

Joint British Geriatrics Society / Dunhill Medical Trust Doctoral Training Fellowship

Guidelines for applicants 2024-25



BGS

British Geriatrics Society
Improving healthcare
for older people

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1. THE OPPORTUNITY

The Dunhill Medical Trust (DMT) continues to partner with the [British Geriatrics Society](#) (BGS) to co-fund one Doctoral Training Fellowship to support front-line healthcare professionals with an interest in developing a career in ageing-related research.

Applicants can apply for up to £300,000. We acknowledge that this amount of funding may not be sufficient for some applicants, and therefore welcome applications that can be part funded by the host institution either financially¹ or in-kind through the provision of services, facilities and/or tuition fee waiver. Broadly, the award will be expected to cover:

- an individual's salary (at the appropriate grade on the relevant pay scale), plus on-costs
- tuition fees for a PhD
- an additional amount to cover consumables, training, travel costs to present their work etc.

Full details on eligible costs are included in [Section 2.4](#).

¹ This may be from internal university funds and/or funding from industry, other charities etc.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1 WHO CAN APPLY?

The scheme is open to all front-line healthcare professionals working with older people – including allied health professionals, doctors and nurses – who meet the requirements for a programme of PhD study at a UK-based university.

The successful candidate will need to become a member of the British Geriatrics Society² – if not already a member – for the duration of the Fellowship as a condition of award. Regardless of the outcome of your application, we encourage all those working in the field of older people’s care and ageing-related research to consider joining the BGS. The BGS has a wealth of clinical and policy resources to support professional development and clinical practice, and provides a UK-wide multidisciplinary community committed to improving healthcare for older people. There are many benefits to joining as a member, including discounts on educational events and resources, access to grants, and opportunities to present your work and to be involved through special interest groups or committees.

In addition, you are required to have at least one prospective supervisor (your Primary Supervisor) who will need to be invited to contribute to your application (more details on this are provided in [Section 4.1](#)).

There are no nationality or age restrictions, but candidates must have (or plan to obtain) permission to live and study in the UK. The host institution is responsible for securing all necessary permits and related costs for the Fellow.

2.2 RESEARCH TOPICS

The focus of your proposed research must be aligned to understanding and treating ageing-related diseases and frailty, and/or improving the health and social care of older people, with an emphasis on projects that address one or more of the priority research themes highlighted on page 15 of the Dunhill Medical Trust’s [2020-25 Strategic Framework](#). We are particularly interested in research with the potential to improve the health and social care of older people within 5 years of the end of the Fellowship.

Please note that projects with a specific focus on cancer will not be eligible for funding.

2.3 PERIOD OF SUPPORT

The Fellowship is intended to be flexible and may be undertaken on either a full-time or part-time basis. Full-time Fellowships will be awarded for a maximum period of 3 years, whereas part-time Fellowships can be awarded for a maximum of 6 years.

If you are applying for a part-time Fellowship, you will need to include your salary costs on a pro-rata basis accordingly (more details on completing your budget are provided in [Section 2.4](#) below).

² For membership queries please contact the British Geriatrics Society at membership@bgs.org.uk

2.4 ELIGIBLE COSTS

In your application, you will be expected to provide detailed budgetary information on the costs you are requesting, phased annually. Please note that if your application is successful, you may need to provide a quarterly breakdown of your budget as a condition of your award.

The budget table within the **Financial support** section of your application should be reviewed and/or completed by the relevant Administrative / Finance Manager from your host institution (this individual must be invited to contribute to your application within the Grants Management Portal, and more information on this is provided in [Section 4.1](#) and in [our “how to” guide](#)).

Please do not include any part or in-kind contributions from other sources in your budget table (you will be given the opportunity to detail these, if applicable, in a separate question).

Please note that host institutions receive a contribution to overheads via the [Charities Research Support Fund](#). More information regarding the Charities element of the Quality-Related (“QR”) funding can be found in the ‘What costs will you cover?’ question in our [Funding FAQs](#). Apart from any specific cases listed, we will not meet overhead costs (typically those identified by Research Councils as Directly Allocated Costs, Indirect Costs and Estates Costs) for research institutions.

However, if applicable, **we do expect** funding to be allocated within the proposed budget to compensate any involved community partner organisation(s) for their contribution to the work at their full economic cost. Some useful advice on full economic cost recovery for community organisations is provided in the [‘Community-facing organisations’ drop-down on the “How we support you” page on our website](#).

The following information outlines the budget table headings and what you can and cannot apply for. For further information on completing your budget within the application form, please read our [“how to” guide for using the Grants Management Portal](#).

When completing your budget table, please ensure that you make a realistic assumption regarding inflation when applying the cost uplift for future years.

STAFF COSTS

- **Basic salary**

Please include your basic salary costs (at the appropriate grade on the relevant pay scale) under this budget heading³. All amounts should include provision for relevant increases in pay grade / scale / spine point and inflation if necessary. For this scheme, the Trust will **not** fund salary costs for members of staff other than the Fellow.

- **National insurance and pension**

³ The Trust is a Living Wage Funder and we require all posts which are wholly or partially funded by us to be paid at least the real Living Wage, unless there are particular reasons for this not to happen. Please cost up any application for salaries at least the real Living Wage. More information can be found on the [Living Wage website](#). Please note that organisations do not need to be accredited Living Wage Employers to apply to us, but we do encourage organisations to consider whether this is a possibility for them.

- **Local allowance**

This includes London weighting, or other location allowances.

- **Career development / support costs**

These will be met when there is clearly defined explanation of how they will contribute to your career development in ageing-related fields during and beyond the lifetime of the proposed research. Examples of career development costs include mentoring and training (so costs related to your training programme should be included under this heading). We would expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the relevant sections of the application form.

- Please note that we will **not** contribute towards the Apprenticeship Levy.

PATIENT, CARER AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

We will meet justified payments for patient, carer and public involvement (PPI). Please ensure that you have read the NIHR's ["Payment guidance for researchers and professionals"](#) page. In addition, ensure that you have considered the [UK Standards for Public Involvement in Research](#). We would also expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the relevant parts of the application form.

RUNNING EXPENSES

- **Animal costs**

If applicable, this can include the costs of attaining appropriate licences.

- **Clinical trials**

A detailed justification for the requested costs will need to be provided. We may provide a reasonable contribution towards Clinical Trials Unit (CTU) staff participating in the research, providing appropriate justification is given when requested. Please read our [Funding FAQs](#) on our website for more information on research involving a Clinical Trials Unit.

- **Consumables and other project specific running costs**

The cost of materials and consumables required to carry out the proposed research will be met but should be justified, with special regard to those categories of overhead costs which the Trust will not meet. Estimated figures for consumables / materials are not acceptable and must be itemised. Non-UK costs (e.g. specialist tests or assays) may be met, on condition that full justification is provided. It will, however, be the responsibility of the host institution to reimburse the non-UK institution for carrying out such tests.

- **Data storage / archive**

Data storage, archiving and management costs may be met, on condition that they are reasonable and proportionate in the context of the study.

- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) related costs**

- **Participant costs / expenses / incentives**

- **Steering group / meeting costs**

- **Transcription costs**

- **Travel and subsistence**

Travel and subsistence costs for yourself, supervisors and other members of the team assigned to the research, where required by the nature of the work, will normally be met and should be based on the most suitable and economical form of travel.

EQUIPMENT (INCLUDING COMPUTER COSTS)

Requests for study-specific items of equipment costing up to £10k may be met but should be fully justified. For requests over £10k, we will expect a detailed case to be provided and at least a 50% contribution towards the total cost of the equipment from the host institution and/or other funders. Suppliers' quotations will also be required.

We would normally expect the involved organisations to provide access to major equipment, but where specific circumstances require substantial usage or a contribution to the use of major equipment is requested, a detailed case should be provided.

Computers and other IT equipment dedicated to the study may be met, on condition that full justification is provided.

OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

- **Impact-related costs**

We will meet costs for yourself and, if applicable, other team members to attend conferences as a speaker and/or to present posters etc. to disseminate the findings of the grant. Costs for other dissemination and impact-related activities related to the research may be applied for, provided that full justification is given. We would also expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the relevant sections of the application form. We will **not** meet costs for attending an academic conference as a delegate only.

- **Open access / open data costs**

These may be included in applications but should be fully justified and comply with the Dunhill Medical Trust's [Open Access Policy](#).

OTHER COSTS

Please include the costs of your PhD tuition fees under this budget heading. Please note that the Trust will only pay tuition fees at the same rate as home students, meaning your host organisation will be required to waive the higher international fee rate, if applicable.

3. APPLICATION PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The application process will consist of three stages:

1. An online application
2. Peer review and Panel review
3. If shortlisted, an interview

The application process for this call will follow the timetable below:

Activity	Date
Call for applications open	13 th December 2024
Deadline for applications	14 th March 2025 (5pm)
Peer review and Panel review / shortlisting of applications	April – September 2025
Notification of outcome of your application and, if shortlisted, invitation to attend an interview	18 th September 2025 (at the latest)
Interviews held by our Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please do ensure that you are available on this day, as unfortunately there will be little flexibility with this date. • This interview will take place either in London or via Zoom. 	30 th September 2025
Ratification of the Panel's recommendation as to which applicant should be funded	7 th October 2025
Shortlisted applicants notified of the outcome of their interview	Mid-November 2025
Formal announcement of the Fellowship at the BGS Autumn 2025 or Spring 2026 Meeting, depending on any award conditions that need to be met prior <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please note that the successful Fellow is expected to attend the relevant meeting and present a short summary of their planned research. • Specific dates for the presentation will be confirmed in due course. 	12 th – 14 th November 2025 or late May 2026 (exact dates to be confirmed and subject to change)

We typically expect the Fellowship to start within 12 months of the Grant Offer Letter being sent. However, please note that the Fellowship will not be able to commence until any conditions stated in the Grant Offer Letter have been met.

Every effort has been made to provide enough time for the various stages of the process while avoiding public / school holidays, but some clashes will unfortunately be unavoidable.

4. ONLINE APPLICATIONS

4.1 OVERVIEW

Online applications will open on Friday 13th December 2024 and close at 5pm on Friday 14th March 2025.

BEFORE STARTING AN APPLICATION

Please ensure that you have completed our [general eligibility questionnaire](#) and read our [Funding FAQs](#) on our website. You should also read our [Terms and Conditions for Research Grants](#).

You should also be aware that we will ask you to provide an ORCID iD when completing your application form. Any prospective applicants without an ORCID iD can [register for one](#). We use the information included in your ORCID profile to help auto-populate the **About you** section of the application form. [ORCID has published a range of help and support](#) for researchers on registering for their iD and managing their ORCID profile.

THE APPLICATION FORM

Applications need to be submitted via our [online Grants Management Portal](#). Please follow [this link for a separate “how to” document](#) with details on registering for an account and using the portal.

You can [download a PDF template of the application form](#) from our website. Please note, however, that this is only provided to help you plan your application – **only submissions made via the Grants Management Portal before the deadline will be accepted.**

Whilst you, as the prospective Fellow / lead applicant, are responsible for submitting the application form, other people (referred to on the portal as “Participants”) must also be invited to contribute to the form. Please see the table below for more information on who can/needs to be involved at this stage of the application process:

Required	Optional
<p>Principal Supervisor:</p> <p>You must invite your Principal Supervisor to contribute to the Your Principal Supervisor section of the application form.</p> <p>Administrative / Finance Manager:</p> <p>An appropriate Administrative / Finance Manager must be invited to complete a declaration on behalf of your host institution (the lead institution). This individual may also contribute to the Financial support section of the form, if required.</p>	<p>Additional supervisors:</p> <p>You may, if you wish, invite up to two additional supervisors to contribute to the Your Co-Supervisor sections of the application form.</p> <p>Please note:</p> <p>Once any optional participants have been invited, it will not be possible to submit the form until they have completed their contribution or you have indicated on the portal that they are no longer required to contribute.</p>

Head of Department:

You must invite your Head of Department to complete a declaration on behalf of your host department.

Please note:

The application cannot be submitted until all required external participants have completed their contributions.

Detailed information on inviting external participants, and contributing to an application as an external participant, is provided in our [“how to” guide for using the Grants Management Portal](#).

4.2 THE PANEL

The shortlisting and interview Panel will consist of the following members:

- Dr Thomas Jackson (University of Birmingham and DMT Research Grants Committee member)
- Dr Marc Österdahl (King’s College London and current Joint BGS / DMT Doctoral Training Fellow)
- Professor Dame Louise Robinson (Newcastle University and DMT Research Grants Committee member)
- Dr Oliver Todd (University of Leeds / Bradford Institute for Health Research and representative of the BGS)

Also present at the shortlisting meeting and/or interviews will be Sarah Mistry (Chief Executive of the BGS) and DMT staff.

Peer review, Panel review / shortlisting and interviews will take place on the dates specified in [Section 3](#).

4.3 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Once submitted, applications will be externally peer reviewed, and then reviewed / shortlisted by the Panel based on the following criteria:

- The proposed work is novel and addresses an important research question.
- The proposed methodology is sound and the proposal sets out clear and achievable objectives.
- The proposed work is of high academic quality and will make a significant contribution to knowledge in the field.
- There is a credible, feasible and specific plan to achieve benefit beyond the academic community and improve the health and social care of older people within 5 years of the end of the grant. Including due consideration of equity, diversity and inclusion and patient, carer and public involvement.
- The applicant is eminently suitable, and the proposal demonstrates a clear and genuine focus on career development and provides evidence of the quality and suitability of institutional support.
- The financial support requested is wholly appropriate and the requested resources have been fully justified.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview as per the dates specified in [Section 3](#). You will be required to give a 10-minute timed presentation on:

- Your proposed project, addressing any feedback received from the Panel shortlisting meeting.
- How you have played a key role in the development of the proposed work.
- Your future aspirations and how this proposed Fellowship fits in.
- How you envisage working with the BGS and DMT during the proposed Fellowship.

After the presentation, there will then be questions from the Panel. In total, it is anticipated that the interview will be no longer than 1 hour.

Recognising the impacts of COVID-19 on research activity: We are aware that COVID-19 has resulted in disruptions to research activities for many researchers. As a result, the impacts of COVID-19 will be taken into account when assessing applicants' record of outputs and career progression and we will be providing guidance on this matter to peer reviewers and panellists.

FEEDBACK ON YOUR APPLICATION

All applicants, whether successful at interview or unsuccessful at either the shortlisting or interview stage, will receive feedback. We will also be providing information on the eventual success rate for the call at a later date.

4.4 CHECKLIST

Make sure you have completed all the relevant tasks on this list before submitting your application:

- Have you read these guidelines, our general Funding FAQs and our Terms and Conditions for Research Grants?
- Have you provided detailed and relevant answers to all of the questions in the application form?
- Have you uploaded all requested documents in the appropriate file formats?
- Has / have your Supervisor(s) read and understood the various guidelines to ensure that the application can be submitted by the deadline on the Grants Management Portal?
- Has an Administrative / Finance Manager from your host institution read the application, reviewed and/or contributed to the **Financial support** section, and completed their declaration to ensure that the application can be submitted before the deadline on the Grants Management Portal?
- Has your Head of Department read the application and completed their declaration to ensure that the application can be submitted by the deadline on the Grants Management Portal?

5. SUPPORT AND FURTHER INFORMATION

5.1 SUPPORT DOCUMENTS

- Download the [PDF template application form](#).
- Visit our “[Apply for funding](#)” page to see our general Funding FAQs, including what our Research Grants Committee would say a good application looks like.
- Read our [Terms and Conditions for Research Grants](#).
- Read our [Open Access Policy](#).
- Read our [template intellectual property agreement](#) (if relevant).
- Read our [Funder Action Plan](#) for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.
- For guidance on navigating and using the Grants Management Portal, please see our “[how to](#)” [guide](#).
- Join the [Dunhill Medical Trust Academy](#), which aims to:
 - Facilitate better understanding and foster relationships between academic and clinical researchers, as well as community organisations, working with older people.
 - Act as a supportive place to find new collaborators, mentors and advisors and to sustain nascent networks for the longer term.

5.2 EXTERNAL GUIDANCE

- For information regarding Patient, Carer and Public Involvement (PPI) in research, please do visit the [National Institute for Health and Care Research website for various PPI resources](#).
- For more information on including underserved groups in research, you might be interested in a website hosted by the [INCLUDE initiative from the National Institute for Health and Care Research](#), which provides guidance for ensuring health research is inclusive, as well as instructions on how to [register for a free online course](#) run by INCLUDE.
- NHS England has also published [practical guidance on engaging more diverse participants in health research](#).
- Applications that include NHS resources will need to adhere to the [Department of Health and Social Care AcoRD guidance](#). You can also [read the AcoRD FAQs](#) online.
- For applications that include clinical research, you might consider visiting the [Research Delivery Network](#) for help and support.

- Feel free to read about “[A funding adviser’s guide to writing a great grant application](#)” in the academic journal Nature.

5.3 CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any queries regarding the call, including if you need any alternative accessible formats at any stage of the application process, please contact grants@dunhillmedical.org.uk. We will do our very best to assist you.

If you have any queries regarding becoming a member of the British Geriatrics Society, please contact membership@bgs.org.uk