

Joint British Geriatrics Society / Vivensa Foundation Undergraduate Research Placement Scheme

Guidelines for applicants 2026



British Geriatrics Society
Improving healthcare
for older people



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If you require this document in any alternative accessible formats, please contact us at grants@vivensafoundation.org.uk. We will do our very best to assist you.

1. THE OPPORTUNITY

We are again partnering with the [British Geriatrics Society](#) (BGS) on this scheme, which aims to increase opportunities for undergraduate students, from any discipline, to engage in ageing-related research. This round represents the second year of a two-year pilot.

The need for undergraduate students to engage in research has been identified by the BGS, through its internal review of research capacity development, and by our own analysis of national reports focused on the UK research and ageing landscape^{1,2}. In response, the aim of this Joint Undergraduate Research Placement Scheme is to enable students to explore and develop their interest in ageing-related research at an early stage, and to enhance their opportunities for a future career in research.

Up to four centres, departments or institutes will be awarded funding, each to deliver three undergraduate research placements. Funding will cover the full salary / stipend / bursary for each student, at the [real Living Wage](#), together with an additional contribution of up to £1k per student to support the placements.

Applications must demonstrate the host centre's strategic commitment – whether established or emerging – to ageing-related research, as well as the provision of appropriate supervision, support and development opportunities for students. We are particularly keen to support proposals that can build capacity within underserved locations, centres, disciplines and/or student populations.

Full details on eligibility criteria are provided in [Section 2](#).

¹ Academy of Medical Sciences: [Future-proofing UK Health Research: a people-centred, coordinated approach](#)

² Nuffield Council on Bioethics: [The future of ageing](#)

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1 WHO CAN APPLY?

Applications are welcomed from prospective supervisors within centres, departments or institutes at any UK university, or other [eligible research organisation](#)³, with a strategic commitment to ageing-related research (this commitment may be established or newly emerging).

Please note:

- **Only one application may be submitted per centre, department or institute.**
- **Current holders of Joint Undergraduate Research Placement grants (including Principal Investigators, placement supervisors, and centres, departments or institutes which are already hosting cohorts of students) are not eligible to apply to this round.**

If successful, the lead applicant will be the dedicated lead for the research placement cohort and the main point-of-contact for the grant. Named supervisors must be prepared to commit sufficient time to ensure that the placement students receive an appropriate grounding in the relevant research methods, as well as wider support / supervision.

Please note that the cohort lead should not be the primary supervisor for all three placement students. Instead, we expect there to be a wider supervisory team – either in place at the time of application, or who will be selected if the proposal is funded – who will contribute to supervision activities.

Lead applicants and co-applicants without substantial prior supervisory experience are welcome to apply – we appreciate that the scheme could provide an opportunity for early- and mid-career researchers to gain valuable experience of student supervision – however, where this is the case, we would expect to see appropriate plans for support and/or mentorship from more experienced members of the proposed team.

Host centres, departments or institutes must have the appropriate capacity, research track record and governance arrangements to ensure that the research placements are delivered to a high standard and within a supportive environment.

2.2 THE PLACEMENTS

Successful centres, departments or institutes will each be awarded funding to deliver three undergraduate research placements. The proposed placements can be a maximum duration of six weeks, and may be structured flexibly either in a single block (full-time), or spread out over a longer period (part-time).

³ Specifically, relevant independent research organisations and public sector research establishments (including UK Research and Innovation Institutes), as well as NHS bodies with research capacity.

Within the application form, applicants will be required to outline the three proposed placements. **Each placement must address at least one of the priority research themes set out on page 22 of the [Vivensa Foundation's 2025-2030 Strategic Framework](#).**

We do **not** fund work that primarily benefits people or organisations based outside the UK. In addition, we prioritise areas that are underfunded or not supported by major dedicated national or international charities. As such, applications with a specific focus on cancer are **not** eligible.

The placements may constitute a standalone research project or form a distinct element of a larger programme of work. Regardless of their topic or structure, all placement projects should:

- Have a clearly defined objective(s).
- Be feasible for an undergraduate student to complete within the duration of the placement.
- Provide scope for the student to contribute meaningfully and use their initiative (rather than serving solely in a research support capacity).

2.3 THE STUDENTS

If successful, the host centre, department or institute will be responsible for recruiting students to the research placements, and ensuring all necessary approvals are in place for the students to undertake the placements and receive payment. Applicants will be required to outline, within the application form, how the placements will be promoted and how the students will be recruited / selected.

This scheme is not limited to undergraduate medical students or those undertaking healthcare-related degrees. Students may be drawn from any discipline and must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree for the duration of the placements.

Our aim for the scheme is to kick-start the students' interest in ageing-related research. Therefore, within the application form, applicants will be asked to explain how the proposed placements – and the centre, department or institute in which they will be hosted – will help to support the students' wider development (e.g. any training and support that they will receive and/or cohort-related activities that they will undertake etc. as a result of the placements).

2.4 ELIGIBLE BUDGET

The scheme will fund the full salary / stipend / bursary of each student, at the [real Living Wage](#) (£13.45 per hour outside of London; £14.80 per hour within London), for the duration of the placements.

In addition, applicants can apply for up to £1k per student (i.e. up to £3k in total) to cover other relevant costs to support the placements.

On this basis, the maximum funding available⁴ is as follows:

- **£11,475 for centres, departments or institutes outside of London.**

⁴ Based on three students being funded for six weeks on a 35-hour working week.

- **£12,325 for centres, departments or institutes within London.**

Full details of eligible costs are provided in [Section 2.5](#) below.

We also welcome applications that include part-funding and/or in-kind support from the host institution and other sources⁵.

2.5 ELIGIBLE COSTS

In your application, you will be asked to state the amount of funding you are requesting and outline what these funds will cover. Where relevant, you should also provide details of any part-funding and/or in-kind support from the host institution or other sources⁵.

The **Financial support** section of your application must be reviewed and/or completed by the relevant Administrative / Finance Manager from the 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 note that host institutions receive a contribution to overheads via the [Charity Research Support Fund](#). Apart from any specific cases listed, for this scheme we will not meet overhead costs (typically those identified by Research Councils as Directly Allocated Costs, Indirect Costs and Estates Costs) for research institutions.

All requested costs must be fully justified in the relevant section(s) of the application form. The following guidance outlines what costs you can and cannot apply for.

STAFFING / SALARY COSTS

- **Student salaries / stipends / bursaries**

We expect the requested costs to include the full salaries / stipends / bursaries of the three students⁶.

- **Supervisory team members' salary**

Please note that the requested funds cannot be used for any part of the supervisory team members' and/or lead applicant's salary.

- **Recruitment costs**

Applicants can apply for up to £500 towards the recruitment of students.

- **Career development / support costs**

These can be applied for, provided there is a clear explanation of how they will contribute to the students' capacity building / career development in ageing-related fields during the proposed placements. We would expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the

⁵ The source of any additional funds / resources must be detailed within the application.

⁶ The Vivensa Foundation is a Living Wage Funder and, for this scheme, the students' salaries / stipends / bursaries must be costed at 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.

relevant sections of the application form. An example of a career development cost includes relevant training courses.

- **Cohort building costs**

We are supportive of you applying for relevant / justified cohort building costs (e.g. the cost of meetings / events to enable to students to showcase their projects etc.). Again, we would expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the relevant sections of the application form.

PATIENT, CARER AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT COSTS

- We will meet relevant costs for patient, carer and public involvement and engagement (PPIE), provided they are justified in the context of the proposed placements. 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](#). Again, we would expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the relevant sections of the application form.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COSTS

- We will meet relevant equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) costs, provided they are justified in the context of the proposed placements. Again, we would expect these costs to relate to the answers provided in the relevant sections of the application form.

RUNNING EXPENSES

- **Animal costs**

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

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

The cost of materials and consumables required to carry out the proposed placements can be applied for. 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.

- **Travel and subsistence**

Travel and subsistence costs for the students, where required by the nature of their placement projects, can be applied for and should be based on the most suitable and economical form of travel.

- **Other eligible costs include:**

- Participant costs / expenses / incentives
- Steering group / meeting costs
- Transcription costs
- Data storage, archiving and management costs

EQUIPMENT (INCLUDING COMPUTER) COSTS

- **Equipment costs**

Relevant / justified requests for small pieces of equipment will be met. Given the overall budget and scope of the scheme, we would normally expect the involved organisations to provide access to major equipment. Where a contribution to the use of major equipment is requested, a detailed justification should be provided. Similarly, requests for computers and larger pieces of IT equipment will only be met if fully justified.

OUTPUTS, OUTCOMES AND IMPACT COSTS

- **Conference attendance**

If relevant, we will meet costs for students to attend conferences as a speaker and/or to present posters etc. to disseminate the findings of their work. We will not typically meet costs for attending a conference as a delegate only, unless a specific case can be made.

- **Impact-related costs**

Costs for other dissemination and impact-related activities related to the placements may be applied for, provided that full justification is given.

- **Open access / open data costs**

A contribution to these costs may be included, but should be fully justified and comply with the Vivensa Foundation's [Open Access Policy](#).

3. CALL TIMELINE

The application process will consist of one stage and will follow the timetable below:

Activity	Date
Call for applications open	11 th June 2026
Deadline for applications	22 nd July 2026 (5pm)
Eligibility checking and panel review of applications	July – September 2026
Approval of the panel's funding recommendations by the Vivensa Foundation Research Grants Committee and BGS Board of Trustees.	October 2026
Applicants informed of the outcome of their application	Late November 2026

We typically expect the placements to start within 12 months of the Grant Offer Letter being sent. Therefore, based on this timetable, we expect that most students will begin their placements in 2027. However, please note that the placements will not be able to commence until any conditions stated in the Grant Offer Letter have been met.

4. APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

4.1 OVERVIEW

Online applications will open on 11th June 2026 and close at 5pm on 22nd July 2026.

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](#).

We also suggest you read our [general feedback post](#) on applications to the previous round of the scheme.

Please also note, according to our:

- [Resubmission policy](#), if your application is a resubmission of a proposal to a previous Vivensa Foundation funding scheme / call (either submitted directly to the Foundation or through a co-funder), you will be asked to describe how the application has been updated / revised in light of previous feedback and how it aligns with the themes and priorities of the current scheme. Resubmissions that fail to adequately address feedback from the previous review process will be deemed ineligible. Addressing previous feedback is a necessary step for resubmission but does not guarantee funding. Eligible resubmitted applications will be considered as a new proposal and assessed alongside other applications to the call.
- [Policy on use of generative and agentic AI in the research grant application process](#), all applicants must disclose any use of AI tools, the tool(s) you have used and for what purpose. Where possible, you must name the specific model(s) and software used and specify how the content was generated (including the prompts used). **This information is used for monitoring purposes and will not be used in the assessment process.** We acknowledge that AI tools offer significant potential to enhance research productivity and innovation. However, these should be used responsibly and in accordance with relevant legal and ethical standards, including data privacy, where these exist or as they develop. **Therefore, you should never input sensitive or personal data of others (i.e. third parties) into AI tools without consent.** In addition, the use of AI tools requires careful consideration to maintain academic integrity, research quality and ethical standards. **You, as an applicant, remain responsible for all research ideas and content contained within your proposal.** You are responsible for verifying the accuracy of any AI-generated content, maintaining academic integrity, respecting intellectual property rights, and considering potential bias.

You should also be aware that we require all lead applicants to provide an ORCID iD when completing an application form. Any prospective lead applicants without an ORCID iD can [register for one](#). We use the information included in the ORCID profile to help auto-populate relevant sections 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” guide](#) 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.**

The prospective lead for the research placement cohort should apply as the lead applicant, but can have named co-supervisors as co-applicants.

Whilst the lead applicant is responsible for submitting the application, some external participants must be invited to contribute to the application form on the Grants Management Portal. Please see the table below for more information on who can / needs to be involved with the application process.

Required	Optional
Administrative / Finance Manager: An appropriate Administrative / Finance Manager must be invited to complete a declaration on behalf of the lead applicant’s institution (the lead / host institution). This individual may also contribute to the Financial support section of the form, if required. Head of Department: The lead applicant must invite their Head of Department (or appropriate equivalent authority) to complete a declaration on behalf of their centre / department / institute. Please note: the application cannot be submitted until all required external participants have completed their contributions.	Co-applicants: The lead applicant may, if they wish, invite co-applicants (e.g. named co-supervisors) to review and contribute to the form. Please note: once any optional co-applicants 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.

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 review panel will consist of the following members:

- Dr Amy Roberts (King’s College London)

- Dr Laura Brown (University of Manchester and Vivensa Foundation Research Grants Committee member)
- Dr Liam Barrett (University of Birmingham and current Joint BGS / Vivensa Foundation Doctoral Training Fellow)
- An additional academic representative of the BGS (TBC)

The panel meeting will be chaired by Sarah Mistry, CEO of the BGS, with members of the Vivensa Foundation Grants Team also in attendance. Panel review and funding recommendations / approval will follow the timeline outlined in [Section 3](#).

4.3 ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Once submitted, the Vivensa Foundation's Grants Team will conduct an initial review of the application to confirm that it meets the following criteria:

- Eligibility for the scheme.
- The proposed placements being within remit.
- Satisfactory completion of the application form.

Eligible applications will then be reviewed by the panel against the following criteria:

- The host centre / department / institute's strategic commitment to ageing-related research.
- The suitability of the proposed placements / projects and student / supervisor selection process.
- The suitability of the host centre / department / institute's research environment, track record and culture.
- The credibility and feasibility of the proposed support, training and/or development opportunities that will be offered through the placements (e.g. by the supervisory team, the wider centre / department / institute etc.).
- Where appropriate, due consideration of patient, carer and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) – for example, how the overall theme of the cohort and/or the proposed placement projects have been informed by the views / needs of older people etc.
- Due consideration of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in all aspects of the proposal, including within the department / centre / institute, the proposed placements and in selection processes.
- The potential for the proposed placements to grow research capacity (particularly within underserved centres / locations / disciplines / student demographics).
- The suitability and justification of the funds requested.

Our [Research Grants Committee](#) and the BGS's Board of Trustees will then discuss / approve any funding recommendations in October 2026, following which applicants will be notified of the outcome of their applications by the end of November 2026.

Please note that any successful awards will be conditional upon provision of the following:

- Contact details for the relevant administrative / finance / post-award personnel.
- An updated timeline for the commencement of the grant and recruitment of students, including the time allocated for our approval of the ageing-related placements proposed.

We will also expect successful cohort leads to provide full details of the students and their placement projects, once these are confirmed.

FEEDBACK ON YOUR APPLICATION

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide individual feedback for each application to this call. However, we intend to publish general feedback on the [news section of our website](#), which will highlight the common themes that distinguished stronger applications, as well as areas where submissions could have been improved. **In particular, applicants are strongly encouraged to review the [general feedback post](#) published following last year's call when developing their application.**

We will also be publishing details of the awarded placements and the overall 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?
- ☐ If relevant, have any invited co-applicants (e.g. named co-supervisors) read and understood these guidelines and [our “how to” guide for using the Grants Management Portal](#), to ensure that they finish their contributions and the application can be submitted before the deadline on the Grants Management Portal?
- ☐ Has an Administrative / Finance Manager from the 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 the Head of Department (or appropriate equivalent authority) from the host centre / department / institute 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 FROM THE VIVENSA FOUNDATION AND BGS

- Download a [blank application form template](#). 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.
- Read our [general feedback on applications to the previous round of the scheme](#).
- Read our:
 - [Policy on use of generative and agentic AI in the research grant application process](#).
 - [Resubmission policy](#).
 - Advice regarding [age-friendly language and imagery](#).
 - General [Funding FAQs](#), including what our Research Grants Committee would say a good application looks like. We have also written a news post giving our top [10 tips for writing a stronger research funding application](#).
 - [Funder action plan](#) for the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.
 - [Terms and conditions for research grants](#).
 - [Open access policy](#).
 - Sample [Intellectual Property agreement](#), if relevant.
- For guidance on navigating and using the Grants Management Portal, please see our [“how to” guide](#).
- Join the [Vivensa Academy](#), which aims to:
 - Facilitate better understanding and foster relationships between academic and clinical researchers, as well as community innovators, 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.
- Visit the [BGS’s website](#) to learn about the benefits of becoming a member.

5.2 EXTERNAL GUIDANCE

- For information regarding patient, carer and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) in research, please do visit the [National Institute for Health and Care Research website for various resources](#).
- There is also a [practical guide to patient and public involvement in lab-based research](#) hosted on the Parkinson’s UK website.
- For more information on including underserved groups in research, you might be interested in a [website hosted by NIHR](#), which provides guidance for ensuring health research is inclusive. NHS England has also created a [good practice guide for engaging with under-represented groups in health research](#).
- For more information on improving the integration of sex and gender in biomedical, health and care research, please visit the [MESSAGE \(Medical Science Sex and Gender Equity\) project website](#).

- If your proposal includes experiments involving animals, please refer to the [NC3Rs website](#) for a range of resources, including guidance on the [use of animals in bioscience research](#), a webinar on using [both sexes in animal experiments](#), and the [Experimental Design Assistant \(EDA\)](#), which can support the design of your experiments.
- Feel free to read “[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@vivensafoundation.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.