



**Bath Institute for Rheumatic Diseases**

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# Grant awarding policy

Date of policy statement: 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Bath Institute for Rheumatic Diseases (BIRD) is an incorporated charity, whose purpose is to support research and education into many aspects of bone and joint diseases. BIRD does this by raising money to fund research and provide information days for people affected by bone and joint disease, their family, friends and carers, and by providing continuing education events for health professionals,
- 1.2 BIRD endeavours to maximise the amount it spends on supporting its charitable objectives with particular emphasis, but not exclusively, on supporting research primarily through pump-prime funding for smaller projects undertaken in or from Bath. This document outlines the process applicants should follow and how applications will be reviewed and considered by the BIRD Council of Management.
- 1.3 The order followed is as follows.  
Section 2.....Terminology  
Section 3.....Value  
Section 4.....Content  
Section 5.....Assessment of applications  
Section 6.....Notification of outcome to applicants  
Section 7.....Publicising awards and their availability  
Section 8.....Management, reporting and monitoring

## 1. Terminology

- 1.3 The terms grant and award are used interchangeably.
- 1.4 The BIRD Council of Management is the governing body of the charity, as set out in its governing document, the Memorandum & Articles of Association. In this document it is referred to as "*the Council*".
- 1.5 The Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS FT is referred to as the "*RUH*". References to the RUH in this document generally, but not exclusively, refer to colleagues based at the RNHRD site with an interest in arthritis.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.6 The "*host institution*" is the institution from which the research will be carried out. It will usually be the applicant's employer or the educational organisation with whom the applicant is registered for a research programme.

## 2. Value

- 2.3 A maximum total value to be awarded during each financial year will be set by Council annually during the last quarter of the preceding financial year. This will be for guidance for the Research Assessment Group (RAG). Council may opt to decrease or increase this amount at any time during the year in its own right or on the recommendation of the RAG. The anticipated maximum amount of each individual award will also be reviewed annually.
- 2.4 In the first year, 2016/17, it is proposed the guideline maximum is a total of £100,000.
- 2.5 During 2016/17 it is anticipated that each grant awarded will be for a maximum in the region of £10,000, although the RAG may award as much as £20,000 for a single project without referring to Council. BIRD encourages applications for matching funding where the applicant has secured funding from another source.
- 2.6 BIRD may not award the full amount applied for. In these circumstances the applicant will be asked to confirm they still wish to accept the award.
- 2.7 Exceptionally BIRD may accept applications for larger amounts. In this situation applicants should contact the Executive Director (ED) for further guidance before making an application.

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<sup>1</sup> BIRD funds research and education into all areas of rheumatology and all types of bone and joint disorder. The terms "*arthritis*", "*bone and joint disease*" and "*rheumatism*" are used in that context throughout this document.

### 3. Content

3.3 Details of what is required, including the time scales for reviewing applications will be available from the website.

3.4 Each application should consist of the following.

- i) Clear research question and background to show this has not been answered previously in the published literature. Maximum 500 words.
- ii) Proposed outline of research methodology with study plan including start/end dates, time-lines, and key milestones if appropriate. Maximum 500 words plus Gantt chart if appropriate.
- iii) Details of analysis to be performed.
- iv) Dissemination plan.
- v) A clear statement of how the application relates to BIRD's charitable objectives with particular reference to rheumatic diseases.  
This should include how the application helps to promote and advance medical knowledge, improve treatments for patients, and encourages collaboration between clinicians and research scientists.
- vi) A statement of how the research makes a contribution to the public benefit as defined by the Charity Commission and in terms of BIRD's charitable purpose.  
[See <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/charitable-purposes-and-public-benefit>.]

Applicants will be encouraged to keep their application as short as is reasonable. For items i – v above this should be a total maximum of 2,000 words.

- vi) Clarification of whether the application is for a pilot study, or to test clinical effectiveness, or "other", and if the applicant is new to research. If "other" further details will be requested, maximum 50 words.
- vii) A lay summary of the proposed project describing the planned project and potential impact. Maximum 200 words. This will be used for publicity with further amendment as required.
- viii) A statement regarding what will need to be in place for the start of the study. Maximum 200 words. This may include, for example, ethical approvals, consent forms, patient information sheets, questionnaires, and so on. Not all of this will be relevant to all applications. Applicants will be requested to supply samples and / or evidence where they are relevant, e.g., notification of authorisation or approval from the appropriate ethics committee.
- ix) Whether or not matched funding from another source has been sought, and if so, from what source, to what amount and whether or not the funding has been secured.  
Maximum 100 words
- x) An indicative breakdown of estimated costs.
- xi) Evidence of the individual's track record (if not new to research), a summary CV, and a brief outline of the employing organisation e.g., a web link. Applicants will be advised to include brief details of other relevant professionals who may be involved, e.g., the name and role of their advisor or research group leader. Max 200 words
- xii) How the applicant will acknowledge BIRD's support and help promote BIRD's name and work. Max 200 words.

The whole application should fit onto six sides of A4, and should be accompanied by the proposed research Gantt chart referred to in (ii) above, any reference list and relevant Outcome Measures, patient or clinician reported.

4.2 The application should be signed off by the authorised manager in the host institution. This could be, for example, a financial officer the R&D Manager, or the head of department.

4.3 Not all of the above may be relevant to all applications. In such instances the applicant should state briefly why an element is not relevant.

- 4.4 BIRD will provide a clear statement of what will not be funded, e.g., proposals not meeting the above charitable objectives and so forth.

## **5. Assessment of applications**

- 5.1 Applications for awards will be accepted at any point of the year and will be kept on file until the next meeting of the RAG, a sub-group of the Council of Management including patient representatives. Applications will be acknowledged and applicants advised of the date of the next RAG meeting.
- 5.2 Each application will be given a preliminary scrutiny on receipt to ensure it is relevant to BIRD's objectives and contains all the required elements, or an acceptable rationale for not doing so. Feedback will be given in response to incomplete applications, those not relevant to BIRD's objectives, or those seeking more than the maximum amount.
- 5.3 The RAG will review and assess applications, which pass the preliminary scrutiny in 5.2 above, four times a year, provisionally in April, June, September and January. The ED will support this Group and its activities.
- 5.4 There will be four outcomes.
- i) Successful
  - ii) Conditional upon minor amendments and subject to review out of committee by any two members of the RAG, as designated in the meeting.
  - iii) Resubmit to the next meeting having addressed the RAG's significant comments.
  - iv) Unsuccessful and not eligible for resubmission.
- 5.5 If a member of the Group knows the applicant or their work, they should make this known to the RAG as early as is practicable. If a Group member is more directly involved, e.g., as an advisor, they should not participate in the review process.
- 5.6 The applicant will be invited to introduce their application to the meeting and further information may be sought from the applicant at any point in the process.
- 5.7 If an application falls outside the combined expertise of the RAG, BIRD reserves the right to invite feedback from relevant specialists, e.g., a statistician or a health economist, as appropriate.

## **6. Notification of outcome to applicants and management of the award**

- 6.1 Applicants will be notified of the result within 14 days of the meeting and given feedback based on the RAG discussion as applicable.
- 6.2 All successful applicants will be given written confirmation of the charity's expectations in the form of the terms and conditions of the award. This will include for example:
- i) BIRD's expectations in terms of maternity leave or extended absence through ill-health;
  - ii) who owns any equipment purchased with BIRD funding;
  - iii) what happens if the terms of the grant are not adhered to, e.g., the award is not used as agreed, or milestones are not met;
  - iv) how BIRD's support should be acknowledged; and,
  - v) reporting requirements in the form of six-monthly reports to Council and at the end of the study, the annual report, and publicity material as required. This may be done in writing or by email.
- 6.2 The agreement should be signed off by the host institution's authorised manager, e.g., head of department, financial officer, research group leader, etc.
- 6.3 Receipt of the signed agreement by BIRD will be taken as confirming acceptance of the award. Successfully applicants will need to arrange with BIRD how payment will be made, again in writing or by email. The expectation in most instances is the host organisation will

invoice BIRD, quoting the award reference, and with evidence of expenditure, e.g., for equipment or printing. Payment will be made in arrears.

- 6.4 Where an award covers employment costs the money will be paid in arrears. In such cases an agreement with the employer may be required.
- 6.5 Applications not accepted and/or work not started and expenditure incurred within six months after the proposed start date will be withdrawn unless an extension is agreed in writing with the ED.

## **7. Publicising awards and their availability**

- 7.1 The website will be updated throughout the year with news of each grant awarded including its value and brief details of the study. News of grants awarded will also be posted on social media, a press release issued and so forth
- 7.2 The availability and granting of awards will be publicised through -
  - i) Word of mouth.
  - ii) A dedicated page on the BIRD website.
  - iii) Links to and from other web sites, relevant professional bodies, publications, other charities and so on in keeping with BIRDs aims and strategic plans.
  - iv) Information to local NHS R&D departments, Universities, etc., in keeping with BIRD's aims and strategic plans.
  - v) Relevant directories, the annual report etc.
  - vi) Local media, social media and so on.
  - vii) BIRD awards may establish their own reputation over time.

## **8. Management, reporting and monitoring by BIRD's Council**

- 8.1 The process will be reviewed annually by the RAG and the outcome reported to Council.
- 8.2 If an insufficient number of high quality applications meeting the criteria are received no further awards will be made in that financial year. If this happens repeatedly the process, outlined above will be reviewed earlier than scheduled in 8.1.
- 8.3 Reports will be made to Council at the next meeting following an RAG meeting. This will include the number of applications received, a short summary of each of the successful applications; and, the amount(s) awarded.
- 8.4 Details of amounts awarded and to whom, with a brief description of the studies, will be included in the Annual Report and Accounts.

Approved by the Council of Management:

6<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and by email subsequently

Minute refers: **CM/15/16/26 -**