking all applicants to consider whether their research falls within the GCRF remit. That is, research that addresses the global challenges directly relevant to developing countries by:*

- Promoting challenge-led disciplinary and interdisciplinary research focussed on topics relevant to DAC-listed countries.
- Building capacity for research, innovation and knowledge exchange in the UK and DAC-listed countries through research partnerships.

You will be asked the following questions to indicate GCRF eligibility:

1. Which country/countries on the DAC list will directly benefit from this proposal? Please outline the pathway by which this proposal will create impact in the Global Challenge Area highlighted above, and why is this particularly relevant for the country/countries of focus?
2. How is your proposal directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of these countries?
3. How do you expect that the outcome of your proposed activities will promote the economic development and welfare of a country or countries on the DAC list?

## **5. What is offered?**

### **5.1 How much can applicants request?**

The maximum amount available is £100,000 (there is a minimum of £50,000) over two years. These funds can be used towards research costs and professional development.

### **5.2 What project durations are permitted?**

Springboard awards are two years long; it is not possible to apply for any other duration.

### **5.3 What can/can't be included in the budget?**

Springboard awards offer flexible funding which can be used for support staff (PhD students, postdoctoral staff, technicians, etc.), technical support, laboratory consumables, equipment, animal costs, publications, training and travel. 'Technical support' refers to staff/facilities available to you (e.g. microscopy facilities, bioinformatics support). Funds cannot be used to pay for the applicant's personal salary costs or overheads.

### **5.4 Is it possible to request funds for a PhD student?**

Yes - applicants may request PhD student stipends, tuition fees (up to the value of home student rate) and consumables in their budget *for the two year award period*. Stipends should be in line with the studentships provided by your institution. Furthermore, we require that the host institution commits to financially support those PhD students after the end of the award if other funds are not available to the applicant to cover the remainder of the student's PhD.

## **6. Career development programme**

### **6.1 What career development programmes will be offered?**

Career development support include access to the Academy's one-to-one mentoring scheme and a programme of events and activities developed for the benefit of newly-independent researchers. Activities will include training events and meetings where researchers can share their research and network.

### **6.2 Who will career development support be open to?**

Some of the career development support elements are open to awardees only, some to both awardees and selected applicants put forward by each institution, and some are open more widely to all biomedical researchers at that career stage. All applicants (those selected by their institutions to submit a full application) will be invited to participate in the Academy's [one-to-one mentoring](#) scheme regardless of the outcome of their application. Whenever possible, events and activities will be open more widely to biomedical researchers.