Translational Call 2025 Outline Application guidance

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VERSUS ARTHRITIS

1 Introduction

Our Better Lives Today, Better Lives Tomorrow Research Strategy 2022-2026 highlights our ambition to accelerate the pace and precision of musculoskeletal research. We aim to fund research that is driven by the needs of people with arthritis and has the greatest potential to improve the quality of their lives. Translational research facilitates the turning of observations in the laboratory, clinic and community into interventions that directly benefit people with arthritis.

This Translational Call will support Proof of Concept projects that aim to progress the development of novel, innovative technologies towards clinical development for the benefit of people with arthritis. The funding should advance technologies along the developmental pathway leading to further investment and/or development by industry.

Applicants may apply for up to £200,000 for a duration of up to 24 months. This scheme will not fund fundamental or discovery research projects, or large clinical trials.

2 Eligibility criteria

Versus Arthritis research awards may only be held in universities, hospitals or recognised academic research institutes in the UK. Any academic, clinician or allied health care professional at an eligible UK institution can apply. The lead applicant must be based at an eligible UK institution. Individuals who are employed by, or whose salary derives from, a commercial organisation are not eligible to apply for a Versus Arthritis award but may be included as a co-applicant. International collaborators may also be included as co-applicants.

Please note all applications must have a lead applicant or another co-applicant that is tenured. If you are applying as a non-tenured lead applicant (such as an early career researcher) then you must provide details of the tenured co-applicant in the 'Project partner profile' section of the outline application form.

Applications can be from lead applicants that have expertise relevant to the area but do not have a track record of musculoskeletal research.

Applications are welcome that include an NHS service manager (or a manager with responsibility for delivering NHS services) or individuals with lived experience as a co-applicant.

Employees of Versus Arthritis are not permitted to be named as co-applicants.

Multiple applications

We will not accept overlapping applications of the same research proposal to more than one Versus Arthritis funding scheme. We will accept an application that has been submitted to another funding body, however, please check the eligibility criteria of the other funding body before making an application.

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3   How to apply

Applications to this scheme will be via a two-stage process, with an initial outline application stage which will undergo panel review. Those who are successful at this stage will be invited to submit a full application.

All applications for Versus Arthritis funding must be received through our online grant management system Grant Tracker. Further details on how to apply can be found on our [website](#).

The deadline for submission of outline applications is 16:00 on 16th October 2024. No application will be accepted after this deadline.

For further enquiries on any aspect of your application, please email the Awards office at awards@versusarthritis.org or phone us on 0300 7900 403.

4   Note on language

We recognise that specialist language will be required to accurately convey the detail of your proposal and, as such, sections that require technical detail will be labelled accordingly.

In addition to scientific review, outline applications will also be reviewed by Versus Arthritis Research Partners (people with lived experience). They assess the quality of the patient involvement, the relevance to the charity and potential for patient benefit. The non-technical summary and involvement and engagement sections should be written in non-technical language, these are important parts of the outline application and require careful consideration.

For more information on how to write a clear and informative lay summary please use the following resources:

- [Plain English summaries | NIHR](#)
- [The Plain English Campaign](#)

If you have further enquiries on the use of appropriate language, please email the Involvement Team at researchinvolvement@versusarthritis.org

5   Guidance for completion of the outline application form

The sections to be completed in the application form are presented below please ensure you reference each section before completing the online form.

Help icon

Additional information and guidance are also provided within the form for specific questions, this can be accessed by clicking on .

Application summary

Project title: The title should be descriptive. If relevant, please use PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) principals and include a project acronym.

Organisation: Insert the name of the lead applicant's host organisation.

Funding requested: Insert total funding requested in £GBP. At the outline stage no further financial breakdown is required, just the total amount requested. Maximum funding that can be requested for this scheme is £200,000.

Proposed start date: This should be no earlier than August 2025. Sufficient time should be allowed to gain NHS approval, if relevant, and any other necessary regulatory requirements such as Health Research Authority, if applicable. Also factor in the time to recruit relevant research staff. Please account for any capacity limitations in the clinical research environment and academic research offices.

Proposed duration: The overall duration should include the start-up time described above and a realistic estimate of how long the research will take, where appropriate considering realistic and feasible recruitment estimates based upon any capacity limitations within the clinical research environment. It should also include sufficient time at the end of the study for full analysis and reporting of the data. The maximum duration is 24 months.

Non-technical summary: Provide a brief account of the proposed activity in non-technical language, including the background to the problem; the aims of your proposal and why they are important; a brief plan of the project; and the relevance to Versus Arthritis potential patient benefit. This section has a limit of 400 words.

Project details

Technical language may be used in this section where required.

Background

Briefly and clearly explain the context of your research. This should include the disease/area and its clinical and/or patient impact, the particular area(s) that your technology seeks to address, and the need for further understanding. Provide a brief overview of work to date which underpins this project.

Aims and objectives of proposed Proof of Concept project: Outline the aims and objectives of the project – what are the questions you hope to answer and why?

Define the project outputs and deliverables: Clearly state the outputs that this project expects to achieve by the end of the funding period, and the deliverables that underpin them.

Project scope: Briefly outline the unmet clinical need that this project is addressing and explain why this particular study is important and how it will lead to patient benefit.

Project Plan: Give a brief overview of how you intend to answer your project question(s), including details of what experimental methods or models you will use (e.g. human cells, animal models, clinical samples, patient and/or education research studies) and how the project will be managed. Where relevant include detail on recruitment for any feasibility study.

Project developmental stages: Provide information on the current stage of development of your technology. Also describe what stage this project will reach at the end of the funded period.

Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) may be used to describe the developmental stages if these are relevant for your technology area. For this call, projects are expected to have completed all fundamental or underpinning research required to understand the basic principles of the technology and develop the concept (Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 1 and 2 where relevant). The technology should be in a position where the next required step is to show preclinical Proof of Concept (TRL 3 and beyond where relevant).

Technology Readiness Level (TRL)							
1-2	**3**	**4**	**5-6**	**7-8**	**9**		**10**
Clinical need defined & knowledge created	Solution Generation	Investment Validation	Development & Validation	Clearance & Clinical	Outputs	Outcomes	Post Launch Market Support
Define clinical need/relevance Develop/refine solution IP	Generation of Prototypes IP Preliminary Value Proposition Risk Assessment	Market Research FTO searches Pilot Studies	Design Control Regulatory Capability	Market support data Supply Chain Reimbursement considerations Capability Clinical	Regulatory Approval Closure & Evaluation Metrics Feedback	Launch SOP	Product Support data White Paper Product Recall Support

Supporting diagram (optional): Your outline application may be supplemented with one supporting diagram. This should be no more than one page of A4 and must be either PDF, JPEG or GIF.

Alignment with funding scope

Please select the technology area relevant to your project from the drop-down list. Technologies not listed are not in scope for this call. Please refer to the call document for further information on the scope of this funding call.

Briefly highlight the relevance of your project to Versus Arthritis and which area of our strategy your project is addressing: Translational research cuts across all aspects of our research strategy and therefore applicants can submit projects which address any of our priority areas:

- • Early Detection and Prevention
- • Targeted Treatment
- • Living Well

In this section applicants should make clear which priority area their project is addressing and how the technology would show benefit for people with arthritis.

Involvement and engagement

Briefly explain how people with lived experience have been/will be involved in the project: Meaningful engagement/involvement of people with lived experience could include activities such as:

- identifying and prioritising the research question or area of unmet need
- helping design study protocols and patient information
- inputting into the application and/or ethics approval
- helping carry out elements of the study, rather than simply participating as a subject
- evaluating the research findings
- dissemination and implementation of outputs and outcomes
- consultation on the relevance of the outcome measures to the specific condition being studied.

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This section should be written in non-technical language and be accessible to a wide audience.

Commercial opportunity

This section of your application form must be reviewed by your Technology Transfer/Enterprise office prior to submission.

Intellectual property: Provide brief details of any existing Intellectual Property associated with the proposal and any new Intellectual Property that may arise from this grant. Please provide details of any relevant patent filings.

Market intelligence: Provide key information from preliminary market analysis supporting the commercial potential of your technology and benefits over competing technologies.

Route to commercialisation: Projects should have a clear commercial route. Provide brief information on how the project/technology will progress to commercial and clinical impact, e.g. what are the next stages in development, likely development partners, timescales to reach the market.

Project partner profile

Provide detail of any partners who will be supporting the delivery of the project and briefly outline their role. Contact details (email address/phone number/physical address) are not required at this stage. These partners can be:

- Clinical
- Academic
- Commercial/industrial
- People with lived experience

For any partners who fall outside these categories, please contact the office in advance of submitting your application. Applicants with proposals that include part-funding from a third party (including industry) are allowable, but applicants should contact us at awards@versusarthritis.org to discuss their application as early as possible and will be subject to appropriate multi-party contracting arrangements around the award.

If you are applying as a non-tenured lead applicant, then you must provide details of the tenured co-applicant in this section.

Lead applicant details

The lead applicant is the individual who will lead the work on the award and be responsible to Versus Arthritis to ensure the conditions of award are met. They must be based in a UK university, hospital or recognised academic research institute in the UK.

The principal/lead applicant must open the outline application form on Grant Tracker.

The details displayed in the application form for the lead applicant are those that are stored on Grant Tracker. To amend them, please save and close the application form and visit the 'Manage My Details' section on the Grant Tracker Versus Arthritis homepage.

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Basic information: Please ensure all fields marked with a red dot are completed (these are compulsory fields).

Update CV: Degree/Qualification - please add any degrees or professional qualifications that you hold and feel would aid your application. Employment – Please list your present and last position held as a minimum. Please list any further positions that feel would aid your application. Grants – Please list all current grants held. It is not mandatory to be a current or prior grant holder to be able to apply.

The application must include at least one tenured academic at the lead UK university, hospital or recognised research institute, this can be as the lead applicant or as a co-applicant. If you are applying as a non-tenured lead applicant, then you must provide details of the tenured co-applicant in the **Project partner profile** section of the application form.

Other research outputs: Other than the publications and awards already listed in the application you may list and briefly describe three to five of your key research outputs or achievements. These can cover any forms of output relevant to your research including but not limited to:

- Development and sharing of new datasets, software, research reagents, tools, methods, products or patents
- Contributions to collaborations/consortia/team science
- Participation in PPI and engagement activities
- Influences on policy, practice, education or training
- Development of new preventative, diagnostic, treatment or management approaches and interventions
- Improvements to health or quality of life for patients and the public
- Additional relevant publications and pre-prints.

Relevant grants and publications

Before adding relevant grants and publications to this application, you should ensure that your profile is up to date in your Grant Tracker account as follows:

Research grants and fellowships

Go to 'Manage My Details' section followed by "Update CV" to check or amend the list of grants and fellowships held.

Publications

Go to "My Research Outputs" to check or amend the list of publications held.

Please refer to our guidance document for full instructions on how to use the Research Outputs section.

Once your profile is up to date, you can then add your relevant grants and publications in the **Relevant grants and publications** section of the application form.

This section allows you to choose which grants and publications to list as part of your CV. You can each choose to list up to a maximum of ten grants and ten publications that are most relevant to the application.

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To add a grant

Use the ⊕ button to add a new field then select a grant from the drop-down menu. If the grant you wish to add is not listed in the drop-down menu, you can add it to your CV in the Manage My Details section of Grant Tracker.

To add a publication

Use the ⊕ button to add a new field then select a publication from the drop-down menu. If the publication you wish to add is not listed in the drop-down menu, you can add it to the My Research Outputs section of Grant Tracker.

There is a link to additional online guidance within this section of the application form in Grant Tracker.

Validation summary

To complete the application process, the final steps are listed below.

1. Validate your form

Click the Revalidate button on the left. This will check that you have completed all of the sections within the application. Any incomplete sections will be listed with a description of the issue.

2. Click Save And Close

This will return you to the details page of your application. The Submit button on the right-hand side of the page should be available.

3. Click Submit

Your application will be submitted to Versus Arthritis.

Once you have submitted your application you will receive an automated email acknowledgment.

If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your application, please contact us on awards@versusarthritis.org or 0300 7900 403. We advise you to submit your application well in time before the deadline so that we have sufficient time to help you.

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