MS Society Data Discovery Awards

Applicant guidance

You should use this guidance document with the 'help' sections on our online application system CC Grant Tracker.

February 2024

Let's stop MS **together**

Contents

We try to make sure that the information in this guidance is accurate. But changes are possible and the most up-to-date guidance is available on our website.

If you have any questions, you can email us at research@mssociety.org.uk or call us on 020 8438 0822.

1. Introduction

We're the largest charitable funder of MS research in the UK. We welcome applications for projects that will increase understanding of the cause of MS. And find new effective treatments or prevention strategies. As well as projects improving care and services for people affected by MS.

We don't make any decisions on the scientific quality and relevance of applications. These are made by independent peer and lay reviewers. As members of the Association of Medical Research Charities we adhere to the Principles of Peer Review.

You should use this guidance document with the "Help" sections in the application forms on our online application system CC Grant Tracker.

> Log into Grant Tracker.

1.1 The UK MS Register

The UK MS Register is a valuable piece of research infrastructure which we fund. It's the world's first register to combine data collected from people with MS with clinical and NHS data.

Over 17,000 people have joined since its launch in May 2011. The Register collects data from:

1. People with MS recording information about their MS directly via questionnaires every 6 months
2. A growing number of hospitals (over 50) across the UK linking consented website participants' medical records with their questionnaire responses
3. Routinely collected NHS data e.g. via the SAIL databank.

> Find out more about the data held by the UK MS Register on their website.

2. Data Discovery Awards Background, Purpose and Scope

We launched the Data Discovery Awards to encourage use of register data. And to build data science capability among the UK MS research community.

These Awards provide support for research projects designed to increase our understanding of MS risk factors. We hope these will provide a more combined approach to assess someone's risk of developing MS. And ultimately help us to develop new preventative strategies.

We're also aware that there are many other MS datasets in the UK. And we believe that by collaborating with the UK MS Register, you can draw from a wider pool of data to support your work. We encourage collaboration with other local, national or international MS datasets or other relevant data repositories.

Data Discovery Awards are for up to £50,000 for up to 12 months in duration.

You **must** use data from the UK MS Register, either alone or with other existing datasets. And your project should aim to do one of the following:

1. Uncover new risk factors for developing MS, with a particular emphasis on modifiable risk factors (towards primary prevention)
2. Further characterise known MS risk factors in a way that will take us towards preventative strategies
3. Increase our understanding of modifiable risk factors and comorbidities that influence MS progression (towards secondary prevention).

We won't fund applications relating to licenced pharmacological interventions for MS. Any such applications will be rejected upon submission.

All Data Discovery Award funding recommendations come from the Review Panel. This is made up of UK MS Register Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) members. And this includes lay members. We may also invite experts from outside of the SSC where necessary or appropriate. For example, if we need additional expertise or there are conflicts of interest.

> Read more about our approach to reviewing applications on our website.
> Read more about the Scientific Steering Committee on the UK MS Register's website.

If your application is awarded it'll be shared with the UK MS Register team so they have a full record of what was approved. We won't share the Finance and Costs or Participant information sections. You'll be required to consent to us sharing your application form with the Register team for this purpose when completing your application.

2.1   Our Research and Organisational Strategies

Your application should fit with our Research Strategy. We also have an organisational strategy to guide our work from 2020-2024. You should read and strongly consider these documents when writing your application.

> Download our 2023-2024 Research Strategy Extension from our website.
> Read our 2020-2024 Organisational Strategy on our website.

2.2   Our James Lind Alliance Partnership (JLA) research priorities

In 2013 we completed a James Lind Alliance Partnership (JLA) to identify research priorities that are important to people affected by MS and healthcare professionals.

"How can MS be prevented?" is one of our JLA research priorities. Historically, prevention of MS has been understudied. So we launched the Data Discovery Awards to encourage research designed to increase our understanding of MS risk factors. We hope by understanding who is likely to develop MS we'll move closer towards prevention of MS.

> Read about our JLA research priorities on our website.

3.   Our Award Conditions and Policies

You should also read our Award Conditions and Policies. This document contains our:
- **Open Access Policy**: We're committed to open and unrestricted access to the results of our funded research. We require any research papers based on our funded research to be published in an open access environment.
- **Grant Award Conditions**: The Award Conditions, together with the Award Letter and the Policies, set out the terms and conditions on which we make Awards.
- **Intellectual Property Policy**: This Intellectual Property (IP) Policy document sets out principles that we're guided by when considering questions relating to intellectual property and research matters.

> [Download our Award Conditions and Policies from our website.](#)
> [Read more about how to manage an MS Society Research Award.](#)

3.1   Our position on researcher leave

We strongly believe that researchers should be supported to take periods of leave when they need to. And part-time opportunities should be available for early career researchers to give more people the chance to progress their careers. As part of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) action plan for MS Society research we're sharing our position on leave for our funded researchers.

We're supportive of our funded researchers taking leave. For example, family leave (maternity, paternity, adoption and shared parental leave) and sick leave. This includes PhD students working on research we fund.

This is our position on researcher leave. It outlines our viewpoint and our expectations, but it's not a policy. Researchers working on our funded projects aren't our employees. So you should check and follow the relevant leave policies at your institution.

> [Read more about our position on researcher leave on our website.](#)
> [Read more about our work to improve EDI in MS research](#).

3.2   Our position on generative AI in research

Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT could bring benefits to MS research. But there are risks associated with their use, particularly in research funding and application review. We support the Research Funders Policy Group's joint statement on the use of generative AI in funding applications and assessment.

You should note:
- If using generative AI tools in developing your application, you must use them responsibly. And in line with relevant legal and ethical standards where these exist or as they develop.
- You must acknowledge any outputs from generative AI tools in funding applications.

We're committed to maintaining confidentiality in our research funding processes. As this is essential for safeguarding the sharing of scientific opinions and assessments.

It's not clear whether anything put into generative AI tools remains confidential. So, our applicants, reviewers and panel members must not put any part of any application under review into these tools. This includes for the purposes of review assessment, applicant responses or other purposes.

> Read the Research Funders Policy Group's joint statement on the use of generative AI in funding applications and assessment.

4.   Key Terms and Definitions

Lead applicant
The named lead applicant is the project leader. As lead applicant, you:
- Are the contact person for all correspondence relating to the application.
- Have overall responsibility for the award and must actively engage in its direction.

Adviser
- Advisers don't need to be actively involved in the project.
- They can view and edit the application, and provide comments.
- Advisers' CVs are included in the application PDF and seen by reviewers.
- They need to confirm their participation. But don't need to approve the application.

Co-applicant
- A co-applicant is a researcher who'll be actively involved in the project should the funding application be successful.
- Co-applicants can view and edit applications.
- Co-applicants have to approve applications before they can be submitted.

Finance officer
- A member of your institution who's responsible for confirming and approving financial details of applications.
- They act as **FINAL SIGNATORY** for application submission. Your application won't be accepted if it's not approved by the Finance Officer before the funding deadline.
- They'll be responsible for administering the grant if it is awarded.

Public engagement
Where information and knowledge about research is provided and disseminated. Examples of engagement are:
- science festivals open to the public
- open days at a research centre
- raising awareness in the media
> Read more about public engagement on the National Centre for Co-ordinating Public Engagement's website.

Public involvement (PPI)
Where members of the public are actively involved in research projects and in research organisations. Examples of involvement include when people affected by MS:
- are involved in identifying research priorities
- are members of a project steering group
- comment on patient information materials
> Read more about involvement on the NIHR website.

Public participation
Where people take part in a research study. Examples of participation include:
- people being recruited to a clinical trial or other study
- people completing a questionnaire as part of a study.
> Read more about participation in trials on the NHS website.

Research Network
The Research Network are a passionate group of people living with MS or caring for someone with MS. They're not required to have specialist scientific knowledge, but are trained to use their personal experiences of MS to review applications, ensuring that the research we fund is of the highest importance to people affected by MS.
> Read more about the Research Network

5. Submitting your application

Your application should be carefully considered and show a high level of grantsmanship. You should thoroughly review it before submission and ask any co-applicants to do the same.

Your application must be submitted to us through CC Grant Tracker. You must complete all sections of the application form. If sections aren't completed properly, we'll return your application. Or it might not be validated for review.

> Log into Grant Tracker.
> Download guidance on how to use Grant Tracker from our website.

5.1 Applicant processes

Before you can submit your application to us, you **must** check the feasibility of your proposal with the UK MS Register. The process for this is as follows:

1. Complete and submit an initial Expression of Interest form to the UK MS Register team. They'll then contact you to arrange a call to discuss your proposal further.

   > Complete the 'Working with the UK MS Register Expression of Interest' form

2. If your proposal is suitable, the UK MS Register team will ask you to complete a DDA Feasibility Assessment Form to provide more information. Including your project aims, methodology/protocol and statistical analysis plan.

3. If your proposal is confirmed as feasible by the UK MS Register team, they'll send you a PDF copy of your DDA Feasibility Assessment Form. **This must be included in the application you submit to us in order to apply for a Data Discovery Award.**

The project aims, methodology/protocol and statistical analysis plan that you submitted in the DDA Feasibility Assessment form mustn't change once they've been confirmed as feasible by the UK MS Register team. You must copy these sections of your DDA Feasibility Assessment Form **verbatim** into the relevant sections of our application form on Grant Tracker.

Please be aware that the UK MS Register team will need to receive details about your project at least four weeks in advance of our application submission deadline. So please make sure you factor time in to complete these UK MS Register feasibility checks.

If you wish to also use your own data, this can be uploaded to the Register Secure eResearch Platform (SeRP), where sufficient identifier linkages can be made with the UK MS Register data. **You must confirm in your application that you have the appropriate approval to do this. And proof of consent or institutional approval to upload that data must be included with your application.**

5.2   Who's eligible to apply?

Both junior and established researchers are eligible to apply as Lead Applicant for Data Discovery Awards.

You're expected to have a contract (fixed-term or tenure) which covers the proposed duration of the grant. You must be based at an UK university or NHS institution and be the Principal Investigator of the project. International co-applicants or advisers are permitted. As are collaborations with international datasets.

The Lead Applicant can invite Co-Applicants and Advisers to join the application as Participants. For all applications the Lead Applicant **must** invite a Finance Officer who approves the application from the host institution and acts as the Final Signatory for application submission.

5.3   Patient and public involvement (PPI) in your research

Patient and public involvement (PPI) in research is when people with personal experience of health conditions work in active partnership with researchers or research funders like us.

Involvement isn't the same as recruiting participants to your study or sharing information with people through public engagement events. Involvement is about working in partnership with people affected by MS to shape, design and oversee a project.

> Read the NIHR's guide to public involvement in funding applications on their website.
> Read 'A practical guide to patient and public involvement in lab-based research' online.
> Find more resources on NIHR's Learning for Involvement website

In your application you need to describe:
1. How people affected by MS have been involved in the development of your proposal (pre-application involvement)
2. How do you plan to involve people affected in your ongoing study, if funded.

Pre-application involvement
Before applying, we encourage you to involve people affected by MS in the development of your proposal. This helps to ensure:

- Your research questions are relevant to their experiences
- Your lay summary is accessible and understandable to our lay reviewers
- Your study design considers the needs of people affected by MS

Involvement in your ongoing study

As well as working with people to develop your application, you should also plan for how you will continue to involve people affected by MS throughout the project. For example, people affected by MS could:

- Join an advisory group to provide their perspective throughout the course of a project - advising on challenges as they arise
- Review participant information materials such as leaflets, posters, webpages, questionnaires (for clinical projects)
- Advise on the best ways to communicate and disseminate your findings
- Work as a peer researcher in your team to be involved throughout the life course of the project (if appropriate)

Budgeting for involvement

Involving people in research requires time and money. It's important to account for the costs of involvement when setting your budget. As without an adequate budget you'll struggle to involve people effectively.

You should include the costs for any planned PPI activities in your application. For example, you should consider:

a. Expenses

You must cover any expenses that people will incur by getting involved in PPI activities. People should never be out-of-pocket. This may include, for example, travel, subsistence (including the cost of carers / PA to also attend face-to-face meetings), broadband and childcare costs for online meetings.

b. Training and support

Training and induction sessions may be required so that people affected by MS are supported to carry out their role well. There are many free resources available online, but you should consider whether any paid training is required. You may also wish for your PPI contributors to join you at conferences and events.

c. Payment

It is best practice to offer payment for members of the public who get involved in your work, in recognition of their time, skills and expertise. How much to budget depends on several factors, for example how often they are going to be involved and what level of responsibility they will have.

> Read the INVOLVE guidelines for payment and recognition for public involvement on the NIHR website.

We recommend you read and work through the NIHR's payment guidance for researchers. This includes information on budgeting and example payment rates for different activities.

We can support you to plan and budget for your public involvement, connect you with people affected by MS and to carry out activities. Get in touch with us by emailing researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk

5.4 Support writing your lay summary and involvement plan

Writing your lay summary

You need to write a clear lay summary for your proposal. People affected by MS will review your application alongside experts in your field. Our funding panels also include researchers without direct expertise in your area of research.

If your lay summary is too brief or too complex, it'll be difficult for them to comment on and score your application. And this will affect whether it might be funded.
We encourage you to use Plain English when writing your lay summary. This will make your writing as accessible as possible to all panel members. You can read about how we use plain English to be more accessible on our website.

> > Read more about Plain English and see some examples on the Plain English Campaign's website.
> > Read our 'Tips for writing a good lay summary'

Our Lay Summary Development scheme

Our optional Lay Summary Development scheme can help you to write a high quality and accessible lay summary and involvement plan. People affected by MS from our Research Network can give feedback on your draft before you submit.

They can comment on:
- how well you have communicated your research proposal
- the importance of the topic to people affected by MS
- How well you have thought through and communicated your involvement plans

You don't have to complete Lay Summary Development if you don't want to. You can still apply without it. It's not part of our review process but can help you to improve your lay summary.

If you'd like to go through Lay Summary Development, you'll need to submit a completed Lay Summary Development request form. This needs to be submitted before the scheme closes. You'll get feedback on your summary around four weeks before the grant application submission deadline.

> > Find more information about the Lay Summary Development scheme, including the guidance notes and request form on our website.
> > You can find the Lay Summary Development scheme closing date on our Funding page.

For all enquiries about involving people affected by MS in any stage of your research, you can email our Public Involvement team on researchnetwork@mssociety.org.uk.

5.5   Finance and costs

You should work with finance offices, clinical trials units, local NHS trusts and the local NIHR CRN network to ensure that all costs of research have been identified and appropriately paid for.

This table includes our list of acceptable and unacceptable costs. **You should read it carefully, including the notes column.** You can request the costs guidance table in an alternative format by emailing research@mssociety.org.uk.

Category	What can you include?	What can't you include?	Notes

Staff members	- Salaries for staff who work on a fixed-term contract specifically on the funded project, employed at the host institution.
	- Staff may include include postdoctoral fellows, research assistants, data managers, PhD students, technicians and allied health professionals.
		- You can't include salary for yourself as lead applicant, co-applicants or advisers.
		- There are some circumstances where we'd consider **a proportion** of salary for one member of the applicant team. Their salary for research must be reliant on grant funding. And the request must be strongly justified for the benefit of MS research in your application form. We need confirmation of their salary circumstances before we make an award.
		- You can't include apprenticeship levy.
		- We won't increase the award budget to reflect increased research costs once the award has been made. This includes increased salaries due to nationally agreed pay awards/inflation.
			- Your application must have an applicant with a tenured position for the duration of the Award. This doesn't have to be the lead applicant.
			- You should provide a copy of current salary scales in the 'Supplementary Attachments' section for all salaried staff when you submit the application.
			- You must quote an appropriate grading and salary for all staff members. And this must be approved by the administrative office of the host institution.
			- The employing institution is responsible for providing maternity benefit and increases in salary costs other than annual increments and cost of living awards.
			- Salaries must show the separate amounts claimed for:
			  o basic pay
			  o national insurance (% salary and total amount, at current rates)

Category	What can you include?	What can't you include?	Notes
			- London weighting allowance where applicable - superannuation (in line with the rate used by the University Superannuation Scheme (USS) or NHS pension scheme).
Consumables	- Laboratory chemicals and materials (e.g. reagents, isotopes, peptides, enzymes, antibodies, gases, proteins, cell/tissue/ bacterial culture). - Data collection materials, if specific to the project. - Where justified, personal computing costs for named individuals working specifically on the grant. These costs shouldn't be more than £1,000. - Patient and public involvement (PPI) costs. This includes recruitment, reasonable travel and refreshment costs. - Consultant costs or staff time at other institutions for specific project work packages, such as specialist statistical analysis. This should be included as a non-salary "Consultant" cost. - Equipment use costs where usage of shared/core equipment, services or research facilities is essential to the project. **These must be stated as cost per sample/time**	- You can't include bench fees or annual access fees for shared facilities, equipment or infrastructure. - Funding for computer equipment or software is only allowed if absolutely essential for the project. These costs shouldn't be more than £1,000 for each item unless absolutely necessary. You'll need to provide a strong justification for their inclusion. - You can't include annual software licencing fees. - We won't cover article publishing or open access costs. - Regulatory licences and fees, such as those associated with ethical approval can't be included.	- You can read more guidance on PPI costs on the NIHR INVOLVE website. - You should break consumables down as itemised costs, rather than giving an overall estimated cost. - A full justification is required for all consumables. If you haven't sufficiently justified a consumables cost, we'll remove it from the award budget.

Category	What can you include?	What can't you include?	Notes
	period otherwise they will be removed.		
Equipment	- Equipment that's specific to the grant and more than £1000 in value (excluding VAT) should be listed here. - Costs may include purchase, delivery and installation of scientific equipment where that equipment is specific and essential for carrying out the project. - Each piece of equipment should be fully justified.	- Equipment can't be requested for routine or service use. - The host institution is responsible for equipment. This includes its accommodation, operating and servicing costs, and any insurance that may be necessary. - You can't include routine operating and servicing costs for any piece of equipment.	- You should add all equipment net of VAT. - Any single piece of equipment costing more than £1000 and funded by the Award is our property. - Equipment less than £1000 in value may be classed as a consumable, and listed accordingly.
Conferences	- Conference costs can cover a maximum of £1,000 each grant year for each member of salaried staff on the application. **These costs are pro rata (see notes).** - Conference costs can be used to cover travel, registration fee and/or accommodation for meetings/conferences.	- You can't include conference costs for the lead applicant as you're not a salaried member of staff on the grant. - You can't include costs above standard class travel or accommodation. - You shouldn't include travel and accommodation to visit collaborators under conference costs.	These costs can only be used for meetings/conferences directly related to the funded research.

Category	What can you include?	What can't you include?	Notes
Other		- Excess treatment costs - Institutional overheads - Financial services - Personnel services - Recruitment costs - Public relations - General institution libraries - Departmental services (administration, secretarial, printing, photocopying) - Telephone charges and postage or courier services - Journal subscriptions - Furniture - Standard per unit IT charges. - Phone/computer accessories (drivers, cases, chargers, batteries).	o

We may reduce excessive costs if you haven't provided sufficient justification. And we'll remove any ineligible costs.
We also won't pay for things that aren't included in the application budget when the award is made.

If you believe that any of the 'unacceptable costs' should be seen as direct costs for your project, you must provide full and detailed justification for this in your application.

Increase in costs

We won't be responsible for any increase in the costs of research (whether caused by increased consumables costs, increased personnel costs or otherwise). We won't increase the award to reflect increased research costs, once the award has been made.

Types of costs

Your institution's finance team should be able to provide further guidance on costings. If you are unsure please get in touch with us. Including ineligible costs may delay application submission or approval of award.

We won't fund the full economic costs of research (fECs), or a fixed proportion of these. We'll only pay for the Directly Incurred costs related specifically to the planned research to be undertaken in this grant. As a member of the AMRC we support their position statement on supporting research in universities outlining what charities pay for and why.

> Read the position statement on charities supporting research in universities on the AMRC website.

1. Directly incurred costs

These include the familiar direct costs of research such as:
- Staff (e.g. research assistant salaries)
- Travel and subsistence
- Consumables and Equipment (or specific access to equipment)

We'll pay these costs, but you'll need to justify why they're needed for the research.

2. Directly allocated costs

These are shared costs, based on estimates and don't represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis. As such we will not pay these costs. They were previously included as 'indirect costs' heading. They include:
- The costing of the time spent by the applicant and co-applicants
- Estates: the way these are calculated may vary between institutions. Different categories of space will be costed differently, for example laboratory space will be different to office-based costs.
- Other Directly Allocated: these include the costs of shared resources, such as staff and equipment.

3. Indirect costs

These costs are necessary for underpinning research but can't be allocated to individual projects. These include things like computing and information support, central services, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs. They'll be calculated separately by each Higher Education Institution (HEI), according to TRAC methodology. We won't cover Indirect Costs or any other non-attributable overhead costs in your budget. However, such costs may be eligible under the Charity Research Support Fund.

5.6   Co-funding applications

We're open to co-funding applications with other funders. You should provide full details of the co-funder and amount they would be contributing.

5.7   References

You should cite all essential references relevant to your proposal. We don't specify a referencing style. But you must include enough information in the reference list for reviewers to find the publication. DOIs alone aren't sufficient.

Copies of in-press or submitted publications relevant to the proposal should also be included. You can add these in the "Supplementary Attachments" section.

6.   Criteria for review

Your application will be scored on the quality of science and relevance to MS. Applications will be reviewed and scored primarily by members of UK MS Register Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) with relevant expertise. This includes review by lay members.

> > Read more about the Scientific Steering Committee on the UK MS Register's website.

- Once you've submitted your application, we'll validate it to make sure it fits the remit of the Data Discovery Awards. And to check that all sections of the form have been completed adequately. We'll also check that the UK MS Register Team have confirmed the feasibility of your proposal (see section 5.1).
- If your application is eligible, we send it for independent review by members of the SSC. This includes review by lay members. We may also send it for review outside of the SSC if necessary or appropriate. For example, if we don't have relevant expertise within the SSC. Or there are conflicts of interest.
- If we receive a higher number of applications than we can take to the Review Panel meeting, applications will go through a shortlisting (triage) process. This'll be based on scores from independent review.
  - o   This involves a shortlisting process by the Review Panel Chair. It can sometimes include a Vice Chair and lay panel member. They'll recommend a shortlist of the highest quality and most relevant applications for further review. These will have the best chances of being fundable in this round.
  - o   The remaining applications will be rejected (triaged)
  - o   If shortlisting is required, we'll tell all applicants the triage outcomes around a month before funding outcomes are announced.
- Shortlisted applications will then be considered by the SSC members at the Review Panel meeting. We may also invite experts from outside of the SSC where necessary or appropriate. For example, if we need additional expertise or there are conflicts of interest.
- The SSC Review Panel Meeting provides a recommendation to us about which applications should be funded. Our Board of Trustees then considers their recommendations for funding.
- Following approval by the Board, we'll communicate official funding offers, awards are made and projects start.

The scoring guidance used by our reviewers is found on the following pages. You can request the generic scoring guidance for reviewers table in an alternative format by emailing research@mssociety.org.uk.

6.1   Data Discovery Award-specific review criteria

Scientific strategy
- How closely does the application meet one of the three aims of the Data Discovery Awards?
- How much will the project take us forward towards prevention strategies?
- **Note**: if there are more than two fundable applications, applications relevant to primary prevention (addressing aims 1 or 2 in the scope) will be prioritised.

Plan of investigation
- Is the data selected appropriate to answer the proposed question(s)?
- Does the team have the correct permissions in place to access and analyse the data?
- Is the data analysis plan realistic in the proposed timeframe?
- Are the planned outputs appropriate to answer the proposed question?
- How have people affected by MS been involved in the development of the project? And how will they be involved in the project delivery?
- Have all requested costs been fully justified and represent value for money?

Research environment and track record of success
- Does the project team have a track record of success in this area?
- Do the team have access to appropriate support/research environment for this project?
- If conducting the analysis themselves, do the team have the appropriate skills/experience to do this?

Capacity building
- Will the project team bring new data expertise into MS? Or will it support the development of data expertise among existing MS researchers?

Dissemination
- Are dissemination plans appropriate and ambitious?
- Have people affected by MS been involved in development on dissemination plans?
- Have the costs of dissemination been included and fully justified?

6.2 Generic scoring guidance for peer reviewers

Generic criteria	Rating	Score	
• Research question(s) are likely to result in significant benefit for people affected by MS. And/or advancement in our scientific understanding of MS • Research team is very strong, containing all relevant disciplines to deliver project outcomes • Very good value for money • Proposal is clear and well written • People affected by MS are actively involved and influencing project at all relevant stages (PPI) • Proposal has a clear and realistic pathway to impact. Potential impact is highly significant and appropriate to grant type. • Research design is excellent, appropriate and highly feasible for the Award type.	Exceptional	**5**	Highly fundable
	High quality	**4.5**	
	Good	**4**	
	Above average	**3.5**	
• Research question(s) are likely to result in benefit for people affected by MS. Or some advancement in the scientific understanding of MS Research team has relevant experience and contains most of the relevant disciplines to deliver project outcomes • Acceptable value for money • Some elements of involving people affected by MS, where appropriate, but not well integrated or well supported • Elements of the application are unclear • Project would only be fundable with some changes • Proposal has a reasonable pathway to impact. Potential impact is significant and mostly appropriate to grant type. • Research design is acceptable for the Award type	Acceptable	**3**	Potentially fundable
	Borderline acceptable	**2.5**	
• Research question(s) are irrelevant with no tangible benefit to people affected by MS. • Key skills missing from the research team • Poor value for money • Unclear application • Involvement of people affected by MS inappropriate or limited/ lacking • Pathway to impact is unclear and/or unrealistic. Little or no potential impact or poorly described/not appropriate to grant type. • Research design is unsuitable for the Award type.	Below acceptable	**2**	Not fundable
	Serious scientific weaknesses or other major concerns	**1.5**	
	Not fundable	**1**	

7. Resubmission Policy

Unless you're explicitly invited, we only allow **one** resubmission of any previously unsuccessful application. If you are resubmitting an application, you should indicate this in the 'Other Support' section of the application form. And complete the text box according to the guidance.

Why do we only allow one resubmission?
Over the past five years, less than 10% of resubmissions have been successful.

Our resubmission policy aims to promote a culture of high-quality submissions and high-quality reviews that will benefit you, our reviewers and us alike. And the MS community by helping us select and fund high quality and relevant research that has an impact on people affected by MS.

What do we consider as a resubmission?
A resubmission is any application that was previously submitted to our Grant Rounds. This includes if you submit the same application under a different name. Or if you submit the same application under a different funding stream (e.g. changing a PhD Fellowship to a Catalyst Award).

Exceptions to our resubmission rule
We may invite a small number of further resubmissions if there is compelling evidence from peer review. And if advised by the TERN Review Panels.

Preparing a resubmission:
If you're preparing a resubmission, you must:
• Indicate this in the 'Other Support' section of the application form.
• Make sure that previous comments or considerations have been adequately responded to. This includes written review comments and/or panel feedback. Reviewers will have access to your previous application and review comments.
• Include a summary of any substantial changes to the application

If you don't include these, your application won't be eligible for re-review. And we'll automatically reject it.

What constitutes sufficient change to qualify as a new submission?
We'll only qualify applications as a new submission if they contain major changes. It's not sufficient to include only minor changes or considering reviewer comments as a new submission.

Consequences of an Uninvited Resubmission:
If we feel that a new application is a resubmission, or if you submit an uninvited resubmission that has already been submitted twice, then we'll automatically reject it.

8. Contact us

Please let us know if you have any questions or need help. You can email us at research@mssociety.org.uk or call us on 020 8438 0822.

Thank you for your interest in our research funding.

We're the MS Society.
Our community is here for you
through the highs, lows and
everything in between.
We understand what life's like with MS.

Together, we are strong enough to stop MS.

mssociety.org.uk

Contact us

MS National Centre 020 8438 0700
info@mssociety.org.uk

MS Helpline Freephone 0808 800 8000 (weekdays 9am-9pm)
helpline@mssociety.org.uk

Online
www.mssociety.org.uk
facebook.com/MSSociety
twitter.com/mssocietyuk

MS Society Scotland
0131 335 4050
msscotland@mssociety.org.uk

MS Society Northern Ireland
028 9080 2802
nireception@mssociety.org.uk

MS Society Cymru
mscymru@mssociety.org.uk

►Let's stop MS together