Joint Stroke Association/ 
British Heart Foundation 
Clinical Study in Stroke Award 

Guidance for Applicants 

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This document is intended to assist with the completion of the Joint Stroke Association/British Heart Foundation Clinical Study in Stroke application form. The guidance is intended to be used in conjunction with the Conditions of Award. 

The Stroke Association is the only medical charity working exclusively for stroke illness. The Stroke Association supports research directly related to stroke illness by means of project grants. These are awarded on the recommendation of an appointed Research Awards Panel using the system of expert and lay review. 

Collaboration 
The award will be co-funded by the Stroke Association and British Heart Foundation (BHF). The Stroke Association will be undertaking the administration of the award and all enquiries should be directed to the Stroke Association Research Department. 

If you have any questions, please email research@stroke.org.uk and we will get back to you as soon as we can. 

Award amount and duration 
The award is for up to 5 years and for a maximum of £1.5 million. 

In the application form you are asked to provide a proposed start and end date and project duration. The adjudication process of applications will not be completed until the end of July 2019. We request that awards start within 6 months of the Stroke Association informing the applicant of the final decision. 

Highlight notice 
This year we are particularly seeking applications in one of the following two areas of research: 

- Haemorrhagic stroke, proposals which address acute treatment strategies: including surgical or medical studies. 
- Secondary prevention. 

Application focus 
Applications must be directly related to stroke illness, and must have a vascular focus. Suitable examples include:
• Cerebral vascular imaging
• Stroke prevention – primary or secondary
• Therapies relating to vascular symptoms, for example:
  o Antiplatelet therapies
  o Thrombolysis
  o Detection and treatment of cerebral haemorrhage
  o Detection and treatment of cerebral aneurysm
  o Detection and treatment of carotid artery or vertebral artery lesions
• Cerebral small vessel disease
• Stroke epidemiology

Non-vascular focused applications, for example those focusing on rehabilitation or the consequences of stroke, non-angiogenic brain tissue regeneration or non-vascular neuroscience will not be considered.

Eligibility

Due to the nature of the research applications we expect to receive in response to this call, applications involving animal experiments will not be considered.

Primary organisation: Stroke Association Awards must be carried out at Universities, NHS Trusts, Statutory Social Care Organisations or other Research Institutions within Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Your application’s primary organisation should be the place where the award will be based. Usually, this refers to the organisation which holds the Lead applicant’s employment contract and will administer invoicing for the award.

The Lead applicant must be a senior researcher holding a PhD (or equivalent) with a track record of managing grants, delivering research studies and a strong publication record. Peer reviewers will judge the expertise and suitability of the applicant and co-applicant team.

The salary of the Lead applicant has to be guaranteed for the duration of the proposed programme. Therefore the Lead applicant’s salary cannot be requested in the budget.

The salaries (whole or in part) of Senior Academic Researchers/Collaborators are not supported by these grants. This may be waived only in exceptional circumstances.

For this funding call masters, PhD studentships, and clinical fellowships are not eligible to be included in the budget.

Applications will not be accepted from investigators (whether applicants, sponsors or collaborators) who have an overdue report from a previous project funded by the Stroke Association at the time of submission (i.e. the deadline date). Applicants should consult with any sponsors and collaborators involved in their application to ensure that they have submitted their reports; otherwise the application will be rejected.
You will be asked to give details of whether you have involved your local Research Design Service (RDS) or Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) in the development of the research proposal, including details of any discussions you have had with the RDS/CTU, improvements to the proposal as a result of the advice offered and their ongoing involvement in the project.

Please note: involvement of a RDS (or equivalent) is **recommended** for all applications. Involvement of a CTU or a clinical statistics expert is **mandatory**. Your application may be excluded from shortlisting if this information is not included.

Please contact the Stroke Association Research Team if you are unsure of, or have any queries regarding, your eligibility for this award.

**Application Deadlines and Adjudication**

Applications should be submitted in outline in the first instance. Outline applications must be submitted to the Stroke Association's online award management system, using the form: Joint SA/BHF Clinical Award Stage 1.

The deadline to submit Stage 1 applications is **5pm on 16 January 2019**.

In **February 2019**, applicants will be notified of the shortlisting meeting’s outcome and successful shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit full applications (Stage 2). The deadline for the full applications is **5pm on 3 April 2019**. The award will be awarded in **July/August 2019**.

Full applications will not be accepted unless specifically invited.

Please note that BHF and the Stroke Association do not allow resubmission of applications for this grant scheme except under specific invitation by the Research Awards Panel. If you are unsure whether you can resubmit an application, please contact the Research team at research@stroke.org.uk with the month and year you applied and the reference number of your application which can be found on your rejection letter.

Applicants who submit a full application will be invited to participate in a rebuttal stage. This involves receiving peer reviewers’ anonymised comments and responding to any comments within a 2 week deadline. The rebuttals will be given to the panel and will be considered alongside the full applications and peer review comments.

A recommendation as to which application should be funded is made by a panel consisting of members of the Stroke Association Research Awards Panel, people affected by stroke from the Stroke Voices in Research group, and representatives of BHF. The recommendation must then be agreed by the British Heart Foundation and the Stroke Association Council of Trustees.

Notification letters for unsuccessful applications will be sent as soon as possible after the BHF Chairs and Programme Committee meeting which takes place in July. Letters to applicants will be sent after the Stroke Association Council of Trustees meeting has agreed the final funding recommendation. The lead applicants of all applications will receive feedback from the Research Awards Panel’s deliberations, where applicable, in their outcome letters.
The Stroke Association is fully committed to ensuring that the process by which applications are adjudicated and funding decisions made are as fair and transparent as possible. We will not enter into any discussion or debate over applications that are unsuccessful. The application process is reviewed after each round. Where improvement has been identified, changes are made and implemented before the next round of applications commence.

When you submit an application, the Stroke Association will use the information provided on the form to process the application, which may involve revealing details of the application to peer reviewers outside the Stroke Association. All personal data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation. If your award is funded, then details of the award may be used for dissemination and potentially made publicly available. All reviewers and Committee members must sign and abide by the Stroke Association’s Confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest Policy.

The Stroke Association is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), and meets all membership criteria. The research awards adjudication process aligns to AMRC guidelines, and the Stroke Association holds an AMRC Certificate of Best Practice in Medical and Health Research Peer Review.

**Key dates:**
- **16 January 2019** – Outline application (Stage 1) deadline
- **February 2019** – Invitation for full application (Stage 2)
- **3 April 2019** – Full application (Stage 2) deadline
- **May 2019** – Rebuttal
- **June 2019** – Panel meeting
- **July/August 2019** – Approval of funding from trustee committee and outcome letters are sent

After an unconditional offer is given to an applicant, we ask that they return the signed acceptance form and start the award within 6 months of receiving the offer letter.

**Patient and Public Involvement**

We expect that all applicants will have involved people affected by stroke in the planning and development stages of their funding application, and will continue to do so should their application be successful. This involvement should be meaningful, and people affected by stroke should have a real opportunity to contribute to your research.

In the application you will be asked how you have involved public and/or patients in this research and/or the application, how you will involve public and/or patients in this research going forward, what the impacts and benefits will be for them (short and/or longer term) and how you plan to disseminate this work to them.

We are able to offer you advice or answer questions you may have about involvement. If you would like to us to contact people affected by stroke to gain feedback on your proposal we can help, however please beware that we will not support any request made to us less than four weeks prior to the application deadline.
You can find out more about how we can help you to involve people affected by stroke in your work here.

**Application procedure**

**For the outline application stage:**

- You are required to complete a 2500 word proposal and a non-mandatory budget table and provide your and your co-applicants’ details.

- You are required to submit your outline application online, via our award management system, before the deadline (5pm 6 February 2019): https://strokeassociation.flexigrant.com

We will not accept paper/Word/PDF copies of the application form.

- You are not required to complete the Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT) for the outline application stage of this funding scheme.

**For the full application stage:**

**Details of support requested**

In the main budget table of the application form we would like you to include all the funding you are requesting from the Stroke Association. You will also be required to fully justify all the funding you are requesting.

Please note that if your application is successful, the funding provided will be the figure that you have requested (unless this is queried by the panel). After the Award Acceptance form is signed, the amount awarded will not be increased if there are errors in your calculations so please ensure that the total amount requested is correct.

If you have financial support from other sources, the nature and tenure of the support should be disclosed in either the project proposal section of the application form, or in the justification textbox underneath the budget table.

Support may be sought for the following items:

- Salaries of research workers and technical assistants. Salaries should be calculated with assistance from your institution’s finance team to ensure that they are in line with your institution’s policy/based on National payscales or recognised local pay models. We do not require a breakdown (ie: take home salary, National Insurance, pension contribution) – only the total figure per year per staff member, but please include the salary grade in the job role title section.

- Please account for inflation and salary increases in the costings in the application form. Salary increases need to be in line with the host institution policy. We are not able to increase the award amount over the course of the award from what is requested in your original budget.

- Equipment to be used exclusively in the research project.
• Consumables that are specific to the research project should be itemised and costed individually over the duration of the award.
• There is no maximum limit for imaging costs. However you will have to justify your request and ensure that costings are in line with institutional and national practices.
• Travel expenses which are integral to the project, for example, when patients have to be visited in their homes. Please ensure these are costed appropriately.
• Expenses of attendance at meetings and conferences must be justified as part of a necessary expenditure to deliver this work, for example, if overseas collaborations and visits for exchange of skills/knowledge are necessary.
• Open access publishing costs may be incorporated into the budget.
• Patient and Public Involvement: you should ensure you budget for all involvement activities you plan to hold as part of this research; such as as venue hire, catering and travel expenses. We recommend using INVOLVE’s involvement cost calculator to help put together an appropriate budget for PPI.

Support may not be sought for the following items:
• The salaries (whole or in part) of the Lead Applicant/Principal Investigator and other Senior Academic Staff are not supported by these grants. This may be waived only in exceptional circumstances.
• Stipends and tuition fees for studentships. For this funding call masters, PhD studentships, and clinical fellowships are not eligible to be included in the budget.
• The Stroke Association considers the Apprenticeship Levy as an indirect cost of research, therefore we will not pay this.

Where the study takes places within the NHS, we ask you to outline any associated NHS costs in the supplementary spreadsheet on the budget page and not in the main budget table:

From October 2018 the way we capture different costs associated with clinical studies is changing. We are a partnership funder of the NIHR, who have developed the new process to address the continued frustration about the complexity and variation in processes for commissioners and providers agreeing excess treatment costs (ETCs).

Researchers are required to complete the Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT) at the point of submission of their application. This is designed to capture the different costs associated with clinical research and attribute them according to whether they are research costs, service support costs, treatment costs, and excess treatment costs/treatment cost savings. The SoECAT will be used by funders and the HRA, and is intended to standardise the way in which the different costs categories will be calculated and attributed.

The impact of this work will:
• Enable the 15 NIHR Local Clinical Research Networks (LCRN) to help manage the excess treatment costs process on behalf of their local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and in collaboration with NHS England Specialised Commissioning. This single point of access for all proposals for which excess treatment costs may be applicable is designed to make the process much simpler for researchers to navigate.
Establish a more rapid, standardised and consistent process for the management of excess treatment costs to avoid delays during study set up and to maximise patient recruitment.

Set a threshold under which excess treatment costs will need to be absorbed by non-primary care providers participating in studies.

**Defining ETC values for each study**

To underpin the new arrangements, a cost attribution tool has been created in partnership with charity funders and research sponsors. This tool provides a standardised approach for attributing the costs of health and social care research and development (AcoRD) across England. As part of their funding applications, researchers will be required to complete this new tool, known as a Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT) for clinical research, which has been developed from the current HRA Schedule of Events. This tool is designed to capture the different costs associated with clinical research and attribute them accordingly.

The tool can be found here.

Supporting guidance for researchers, study teams and sponsors to complete the SoECAT can be found here.

**Non-commercial research sponsors have a responsibility to ensure the study is appropriately costed and attributed**

Attribution support is available for investigators, study teams and their R&D offices through AcoRD specialists in the NIHR Local Clinical Research Network. Find out more about how to access this support via the Study Support Service.

Under the new arrangements, sign off via the tool is required to confirm the study attribution complies with the Department of Health and Social Care AcoRD guidance. This early attribution support will underpin the excess treatment cost management process by providing formal sign off, supporting the role of the research sponsor and lead R&D office or Clinical Trial Unit. Completion of the Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Template will be required for studies eligible for the NIHR portfolio and the support this provides, which will include access to excess treatment cost payments under the new arrangements. This ETC value, alongside recruitment activity in the NIHR Central Portfolio Management System, will then be utilised to inform the payments to NHS providers.

A routemap is available to provide a high level overview for researchers and research sponsors accessing ETCs from 1 October 2018.

**Application checklist**

- You are required to submit your application online, via our award management system, before the deadline (5pm 3 April 2019):
  https://strokeassociation.flexigrant.com
- We will not accept paper/Word/PDF copies of the application form.
- The Head of Department and the Finance/Research Administration Officer from your primary organisation, and (if applicable) Research Sponsor must provide their approval of your application in order to allow you to submit the application. This is done by you inviting them to your application form via the ‘Participants’ tab in the system and them typing their details into the corresponding declaration page. This
acts as their signature. If your application is funded, wet copies of their signatures will be required.

Please see in the **Eligibility** section above defining ‘primary organisation’.

- You are not required to have the necessary ethical approval at the time of application. If successful, ethical approval for your study will have to be gained before you can begin your award. You are required to send us a copy of the ethical approval when it is gained.