The Academy *of* Medical Sciences

AMS Springboard – FAQs for Champions and Research Offices

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; 020 3141 3236).

<u>Sections:</u>

Contents

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) and
    - Be within **3 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 Investigator exceeding **£75,000 p.a**., or **£150,000** for the two year Springboard award (excluding their personal salary).

1.1 What qualifies as a 'first independent position'?

Applicants should currently be in their first independent research position - this refers to the first *group-leader* position the applicant has held at *any* institution. 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.)

1.2 How should the time already in post be counted towards the 3 years limit?

The applicant should be no more than 3 years (FTE) into their first independent research post *by the application deadline, which is July 16th, 2018*. For Round 4, the earliest eligible appointment start date for a researcher working full-time is July 2015. 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 are the eligible appointment start and end dates?

The applicant should be in post throughout the 2 year period that would be covered by a Springboard award.

- Start date: Applicants must be in post *by the Panel date* at the very latest; if a selected applicant will not yet be in post by the application deadline, please provide an official letter from your institution confirming their start date along with their application form. As the Panel date for Round 4 is November/December 2018, the earliest start date for successful awards is February 2019.
- End date:
  - Applicants must have guaranteed salary support (which may come from the institution or a personal fellowship) that will cover the duration of a Springboard award. Their appointment end date, if they have one, should not fall before the *earliest possible award end date* (for Round 4, this is January 2021). Should projects of successful awardees start after February 2019, their appointment end date must be commensurately later.
  - Some potential applicants may be on fixed-term appointments due to finish before the earliest possible award end date but with the possibility of extension or a permanent position following a review (this is not be to confused with probations). In order for their application to be considered, the status of these applicants should be reviewed and confirmed *before the application deadline*.

1.4 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.

1.5 What counts towards the substantial research funding limit?

The £75,000 p.a. limit (or £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 2 year award period* (the earliest possible start and end dates should be used; for Round 4, these dates are February 2019 to January 2021). Please do not include any funding that 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 (but not overheads) *should* 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.

1.6 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 liaise with applicants who have pending grant applications to seek an update on these applications – if these have been successful and the applicant has now secured funds exceeding the £75,000 p.a. limit (or £150,000 over two years), they will be asked to withdraw their Springboard application.

2. Reapplication:

2.1 Under what circumstances is a second application permitted?

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

The Panel may recommend specific applications for resubmission but this does not imply that it discourages resubmissions from other unsuccessful applicants. Please see the next question (2.2) for more information on how resubmitted applications will be assessed.

2.2 How will resubmitted applications be assessed?

Applicants who resubmit an application must complete an additional section detailing how the current application differs from their first application, and addresses any concerns raised in the application feedback. Panel members and peer reviewers will be asked to consider this section when assessing the new application, and the Office may seek comments from those who assessed the first application.

Personalised feedback is provided to all applicants. Champions are encouraged to ask those applicants wishing to resubmit their proposal to share their feedback.

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 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. This is research that directly addresses global challenges relevant to developing countries by:

- Promoting collaboration - Enabling researchers to undertake collaborative research in support of socio-economic development in certain countries
- Building research capacity – Using the strengths of the UK research base to build research capacity in developing countries through collaboration
- Training research leaders – Supporting the next generation of research leaders in developing countries

You will be asked to consider whether:

- Countries on the DAC list will directly benefit from the proposed research
- Developmental challenges of these countries are of primary relevance to the proposed research
- How the outcome of the proposed research will promote the economic development and welfare of a country or countries on the DAC list.
- For more information in this area, to help guide you to establish whether your research fits this remit, please see RCUK's page on GCRF.

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 2 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 and the scheme does not cover overheads.

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

Yes - applicants may request PhD student stipends, tuition fees (at 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, should the applicant be unable to support the remainder of the student's PhD, we require that the host institution commits to support those PhD students after the end of the award, financially, through provision of supervision, resources and equipment.

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 is open to awardees only, some to both awardees and selected applicants put forward by each institution, and some is 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.