

# EXPANDING THEORIES

## Guidance Notes for Full Application

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## Introduction

- This funding scheme supports pilot studies that explore and develop novel concepts that may eventually lead to significant improvements in clinical outcomes, including quality of life, for people with brain tumours.
- All grant applications must focus on at least one of the research priorities highlighted in our Research Strategy '[Accelerating a Cure](#)'.
- Funding of up to £150,000 per project over two years is available.
- Early career researchers are welcome to apply for this scheme. Early career researchers are defined as having completed their PhD within the last 8 years, and this excludes any career breaks such as those taken for family, health or due to caring responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Eligibility criteria is available on our [website](#).
- Please read the important documents ([here](#)) that are applicable to all our grants before applying for funding. These include the Grant Conditions, Finance Guidelines, Open Access Policy and Data Protection Statement.

**Expanding Theories applications will undergo blinded peer review.** The Brain Tumour Charity will redact sections of the application that identify the applicants during the review stages but the applicants must make every effort to ensure their identity, and those of co-applicants and collaborators, and their institution are not disclosed throughout the application. **Please respect the blinding application process and describe people by the roles they have on the grant: Staff role on project e.g. Co-applicant 1 and job role, Co-applicant 2 and Job role, Collaborator 1 and job role, Collaborator 2 and job role, etc.**

Applications that reveal the identity of the applicants or the institutions involved will not be considered valid.

All applications must have input from those affected by brain tumours as early as possible. To facilitate this we encourage you to engage The Charity's Involvement Network (IN), a network of people who either care for someone who has a brain tumour (or have done in the past) or are living with a brain tumour themselves. More information on the IN and how to contact them can be found at [thebraintumourcharity.org/PPI](https://thebraintumourcharity.org/PPI)

If you have any queries or would like to discuss your application, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. If you have any problems completing the online application form please let us know via either of the below routes so a member of the team can resolve this for you:

- E-mail: [research@thebraintumourcharity.org](mailto:research@thebraintumourcharity.org)
- Phone: +44 (0) 1252 418190

**For specific deadline details, please refer to the website. Kindly note that the strict time zone for the deadline is BST (British Summer Time).**

## Beginning your full application

The application is available for completion via the **Grant Management Portal**. Please read the system guidance, available on the portal, and use these guidance notes to support completion of the application.

**Please allow sufficient time for your Head of Department and Administrative Authority to approve this application before the grant deadline. Once the application has been submitted by the Lead Applicant, it will not be received by The Charity, until these individuals have given their approval.**

## Application Summary

Please complete the details requested, including:

- Title of the project
- Proposed start date – must not be before 01 May 2024
- Proposed duration – must not exceed 24 months
- Total requested – this section will automatically populate when you complete the 'Budget' section of the application. This must not exceed £150,000.

## Applicant Details



Please note:

- Lead applicants must hold an employment contract with their institution that exceeds the duration of the proposed research OR provide a letter of support from the Host Institution committing to support the project for its duration.
- If the Lead applicant does not hold an academic or research position, the application must include a Co-applicant at the Host Institution who does.
- Co-applicants will have access to edit this application, and Collaborators will have read only access.
- Applications can only be submitted by a Lead applicant.
- This section of the application will not be shared with reviewers.

### Lead Applicant

Some of your details will have been pulled through from your CV and any remaining fields should be completed. Please add/amend basic information details in the "Manage My Details" section of the Grant Management Portal.

In addition to the basic contact details please add your Twitter handle. This can be added in the 'Web page' field.

A biographical sketch is required for the Lead Applicant. Please download the template from the application form and attach the completed version using the  **Attach**  button.

The Lead applicant's institution will be the Host Institution.

Please note:



- All financial awards will be made in Pounds Sterling (£). It will be the responsibility of the Host Institution to make conversions to other currencies.
- The Charity is not responsible for any fluctuations in exchange rate over the course of the programme. We recommend that the Host Institution establishes a corporate exchange rate agreement if conversion to other currencies is required.

### Co-applicants

Please add the details of the co-applicants. Use the 'Add Contact' button to search for contacts within our database. If the person you searched for was not found, please add this person to our system by entering their full name and email address. They will receive an email, prompting them to set up a Portal account.

The co-applicants will be required to accept their involvement in the application prior to submission. They also need to ensure all their details are populated correctly and use the “Manage My Details” section of the Grant Management Portal to add/ amend their basic information.

*Co-applicants are those individuals with responsibility for the day to day management and delivery of the project. Co-applicants are considered part of the project team and are expected to share responsibility for its successful delivery. Collaborators normally provide specific expertise on particular aspects of the project but who do not share in the responsibility for the delivery of the project.*

A biographical sketch is required for each Co-applicant. Please download the template from the application form and attach the completed version using the  **Attach**  button.

### **Time Spent by Applicants on Research**

Please include the hours the Lead applicant, Co-lead applicant and Co-applicants will spend on research per week and how much time they will spend on this specific research project per week.

### **Collaborators**

Please use the ‘Add Contact’ button to search for contacts within our database. If the person you searched for was not found, please add this person to our system by entering their full name and email address. They will receive an email, prompting them to set up a Portal account.

Please upload a letter of collaboration for each Collaborator listed. Letters should be signed by the Collaborator named in the application, and include a brief summary of what they will contribute toward the project.

### **Head of Department and Senior Administrative Authority**

Please provide the details of the Head of Department (HoD) and Senior Administrative Authority (SAA) from your Host Institution. Please use the ‘Add Contact’ button to search for contacts within our database. If the person you searched for was not found, please add this person to our system by entering their full name and email address.

The HoD and SAA will be sent emails by the system once assigned to the application.

These authorities have two tasks during the submission of the application. Firstly, they will be required to tick a check box indicating they have read and understood the terms of the proposal and accept the role (HoD or SAA) they have been nominated for. Ticking this box constitutes an electronic signature for the application. Secondly, they will need to approve the final submission of the application. This occurs AFTER the Lead applicant clicks “Submit”.

**Please note that the Head of Department and Senior Administrative Authority must both approve the application in order for it to be submitted successfully.**

### **Required attachments for this section:**

- Biosketches for the Lead applicant and Co-applicants.
- Letters of collaboration from all named Collaborators.

## Lay Section

This section of the application form must be completed in plain English, using non-technical language. The information should be comprehensible to people with no scientific background and abbreviations and acronyms should be avoided. Any unavoidable scientific terminology should be clearly explained.

This section of the application form will be reviewed by the Lay Scientific Advisory Board members as part of the assessment process. Do not include any confidential or sensitive information in this section as this section may be used to publicise the project if the application is successful.

Please note the lay section will be returned to you to be rewritten if it is not easily comprehensible and not written in plain English. You may find it helpful to refer to the AMRC's **Guidance for Researchers - Writing Lay Summaries**.

*Please note The Brain Tumour Charity has established an Involvement Network (IN), which is a resource applicants can use to check readability of the lay section of the application. If you would like to learn more about Patient and Public Involvement or the IN and the help they can offer please see <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/funding-for-brain-tumour-researchers/patient-public-involvement/>*

### What is your research about? (300 words)

Please provide background details for the research, addressing the following questions:

- What problem are you trying to address?
- What is already known about the problem?
- How does this research aim to address the problem?
- What is innovative and novel about the proposed research?

### Research methods (300 words)

Please briefly describe the approaches and techniques you will use to answer the research question and address the aims of the programme.

This section should be written in plain English and any technical terms must be clearly explained.

### How will this research benefit people affected by brain tumours? (300 words)

Please describe the potential benefit for people affected by brain tumours. Please include:

- How will this research (ultimately) benefit people affected by brain tumours?
- What are the further steps needed to achieve benefit?
- What is the likely timescale to achieve this benefit?
- Why is this step needed? What important information will this research provide?
- How could the findings from this research be developed and/or put into practice?

Please note that The Brain Tumour Charity funds research that will ultimately offer benefits to people affected by brain tumours. It is therefore important that all applicants consider how their research proposal could lead to patient benefit and what the steps will be on the route to achieving benefit.

### Patient and Public Involvement (300 words)

Please outline how people affected by brain tumours will be involved in the research. As a minimum this should include:

- How people affected by brain tumours have been involved in the development of this proposal
- How people affected by brain tumours will be involved in the dissemination of results
- How the findings from the research will be communicated with the general public

Please note The Brain Tumour Charity has established an Involvement Network (IN) which is a resource available to applicants. If you would like to learn more about the IN and the help they can offer please see <https://www.thebraintumourcharity.org/funding-for-brain-tumour-researchers/patient-public-involvement/>. If you have consulted the IN, please describe any feedback received and the steps taken to address this.

## Summary of Proposed Research

### Scientific Summary



Please provide a summary of the proposed research suitable for a scientifically qualified assessor. Please note this summary will not be published and may contain confidential information.

### Keywords and Categorisation

Please select the keywords that best describe your research. In particular, please tick whether the research will focus on high grade or low grade brain tumours, and whether it focuses on adult or paediatric tumours.

## Research Proposal

### Detailed Research Proposal

Please attach a detailed research proposal as a PDF file (up to 8 pages, minimum size 10 font with single spacing) using the  **Attach**  button. This should include:

- Background and research question(s) to be addressed.
- Aims and key deliverables.
- Methodology.
- Justification for the methods chosen.
- Statistical analysis plan and any calculations to justify the sample size and number of animals being used.
- Relevant figures.

**Please respect the blinding application process and describe people by the roles they have on the grant: lead applicant, Co-applicant 1, Co-applicant 2, Collaborator 1, Collaborator 2, etc.**

Please also avoid phrases such as 'We have previously shown...' or 'Our work demonstrated...' especially where you then reference your own publications. We suggest alternatives like 'It has previously been shown...' or 'Previous work demonstrates...' to ensure the application remains blinded.

**Please also ensure the file name does not include names or institutions.**

Please provide the citations for your research in full in the text box using APA or CSE format. This is separate to the main research proposal and does not need to be included in the 8 page limit for the research proposal. **Do not underline or highlight papers that belong to any of the applicants.**

## Use of Models

Please include information on the models (including cell models) that will be used in the research. Use the 'Add...' button to enter each model. There should be a separate entry per model being used in the research.

For each model proposed please include a justification for the choice of this model.

## Key Questions

### Relevance to research priorities (300 words)

Detail how the proposal addresses the research priorities outlined in our research strategy 'Accelerating a Cure'.

### Research Pathway (300 words)

Please outline the potential pathway to clinical or practical applications of the project.

Is the funding likely to lead to and support applications for larger scale projects to national/international funding organisations? Please include details of any potential funders/schemes.

### Team members (500 words)

Please describe the work that will be undertaken by each team member involved in the programme (this includes fellow, research assistants and support staff as well as the Lead applicant, Co-applicants and Collaborators). Each role should be described using the applicants role on the project e.g. Co-applicant 1, Collaborator 2, please do not identify the applicants by name or institution.

The nature and benefits of any collaborations that are in place should be described in general terms and details of the multidisciplinary approach should be included. This section should also outline how research will be coordinated across the participating institutions, including how team members will be kept up to date with progress.

**Please ensure you do not name any of the team members in this section.**

### Facilities and resources available to the team (300 words)

Please outline the facilities and resources that will be available to the team for the duration of the programme. The facilities and resources should be described in general terms.

**Please ensure you do not name the institutions involved in the project in this section.**

### Contingency plans (300 words)

Outline any problems that may potentially arise and provide details of how such problems may be overcome. Please highlight any problems that might prevent you from reaching a milestone.

### Dissemination plans and working with The Brain Tumour Charity (300 words)

Please outline your plans for dissemination and how you will work with The Charity, including:

- How research results will be disseminated to both a scientific audience and the general public
- How you will work with The Charity to promote the research during the programme and after its completion date

- A commitment to keep The Charity informed about manuscript submissions BEFORE publication date. To find out what financial support you can receive to support publication costs, please refer to our **Open Access Policy**.

### **Equality, diversity and inclusion (300 words)**

The Charity is committed to ensuring our research funding practices are inclusive. Please outline any steps your Host Institution is taking to improve its EDI practices. This can include initiatives and schemes, training or the overall approach to ensuring equal opportunities. Please ensure this is described in general terms and do not name any schemes or initiatives that are unique to your institution.



In addition, please describe any steps that have been taken within the research proposal to ensure it is inclusive.

## **Milestones**

### **Timelines and milestones**

Please detail the key milestones for the entire duration of the research proposal. The key deliverables for each year of the grant must be specified and an estimated timeframe for the completion of each milestone should be included.

### **Gantt chart for the proposed research**

Please attach a detailed Gantt chart using the  **Attach**  button. The Gantt chart should cover the duration of the proposed research and include all the milestones listed above.

**Please ensure you do not name any individuals or the institution in the Gantt chart. Please also ensure the file name does not include names or institutions.**

## **Budget**

Please note that only directly incurred costs can be requested. Please refer to our **Finance Guidelines** before completing this section.

All amounts must be provided in Pound Sterling (£) and rounded to the nearest whole pound.

If no costs have been requested for a specific budget category, please input "n/a" in the justification section.

Please note The Charity is not responsible for any fluctuations in exchange rate over the course of the project.

**Again please do not mention staff by name or reference institutions by name within the budget request and justification section.**

### **Salaries**

Please note the salary is broken down into Basic Salary, Superannuation and Employer Contribution. The Employer Contribution should be used to cover the contribution the employer makes towards an employee's pension, national insurance or benefits.



For each staff member, please include:

- Staff name – please do not name the individual and instead include their role on the project, e.g. Staff member 1 or Research Assistant, Lab Technician.
- Role – this is the job role of the individual
- Period on grant (months)
- % of full time
- Total salary costs per year

### **Materials and consumables**

For each item, please include total costs per year.

### **Animals**

For each item please include:

- Species and number of animals to be used
- Cost category (purchase cost or maintenance cost)
- Total costs per year

### **Travel**

For each item, please include total costs per year.

### **Miscellaneous**

For each item please include total costs per year.

## **Leveraged Funding and Indirect Costs of Research**

As an Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) member, The Brain Tumour Charity monitors the indirect cost of the research we support. Unlike some other funding bodies, such as the research councils, AMRC member charities will not fund the indirect costs of research, or a proportion of these. The figures provided should include the standard indexation rate used by the institution to calculate indirect costs.

**The Charity will only cover the direct costs included in the budget breakdown above.** Acceptance of a grant, if awarded, will imply that the institution is prepared to meet the full economic costs from its own sources of funding.

Please refer to our **Finance Guidelines** for advice on what are considered eligible costs that The Charity will pay for.

### **Total Indirect Costs**

Please provide an estimate of the total indirect costs for this research. This should include the Lead applicant's salary (unless these costs are to be covered by the grant, as per the **Finance Guidelines**), estate costs and other indirect costs of research, such as administration costs, library expenses and utility charges.

## Indirect Cost Breakdown

Please describe how these costs have been calculated and summarise what has been included in the Total Indirect Cost above.

## Leveraged funding or resources value

Please provide the monetary value of any leveraged funding or resources.

## Leveraged funding or resources justification

Please describe any funding, facilities or resources in kind that have been received or will be made available for the project. Where funding or support has been given to cover parts of the research proposal please explain how this will complement The Brain Tumour Charity award.

## Current Funding

Please list existing and pending research funding for the Lead applicant and Co-applicants including:

- Status
- Team member – will default to the Lead Applicant.
- Funding source
- Title of project
- Funding start date
- Funding end date
- Total amount – please include the currency.

Please note this section will not be visible to reviewers.

## Assurances

### Commercial Exploitation and Competing Interests

Please complete the questions in this section to confirm:

- If any of the applicants have consultancies, or any equity holdings in, or directorships of companies or other organisation that might have an interest in the results of the proposed research.
- If the proposed research uses technology, materials or other inventions, that as far as you are aware, are subject to any patents or other form of intellectual property protection.
- If the proposed research, in whole or in part, is subject to any agreements with commercial, academic or other organisations.
- If the proposed research is likely to lead to any patentable or commercially exploitable results.

If the answer is yes to any of the above points, you will be required to provide more details in the form.

### Ethical and Legal Requirements

Please complete the questions in this section to confirm:

- If the proposal involves human subjects. Details of the Ethics Committee approval or expected date of approval are required if it does.

- If the proposal involves vertebrate animals. Details of ethical approval, or expected date of approval are required if it does. In order to ensure the proposal adheres to NC3Rs guidance additional information will be required, including:
  - Details of the animal species being used, why this species/model is the most appropriate and whether there are any alternative approaches that could be used instead.
  - Whether any of the animals being used are genetically modified.
  - Justification for the number of animals to be used per experiment, including details of sample size calculations and statistical advice sought
  - Indicate the severity of the procedures being used – mild, moderate or severe.

Evidence of ethics approval, personal and project licences should be uploaded using the 'Add' button at the bottom of this section.

## Additional Information

### Reviewer Suggestions

Please use the 'Add a Reviewer' button to add the names of people that you would recommend as a reviewer and those who you would prefer we didn't contact for a review. Please include a justification for your choice to help us understand the nature of your relationship with the individual and why you think they would or wouldn't be a suitable reviewer for this application.

### Letters of Support

Please use the  **Attach**  button to upload any letters of support you have received for this application.

### Required Attachments

Please make sure you have attached all of the following documents to the application:

- Biographical sketches for the Lead applicant and Co-applicants
- Letters of collaboration for all named Collaborators
- Detailed research proposal
- Gantt chart
- Ethics approval, personal and project licenses
- Letters of support – as necessary i.e. confirmation by clinical department to confirm protected academic time

You will see a list of the currently uploaded documents in your application to refer to. If anything is missing please return to the relevant section of the application and upload the necessary document.

## Confirmation

### The Brain Tumour Charity Data Protection Statement

Information that you supply to The Brain Tumour Charity in connection with this application (which includes all information sent to The Charity that relates to your grant application including personal data) will be used to process and administer your application and for the purpose of audit, statistical analysis, administration and/or evaluation. It will be disclosed to external peer reviewers, some of whom may be based outside the EU/EEA, and may be shared with co-funders or other potential funders. All parties with whom this information is shared will be required to keep it securely and in confidence and we have safeguards in place to ensure secure transfer of any data. The Brain Tumour

Charity may publish basic details of successful grant applications (e.g. on its website or in its Annual Report). The Brain Tumour Charity may also release details of successful applications (including your name and employing institution, the programme title and the summary of proposal for scientifically qualified assessors and lay summaries of the research) into the public domain (e.g. via the internet or publicly accessible databases). The Brain Tumour Charity may contact you about the work of The Charity and other award schemes and initiatives that may be of interest to you, or for your views on its funding schemes and application processes. If you would prefer not to receive further communications please let us know. The information you provide will be held on our secure database and in accordance with all data protection legislation and our **privacy policy**.

- I confirm that I (and all those providing personal information in the application) have read and understood The Brain Tumour Charity's Data Protection statement above.
- I confirm that I have read, understood and accept the The Brain Tumour Charity's Grant Conditions (**found on this webpage**).
- I have read and approve the completed application form. If granted, the work will be accommodated and administered in the department/institution in accordance with the grant conditions. I also confirm that there are no existing matters which would be a breach of any conditions which have not been brought to your attention in writing.
- I understand that the provision of any false or inaccurate information in this application would be considered very seriously and may result in disqualification of the application. To the best of my knowledge, the information provided in this application is accurate and complete.