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About MQ Mental Health Research

MQ Mental Health Research is a global mental health research charity that supports research exploring the detection, treatment, and prevention of mental illnesses. To achieve our mission of transforming mental health research, we follow four objectives outlined in [our research strategy](#):

- **Growing Talent:** We will invest in and support the brightest researchers to expand capability and drive innovation.
- **Investing in Impact:** We will invest in research that drives change in policy and practice while also challenging the status quo.
- **Challenging Inequality:** We will tackle mental health inequalities for young people, minoritized communities, and those living with serious mental health conditions.
- **Involving people:** We will triple the number of people who actively support mental health research and engage a diverse range of research participants.

Key Information

Career Level	All career levels: early-career, mid-career, and established researchers
Research Area	Individuals or teams from any academic discipline or background outside mental health science including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arts and humanities - Economics, social and political sciences - Basic sciences, e.g. mathematics, physics - Engineering and computational science - Environmental sciences - Biotechnology and biological science
Host institution	Anywhere in the world except for institutions that are based in mainland China and countries under UK financial sanctions: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-sanctions-regime-specific-consolidated-lists-and-releases
Funding Period	January to June 2024 (6 months)
Funding Amount	Up to £50,000 (GBP)

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Guidelines

These guidelines explain what we're looking for in the application to the MQ Mental Health Transdisciplinary Research Grants.

As a first step, applicants will need to submit an expression of interest application. If successful shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

1.2 About the grant

Mental health problems are common and severely impact people's lives. Mental health problems accounted for 125 million (95% UI 93.0–163) global disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) in 2019, which is equivalent to 4.9% (3.9–6.1) of total DALYs. The largest contributors

to this total were anxiety, depression and psychosis¹. While treatments are available for these conditions, they only work for some people and may have side effects that limit their effectiveness and affect quality of life. Fresh ideas are necessary to advance the field and further our understanding of what causes mental health problems or supports their resolution, and how we can personalise and improve pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments.

This funding opportunity from [MQ Mental Health Research](#), funded by [Wellcome](#) aims to support researchers outside psychiatry, psychology, and neuroscience to apply bold and novel ideas and methods from their discipline to mental health science. We seek to bring ambitious ideas and new thinking from different academic disciplines and backgrounds to make contributions to mental health science and drive breakthroughs in prevention and treatment of depression, anxiety, or psychosis.

The grant will help you:

- Strengthen your research experience.
- Expand your research and technical skills.
- Improve your communication and dissemination skills.
- Engage with lived experience and academic experts from different disciplines.
- Improve your network.
- Develop your cross-disciplinary practice beyond your core discipline.

2. Eligibility

2.1 The Project Scope

We will fund innovative and bold ideas to advance the field of mental health science and further our understanding of what causes depression, anxiety, and psychosis or supports the resolution of these conditions, and how we can personalise and improve pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions to prevent and treat depression, anxiety, and psychosis. We are looking for high risk, high potential, and exploratory projects.

Proposed projects will review the potential of novel applications of methods, frameworks, or concepts from domains outside of mental health science to accelerate progress in early intervention for depression, anxiety, or psychosis.

We encourage applicants to consider how they will incorporate patient and public perspectives in their proposed projects. MQ will support awardees in embedding patient and public involvement in their research through genuine and meaningful partnership with patients and the public in design, delivery, and dissemination of research.

What is not suitable for the transdisciplinary research grant?

Proposals conducting primary research. Projects focused on (i) health service delivery, (ii) service quality, improvement or redesign, or (iii) mental health conditions other than depression, anxiety, or psychosis are also outside the scope of this call.

¹ [Science and Technology Advance through Surprise \(arxiv.org\)](#)

We encourage applicants to consider how they will incorporate patient and public perspectives in their proposed projects. MQ will support awardees in embedding patient and public involvement in their research through genuine and meaningful partnership with patients and the public in design, delivery, and dissemination of research.

2.2 The applicant(s)

The MQ Mental Health Transdisciplinary Research Grants is open for individuals or teams who:

- Are working or have an educational and research publication background outside of mental health research.
- Have a strong research track record in their base discipline.
- Will be based at a university, hospital affiliated to universities, third sector institutions, research charity, or research institution anywhere in the world except for institutions that are based in countries under UK financial sanctions: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-sanctions-regime-specific-consolidated-lists-and-releases>

Individuals who are working, or have an educational background in, a discipline that is traditionally recognised as a route to mental health research including psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience are not eligible to apply as lead applicants. If you have published transdisciplinary research relevant to mental health science, you are eligible to apply as a lead applicant on the condition that the majority of your publications are not relevant to mental health and your idea is original.

Applicants should only act as lead applicant or co-applicants on one application.

2.2.1 Teams

Projects should have one lead applicant responsible for creating and submitting the application. The lead applicant will be accountable for completion of grant activities and financial management of the grant.

Co-applicants are expected to add value to the proposed work by providing specific expertise or access to infrastructure or facilities. The distinct roles and responsibilities of each co-applicant involved should be explained in the full application.

Co-applicants may have a mental health background where their role is contributing to ensuring the project is relevant, feasible, and meaningful to the mental health science community. Since this programme is about supporting the development of new connections and thinking, we would expect that the lead applicant does not already have a longstanding history of publishing transdisciplinary or interdisciplinary research relevant to mental health science whereby the majority of their publications is related to mental health science.

Co-applicants could be based at institutions different than that hosting the lead applicant.

2.2.2 Host Institution

Lead applicants should identify a host institution which will act as the lead applicant's employer for the duration of the award. Host organisations hosting the grant must be able to provide the applicant with a contract of employment for the duration of the award.

Eligible host institutions include higher education institutions, third sector organisations, and research organisations and can be anywhere in the world except for institutions based in mainland China and countries under UK financial sanctions: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/financial-sanctions-regime-specific-consolidated-lists-and-releases>.

The proposed host Institution should ensure an adequate and supportive environment for applicant(s) and the project. If successful in the expression of interest application, you and the named institution are expected to explain how the organisation will support the delivery of your project during the grant period. Host institutions will be required to approve the full application through the Flexi-Grant application portal. You are advised to give sufficient notice to allow for the host institution's administrative processes.

Payments will be made directly to the host institution. We expect financial justification as per the terms and conditions of the award.

2.2.3 Encouraging Representation

We welcome applications irrespective of the applicant's sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, faith and religion, disability, and age. However, as racially marginalised groups, women, researchers with disabilities, researchers from low-income or middle-income countries (LMICs), and members of the trans community are currently under-represented across research funding, we would encourage applications from members of these groups.

Appointment will be based on academic merit of proposed ideas and availability of funding.

3. What is Funded?

The MQ Mental Health Transdisciplinary Research Grants will provide funding of up to £50,000 (GBP) for a period of six months. Funds may be used for any of the following:

- **Salary** to cover grant holder(s)' time for the duration of the award.
- **Direct research expenses** (e.g., consumables, publication costs, open access charges).
- **Travel and subsistence costs** (e.g., project meetings, visiting to collaborators).
- **Patient and public involvement and dissemination** costs (e.g., production of infographics, payments for lived experience experts' time, skill, and expertise).

The host institution must cover all indirect costs, such as non-specific estimated costs. Estate costs (i.e., heating/lighting), office stationery, finance and HR (personnel) costs are not eligible for funding, even if it is standard practice for your institution to charge overheads to external grants.

4. Grant Activities

Grant holders (individuals or small teams) will have 6 months to review the relevant literature to assess the potential, and feasibility of, a transdisciplinary idea, producing a viewpoint paper of publishable standard (for example, as a review, personal view, position paper, or comment) of up to 3,500 words, as well as a single-page summary of their work.

Grant holders are expected to attend three hybrid or virtual convening meetings at the start, middle and endpoints of the grant period. These meetings will also be attended by Wellcome and the Funding Committee and will be an opportunity for grant holders to share, present, develop their work with guidance from the Funding Committee and Wellcome.

5. Assessment Process

5.1 Assessment Criteria

The Funding Committee and external reviewers will assess the applications based on:

1. **Potential of the proposal to accelerate advances** in the field of mental health science – high risk, exploratory projects are encouraged.
2. **Novelty and boldness** of the proposed ideas. The extent to which the project supports novel applications of methods and concepts into mental health science brought in from other fields (beyond state of the art)
3. **Experience and/or qualifications** of the lead applicant and co-applicants
4. **Potential for further development of the project** in relation to scale, applicability, and ambition (e.g., broader applicability to mental health research and types of literature surveyed)
5. **Feasibility:** ability to successfully carry out the proposed project with resources and facilities available to applicant(s)
6. **The proposed use of funds:** costs requested should be for the direct costs of the research and be reasonably justified in line with work plan

5.2 Funding Committee

The Funding Committee's role is to assess and score applications, make funding decisions and/or recommendations based on the applications assessment, and provide guidance and advise to grant holders.

The Funding Committee includes international experts including academic experts from diverse disciplinary backgrounds in the field of Mental Health Science and lived experience experts. Lived experience experts will be full members of the Funding Committee, meaning they will have an equal voice and equal vote to the academic members, and will provide feedback and insights throughout the review process from a lived experience perspective.

The Funding Committee will provide feedback on full applications to be communicated by MQ Research Team. Committee members cannot discuss their assessment and decisions with applicants, so please refrain from directly addressing committee members.

5.3 Peer Review Process

In addition to the Funding Committee, national and international external reviewers with relevant expertise will assess the quality of applications. The feedback and recommendations

from external reviewers will be considered by the Funding Committee when making funding recommendations.

The external reviewers are selected based on nominations from the Funding Committee and MQ Research Team.

6. The Application Process

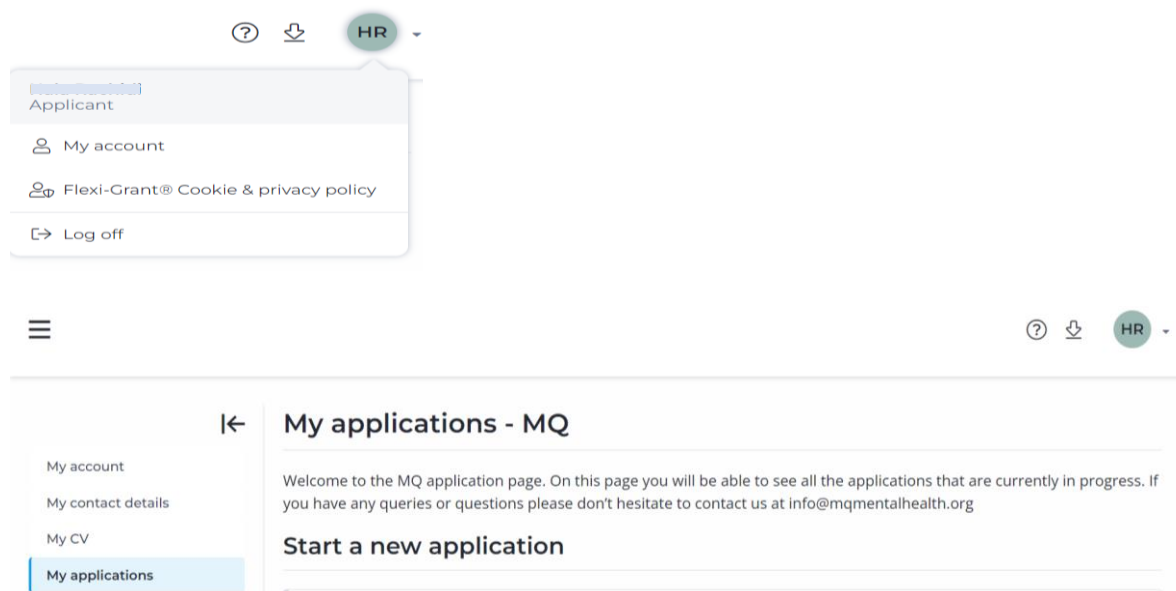
6.1 Application Stages Overview

The application involves the following stages:

- 1- Applicants submit an expression of interest application by 08 September 2023 – at 13:00 UK time
- 2- If successful, applicants will be invited to submit a full application by 23 October 2023 – at 13:00 UK time
- 3- Full applications will be reviewed by the Funding Committee and external reviewers between October and November 2023
- 4- The Funding Committee will hold a decision meeting to shortlist the applications based on the set assessment criteria in November 2023
- 5- The Funding Committee will make the final funding recommendations by December 2023.

6.2 Completing Your Application

Lead applicants need to submit your application online using our Grants Management System, Flexi-Grant® via <https://mq.flexigrant.com/>. You can access the application form by registering to Flexi-Grant, head to 'My Account', 'My Applications' and start the 'MQ Transdisciplinary Research Grant 2023 Expression of Interest Application'.



As part of your submission, we require the following sections to be completed:

6.2.1. Lead Applicant Details

You will be asked to complete the following sections:

- Applicant: please add your contact details. Ensure these details are kept up to date, so that we may contact you during the application process if necessary. The email address is your username on this system.
- Employment: please add any research position(s) held since the completion of your doctoral degree if applicable.
- Education and training: please list university level and professional education and training, including both completed and current qualifications, beginning with your most recent qualification (e.g., PhD, DPhil, DClinPsy, MBBS, MD). *This should be the date the qualification was awarded (after the examination and corrections).*
- Grants, awards, and publications: you will be asked to list all awards you have received for work or training, research grants you held in the past five years, and up to five most relevant and/or significant publications and conference papers. Publications should be listed using the following format:
 - Author's name (last name, initials)
 - Year of publication
 - Title of article
 - Journal name
 - Volume number, and
 - Page numbers(s)
 - or DOI
- Personal Statement: You will be asked to provide a personal statement describing i) your research experience, ii) interest in transdisciplinary research, iii) what transferable skills you plan to bring from your discipline to mental health research, and iv) why this is important.

6.2.2. Co-applicants (Team Applicants)

Team applicants will be asked to provide contact details for all co-applicants. Co-applicants are defined as researchers who will provide significant intellectual input into the project and will be responsible for the running of some aspects of the work. Co-applicants can be from any discipline.

6.2.3. Project Overview

You will be asked to complete the following sections:

- Title of project
- Financial support requested (total amount)
- Area of research (Understand, Prevent, Treat)
- Research discipline or background

6.2.4. Project Summary

You will be asked to provide an 800 words succinct summary of the proposal under the following headlines:

- Aims and objectives (150 words)
- Background and rationale (250 words)
- Work plan (250 words)

- Potential outcomes and impact of the project (150 words)

References are not included in word count.

Please give full details of any references, including authors, publication year, title and journal name, volume, page numbers.

Number your references in the order in which they appear in the text, and list them in the Vancouver style (as [outlined by the US National Library of Medicine](#)).

6.2.5. Lay Project Summary

You will be asked to provide a 300 words clear explanation of your project. This section should be written in non-technical language and should give a clear account of what you intend to do, why it matters, what difference it will make, and how will the public be involved in this project and dissemination. This section will be aimed at reviewers that do not have specialist knowledge of your field.

Please do not cut and paste from other sections of your application form to create the plain English summary. Further guidance on [writing a plain English summary](#) is available on the NIHR website.

In line with [NIHR](#)'s definition, when using the term 'patient and public' we include patients, potential patients, carers and people who use health and social care services as well as people from specific communities and from organisations that represent people who use services. Also included are people with lived experience of one or more mental health conditions, whether they're current patients or not.

We believe that patient and public involvement is important to improve the relevance and quality of research. It is important that our funding reflects the priorities and outcomes of patients, carers, and people with lived experience on mental illness and that their voice is heard throughout mental health research. We therefore ask that you consider how your project is relevant to priorities of patients and public: for example, by addressing questions identified in published priority setting exercises such as the [James Lind Alliance projects](#). We also ask that you consider how to best involve patients and public in you in your work. We encourage you to refer to the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#).

6.2.6. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

MQ Mental Health Research is committed to being an inclusive funder supporting researchers from diverse backgrounds. You will be asked questions to monitor diversity. We encourage applicants to complete this section. Applicants can select the option of 'Prefer not to say'. This information will not be part of the funding decision and is only collected for analysing MQ's funding activities and trends.

7. Feedback

Feedback on your application will be provided by the MQ research team, but please remember that all funding decisions made by the Funding Committee are final. Feedback is based on the written assessment of the applications and/or discussion that takes place during the panel decision meeting and does not include reasons why an application is or isn't funded.

8. Useful Contacts

Once you've read these guidelines, please contact us at grants@mqmentalhealth.org for more information about the Transdisciplinary Research Grants.