

Frequently asked questions

Efficiency Research Programme 2018

Updated July 2018

Contents

Eligibility.....	2
Budgeting and research costs.....	3
Scope and focus of the research.....	5
The application process	6
Management and communication	7
Other.....	8

NOTE: All applications to this research programme have to be submitted through our online application portal <https://aims.health.org.uk>. We advise all potential applicants to familiarise themselves as early as possible with the application process. The process is outlined in this FAQ document as well as in the AIMS user manual.

The deadline for applications is Midday on Monday 24 September 2018.

The Health Foundation
Tel: 020 7257 8000
health.org.uk

Eligibility

Q1. Who can submit proposals? Is it just universities?

It is not limited to universities; any organisation who can demonstrate that they are able to carry out high quality research can submit a proposal within our remit. However, applicants will need to demonstrate that those delivering the research have the necessary expertise and experience to do so.

Q2. Does the lead applicant need to be UK-based?

No, we will accept proposals from organisations based outside of the UK and/or collaborations with non-UK based researchers. However, the research must clearly relate to labour productivity and workforce retention that has a direct impact on health and social care in the UK. A non-UK based application would also need to demonstrate that the team undertaking the research has strong links into the respective communities of practice in the UK health care setting. In addition, a non-UK based application would need to demonstrate how management and communication processes would not suffer.

Q3. Can my proposal have partner organisations?

Yes, applicants can collaborate or subcontract, where appropriate, with partner organisations. We believe that in many cases multi-disciplinary research teams that work collaboratively with important stakeholders are best positioned to deliver the most impactful research. Please specify what role any partners will have, and indicate the current level of progress in developing the collaboration in your application.

Q4. Could two individuals, working for separate institutions, act as co-principal investigators?

We welcome applications from multidisciplinary and multisite teams with one or more co-principal investigator(s). However, for the purposes of the online application, the contracting and the project management processes, we require you to have only one named primary/lead contact for each application, and that person must be ultimately responsible for the delivery of the research.

Budgeting and research costs

Q5. How long will the Health Foundation's funding last for this research?

We anticipate making grants for research projects lasting between three and five years. If your research idea will take slightly longer, we still welcome an application. However, you will need to be explicit in your application about why you need more time and what additional value it would bring.

Q6. Will the funding begin from grant announcement or from the start of the research programme?

Funding will begin once the research starts and upon signing of a mutually agreed award agreement. Subsequent payments will be made contingent on agreed outputs, normally by way of annual and final award reports. It is anticipated that projects supported through these grants will begin towards the end of quarter one of 2019.

Q7. What is the funding that I can apply for?

We anticipate funding a range of awards between £250,000 and £500,000.

You may submit an application below £250,000, but you should be able to justify how your project will support our objectives for this programme to make a significant contribution at that scale. In exceptional circumstances, we may consider funding a research idea beyond our maximum of £500,000. However, you will need to present an excellent case for this, centred around the additional value and impact of the proposal.

Q8. What costs can be included as 'research costs'?

You should include what you expect to be the items of direct expenditure required to carry out your research. Items commonly covered include travel costs for meetings, relevant conferences, data analysis support, transcription of interviews and focus groups, venue hire/refreshments for research meetings/focus groups, and travel costs for patients and health and social care staff to attend focus groups. You can include 'honorary' payments for patient participants and some backfill payments for health and social care staff to participate in specific research activities but not where this would constitute covering the cost of the research team, or for any length of time beyond a few days.

Please note that as a charity we will fund only the full directly incurred costs of the research. We do not fund overheads. Furthermore, the research will be supported as a charitable grant and as such is not liable for VAT.

Q9. Can we include salary costs for academic staff working on the project or salary costs that are directly allocated not directly incurred?

We expect that the majority of funding will be spent on the direct costs covering academic and/or researcher time spent on projects, which can include staff who are already employed

at the institution or new staff (directly allocated cost and directly incurred cost). However, we do not provide the funding for academic backfill or teaching replacement time in addition to the direct cost.

Q10. Do we cover staff with grant funding from elsewhere?

Yes, provided their time on this project is clearly allocated and budgeted.

Q11. Can we include the cost of PhD?

Yes, in principle, but you must provide a sufficiently experienced team and also consider whether part-funding is possible.

Q12. Can we include VAT from sub-contractors?

Yes – but only the directly attributable VAT. You may want to consider whether you can achieve better value for money by including a non-commercial sub-contractor instead.

Q13. Will the Health Foundation fund overheads?

No. As a charity we will only fund the full directly incurred and directly allocated costs of the research.

Q14. Can we include inflation in our costing?

All costs would need to be covered as part of the overall budget, including any inflationary increases. However, as a charity we ask that future inflationary increases be based on the Retail Price Index as of April 2018. Please confirm in your application that this is the assumed inflation rate adopted in your budgeting.

Q15. Do you pay VAT?

No. The research will be supported as a charitable grant and as such is not liable for VAT.

Q16. Would you be prepared to part-fund a research project?

Yes, we have no objection to joint funding with an existing project or joint funder. However, we would need an idea of when and from whom the rest of the funding is likely to be secured in your proposal. Prior to any funding decision we would need clarity about where responsibility lay contractually in terms of research governance issues, intellectual property, publication and dissemination, etc.

Q17. Are proposals for grants required to be accompanied by matched funding contributions from service partners?

We will favour proposals that can demonstrate a strong commitment to the research from service partners, including a matched funding contribution. It is not a requirement that proposals have matched funding.

Scope and focus of the research

Q18. Can aspects of my research be based on non-health care or non-UK experiences?

We are not looking to support entire research programmes which do not have a focus on health and social care systems in the UK. However, we will consider research that has a component of investigation in non-UK health and social care provided that you can clearly demonstrate the applicability and relevance of your research idea to improving efficiency and reducing waste within the UK context.

Q19. Will the programme fund methodological research?

Yes. However, we do not expect methodological research to be the only focus of the proposal and would expect to see methodological research accompanied by an applied component within your research programme.

Q20. Our research idea aligns closely to more than one of the Health Foundation's priority areas, is this okay?

Yes, we welcome research ideas that cross-cut areas of interest; however, you will be asked to select only one priority area on the online application form so please be clear as to which one of the two areas your proposal primarily focuses on.

Q21. Do I need to have obtained ethical approval for my proposal prior to submitting my application?

No, not at the time of submitting your application. However, you should factor the estimated time required into your research plan. In addition, our application form asks that you carefully consider data acquisition in your project timelines; please ensure that you answer this section of the form thoroughly.

Q22. I'm very clear about the outputs from my research in the early part of my proposed programme but there may be a number of different options and avenues of investigation that may emerge as the research progresses – is this okay?

Yes, we expect that some research programmes outputs and trajectories for investigation will be contingent on emerging findings from the initial stages of the research. You should be clear in your proposal where this is likely and illustrate in as much detail as possible the range of potential lines of enquiry that may emerge. We believe that such flexibility allows us and the researchers to maximise the impact of their work.

The application process

Q23. I've applied to the Health Foundation for funding before and have not had to use an online system. Can I submit a proposal any other way?

No, only applications submitted through our new online application portal <https://aims.health.org.uk> will be considered for assessment. We would ask that you familiarise yourself with the online application portal at an early stage of your application as we may not be able to respond to any technical queries in a timely fashion in the days prior to the deadline for applications. As such, we encourage early proposal submission to avoid any disappointment. The key documents supporting the application process are this FAQ document, the 'Call for applications', the 'Application form guidance' and the associated [AIMS user manual](#).

The application form can be downloaded as a Word file, making it possible to work on your application remotely; however, you are required to make your final submission through the online system. Please note that tables, diagrams or mathematical formulas do not always neatly cut and paste into the online portal and should be submitted as attachments.

Q24. Can an applicant submit more than one proposal?

Yes, an applicant is welcome to submit more than one proposal; however, they will need to clearly demonstrate that they have the capacity to undertake more than one research programme if successful. Each application can have the same organisation but may have different lead applicants if needed.

Q25. I'm having problems completing my online form: what should I do?

In the first instance please check that you have completed all the mandatory fields in the online form – it might be helpful to take a written note or screenshot of which questions require review before you re-enter the form.

If this has not resolved your problem, please refer to the [AIMS user manual](#). If you have a technical issue, eg problems with registering and logging in or confusing error messages, please email efficiency@health.org.uk and we will aim to reply within five working days.

Q26. Will I be able to get feedback on my application if it has been unsuccessful?

Proposals that are successful in progressing to the peer review stage of assessment will receive the anonymised peer reviewer feedback. All research teams that we interview will have the opportunity for verbal feedback. Unfortunately, as we expect interest to be high in this call, we do not have the resources to provide feedback to the other unsuccessful proposals (ie those that were unsuccessful in getting to peer review stage).

Management and communication

Q27. If successful, when is it expected that research will begin, and when is the earliest that funds would be made available?

We expect projects funded through the open call to begin towards the end of quarter one of 2019. We will come to an agreement with each research team on the exact scheduling of the award payments as part of the finalisation of the research protocol and contracting process; generally speaking the first payment for a grant agreement is made soon after signing of the grant agreement.

Q28. What is the Health Foundation's approach to the management of the research grants, and requirements for reporting and engagement while the research is being carried out?

We are an engaged funder, and are interested in working with the successful research teams to understand and support their work while it is ongoing. Staff from our Research Department and elsewhere in the organisation may be interested in meeting with the successful research teams, and will be available to support and advise on the write-up of the findings. We expect successful research teams to keep us updated on their progress, including through an annual grant report.

We will be actively looking to build relationships and share information between the research teams funded through this programme. For example, we may host seminars and/or collaborative learning events that the successful research teams will be required to attend.

Q29. Who owns the intellectual property rights from the research?

Our grant agreements are constructed so that you would own the rights to the intellectual property but you would license the Health Foundation to be able to use the intellectual property. This is so that we can, in partnership with the researchers, help support dissemination of the research and maximise impact in line with our charitable objectives.

Q30. What are the Health Foundation's expectations regarding publication and communication of the findings from this research?

We expect successful research teams to communicate the progress of their work from an early stage, and will be actively seeking to build linkages and share information where appropriate between the teams funded through this programme.

The formal outputs from each project will be an annual award report, an end of award report and a final research report. We would also expect award holders to publish their work in academic journals and to present their work at meetings and conferences. The Health Foundation has a policy of supporting open access publication fees for strategically relevant publications. These are decided on an individual basis and as such, we ask that applicants do not include the cost of open access publishing in their proposals.

The audience for this research is broad, and includes system leaders, policymakers and researchers. We expect research funded through this programme to be widely communicated, especially through leading peer review journals and conferences. We would

also encourage researchers to consider innovative methods of communication where appropriate.

For tips and guidance on how to effectively communicate your research, including how to write a comprehensive communications plan, please see our toolkit, '[Communicating your research](#)'.

Q31. How important is the policy relevance of the research?

Successful applications must be policy relevant and have the potential to have an impact on policy. Teams are expected to be able and prepared to work with us to engage with, and influence, policymakers. Applicants must demonstrate a good understanding of the policy landscape.

Other

Q32. What should I do if I have a query that has not been answered in these FAQs?

If you have queries about the programme or the application process which have not been answered in these FAQs, please email efficiency@health.org.uk and we will aim to reply within five working days and, if appropriate, will also update the FAQs document.