Bridging Fellowship

Application guidance

Contents

Arthritis UK

1 Introduction

We want to bring about more accurate and faster diagnosis and more timely, effective and targeted treatments, tailored to individuals, taking into consideration not just their genes but also the environment they live in.

Our Better Lives Today, Better Lives Tomorrow Research Strategy 2022-2026 focusses our investment and influence on four priority areas over the next four years. It is striving to bring ground-breaking scientific discoveries to people with arthritis at pace and with precision.

Arthritis UK is committed to building a world-class workforce by supporting research careers and building stills within the UK arthritis research community. As part of our research strategy, we are aiming to facilitate the establishment of a cohort of highly skilled and established experts who will lead talented, multidisciplinary teams and attract, train and help nurture the next generation of researchers in the UK.

Our Bridging Fellowship scheme provides final year Arthritis UK fellows with additional financial support to bridge them to their next fellowship application or academic post, providing them with the opportunity to continue the development of an independent research career and progression towards higher-level appointments.

2 Eligibility criteria

Arthritis UK research awards may only be held in universities, hospitals or recognised academic research institutes in the UK.

Only current Arthritis UK Fellows who are in the final year of their fellowship are eligible to apply.

The current Arthritis UK fellowship holders are eligible for this scheme:

- Clinical Research Fellowships
- Foundation Fellowships
- Career Development Fellowships

We will consider applications from fellows who have recently completed their fellowship. Please contact the office before starting an application.

Applicants will need to need provide a strong case for why the additional financial support is needed and clear plans for what the fellowship will be bridging the applicant towards, such as specific funding schemes or academic positions.

Applicants can apply for up to 2 years funding for their salary, expenses and animal costs can be requested.

There are two funding options:

- Up to 1 year of funding with no host institution buy-in required. A maximum of £80,000 can be requested by foundation and clinical research fellowship holders and £100,000 for career development fellows.

- Up to 2 years of funding with the host institution contributing 50% of salary costs. A maximum of £100,000 can be requested by foundation and clinical research fellows and £150,000 for career development fellows.

Projects must demonstrate a clear relevance to Arthritis UK. We want research to make arthritis preventable, manageable and treatable. While fellowship proposals do need to align with our research principles, they do not need to align with the four priority areas set out in our 2022-2026 Research Strategy to be considered eligible for funding.

There are no nationality or age restrictions for applicants.

3 Clinical trials within fellowships

Arthritis UK does not support the funding of a major or substantial clinical trial as a fellowship. Trials should be funded through the appropriate Arthritis UK grant scheme which has a reviewing panel with the right expertise to assess clinical trial application content. It is not considered that running a trial from within a fellowship in a trial manager role represents good training.

Trials are supported within fellowships in a junior principal investigator role only to support learning of methodology and recruitment and assist protocol development; there should be sufficient fellowship content that is non-trial.

It is considered suitable for a fellowship to contain methodological development work or supplementary analysis as bolt on activity to an established or proposed trial.

It is considered suitable to conduct a feasibility/pilot clinical study within a fellowship where studies are expected to be recruiting in small numbers.

Arthritis UK is supportive of fellowship applications as an add on to a clinical trial that has been supported by Arthritis UK, or elsewhere, where the fellowship component is contributing to scientific training.

4 Multiple and previous applications

We will not accept overlapping applications of the same research proposal to more than one Arthritis UK 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.

Researchers can reapply for the Bridging Fellowship. It is expected that the new proposal would be significantly different from a previous proposal and any feedback from the Fellowship Expert Committee would have been addressed. If an application is a resubmission, a letter (maximum 1 page of A4) should be attached detailing how the application has been altered in response to the feedback received from the original submission.

5 How to apply

All applications for Arthritis UK 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 applications is 16:00 on the stated deadline. No application will be accepted after this deadline. We strongly recommend that applicants allow sufficient time for submission before the deadline to obtain the necessary approvals, such as from your research or finance office and head of department.

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

6 The assessment process

The fellowship application is a single submission process – a full application should be submitted by the deadline. Bridging Fellowship applications are reviewed by the Arthritis UK Fellowship Expert Committee.

There are three stages to the assessment process:

1. **Peer review:** Applications are sent for lay and external peer review by experts from the UK and abroad and of international standing in the field of the proposal.
2. **Written rebuttal:** Applicants are given the opportunity to respond to written review comments.
3. **Decision meeting:** Applications, written reviews and rebuttals are assessed by the Fellowship Expert Committee and funding decision are made.

Awards are typically made 5-6 months after the deadline date.

All unsuccessful applications receive written feedback outlining why they were not recommended for funding.

Further information and FAQs about applying for fellowships, are available here: Applying for a fellowship | Arthritis UK

7 Scoring criteria

At all stages of the review process, the funding panel and external reviewers are asked to consider:

- **Person:** The candidate's track record and future potential
- **Project:** The research design, scientific quality, feasibility
- **Place:** Suitability of the host organisation and the support being provided to the candidate
- **Patient and Public Involvement:** The quality of plans for involvement of patients and the public, and potential patient benefit.

8 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, applications will also be reviewed by Arthritis UK Research Partners (people with lived experience of arthritis). They assess the quality of the patient involvement plan, the project's relevance to the charity and its potential for patient benefit. The application summary and involvement sections should be written in non-technical language, as well as specific sections of the scientific summary. These are important parts of the application and require careful consideration.

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

- NIHR plain English summaries
- The Plain English Campaign

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

9 Guidance for completion of the application form

Grant Tracker profile

Before creating a new application, please ensure that your CV is up to date in your Grant Tracker profile. Lead applicants and sponsors will need to do this.

Please ensure you reference each section below 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

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

Lead applicant: Details will be populated from the CV of the person who has started the application.

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

Profession: This can be edited in the 'Manage my details: Basic information' section, accessed from the home page of Grant Tracker.

Relevant professional body: If you are registered with a regulatory body or council of your profession. This can be edited in the 'Manage my details: Basic Information' section, accessed from the home page of Grant Tracker.

Proposed start date: This should be no earlier than January 2026. Sufficient time should be allowed to gain NHS approval, if relevant, and all 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 5 years.

Key words: Please enter up to six key words that describe your application.

Previously submitted: Please indicate if this or a related application has been submitted elsewhere, including Arthritis UK. If a similar application has been submitted, please provide further details about the application, where it has been submitted and the outcome or date of expected outcome.

Abstract (written in non-technical language): Provide a brief account of the proposed activity in non-technical language, including the background to the problem; the aims and purposes of your proposal and why they are important; a brief experimental plan; and the relevance to Arthritis UK and its potential patient benefit. This information may be used in public summaries of our funded researched and must be written in a language accessible to a wide audience. This section has a limit of 500 words.

What impact and potential benefits will the research have on those living with arthritis? We recognise that, depending on the nature of the research, the applications that we receive can have immediate patient benefit and others increase the knowledge base for future interventions. In applications where the outcomes directly impact on the quality of life of people with arthritis, this should be clearly detailed in this section. Where benefit is less obvious, explain aspects that may include:

- why this study is necessary to inform a gap in knowledge that will be useful for subsequent translational research
- how the project might help design study protocols and patient information
- what the potential next steps that would be required to move your research findings to clinical intervention are
- when the benefit might be achieved, with realistic justification of these timelines.

This section has a limit of 300 words.

Involvement and engagement

What is research involvement?

Research involvement is where people living with arthritis, or their partners, family members or carers are partners in research activities. This means, working together with a diverse range of people with lived experience of arthritis, to better understand what research is needed for them to live the life they choose.

Involvement means sharing the decision-making power, and doing things with, rather than to or for people with lived experience. In practice this could look like people living with arthritis setting research priorities, deciding on what research gets funding, delivering the research projects and communicating research findings alongside researchers.

Why is research involvement important to us?

Research is improved if people with lived experience help to design and deliver it.

Involving people in this way means the research is more relevant to the challenges and experiences they live with. It is therefore more likely to encourage people to participate in the projects, and to make a difference to the lives of people living with arthritis in the future.

All this together can mean that the research will attract more recognition and funding. Not to mention it can be fun and motivating, as well as empowering for people living with arthritis who get involved - some people have described it as part of their self-management journey.

Our position on Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in research

We are committed to making sure that people with lived experience are involved at all stages in the research we fund. We expect our researchers to meaningfully involve people at application and project development stages, and to continue their involvement throughout the project. We are person-focussed and inclusive in the research we support (you can read our research strategy here).

We support the UK Standards for Public involvement and the EULAR recommendations for involvement in rheumatology research, and expect that these will be adhered to throughout research projects. Working in partnership with people who have lived experience of arthritis we have developed our Arthritis UK Good Practice Guidelines for Involvement to share our expectations with our colleagues, health professionals and researchers. Take a look at our page that collates and summarises the standards, recommendations and guidelines here.

Arthritis UK do not view research involvement as a ‘tick box’ exercise. Involvement is a key element to any research project or department creating equitable and impactful changes to preventing, diagnosing, and treating arthritis. In partnership we strive to ensure that people living with arthritis can live the lives they choose.

This section will be reviewed by Arthritis UK Research Partners (volunteers with lived experience) and scientific experts. Please complete this section in non-technical language. Further guidance on writing for a lay audience is provided in the Note on language section.

Meaningful engagement/involvement of people with arthritis could include activities such as:

- identifying and prioritising the research question
- 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
- participating in oversight structures and evaluating the research findings
- dissemination and implementation of outputs and outcomes.

To find out more on how to plan and carry out meaningful patient involvement please use our PPIE hub for researchers. It includes support and resources for all stages of the research cycle, writing in lay language, reaching out to underserved and diverse communities, as well as support for a range of researchers, including lab based and clinical.

To best address the below PPIE questions, it would be strongly advisable to consult people affected by the disorder(s) you are researching to ensure the workplan is as meaningful and impactful as possible.

How have people living with arthritis inputted into the design of the research? Explain how people with arthritis, especially from under-served groups, have taken part and informed this application: This could include: identifying and prioritising the research question, helping to design the study protocol and patient information, providing input into the application and ethics approvals. This section has a limit of 300 words.

Describe the plan to involve people with arthritis as partners throughout the various stages of your project: Explain how people with arthritis, especially from under-served groups, will input into the conduct of the research. This could include helping to carry out elements of the research, participation in oversight structures, evaluation of research findings, disseminating and implementing outputs and outcomes. This section has a limit of 300 words.

Describe how the outcomes of the research are relevant for, or are meeting, an unmet need for people living with arthritis: Explain how the chosen endpoints or outcomes of the work are relevant to or address unmet needs for people living with arthritis. This could include the design of the research responding to unmet needs or specific areas of importance for those living with arthritis. For earlier stage research, this could reflect how the outcomes of the proposal have current, or a future pathway to, importance for people living with arthritis. This section has a limit of 300 words.

How will results of the research be fed back to those participating and other people living with arthritis? Outline your plans to disseminate the results of the research to participants of the research and the wider population of people with the conditions being researched. This section has a limit of 300 words.

Have you used Arthritis UK PPIE support (PPIE Hub for researchers/webinars) to deliver your PPIE?: This section is for monitoring purposes only and will not be used in the assessment of your application. This information will help us understand the uptake and impact of the support we provide. Please do not answer yes if you have only used PPIE support or resources from your institution or from other organisations.

Project details

Background: Provide a technical summary of the background information and research available in support of the application. It should outline past and current research, including that funded by Arthritis UK, and should highlight the applicant's own contribution. If appropriate, where a systematic review has been carried out that summarises the available evidence, this should be referenced. If relevant, applicants should describe the policy relevance of the proposed research and the importance of its findings. This section has a maximum of 2000 words.

Hypothesis: The research should be hypothesis led and should seek to answer a specific question. Outline clearly the full and null hypotheses and specifically the questions to be addressed. This section has a maximum of 100 words.

Objectives: Describe up to 6 objectives/milestones for the delivery of the proposed research (up to 100 words each) Clearly explain the rationale for each objective/milestone.

Outcome measures: Describe up to 6 outcome measures for the proposed research (up to 100 words each). You must complete at least one outcome measure. Clearly explain the outcome measures including justification of the outcome measures used where a legitimate alternative exists. A decision not to use established validated outcome measures must be explained. The COMET database is available to search for a core outcome set if appropriate. For animal studies, further information can be found in the ARRIVE Guidelines.

Impacts: Describe up to 6 anticipated impacts (up to 100 words each). You must describe at least one impact. The Arthritis UK Research Impact framework focuses on seven areas of research impact (listed below). We anticipate that, in delivering against the call outcomes set out in the call document, research projects will achieve impact relevant to one or more of the four areas highlighted in bold. The final impact area 'leveraged funding' is of secondary interest for this call. We encourage applicants to detail their responses in relation to these highlighted areas, being as specific as possible about the extent of the intended change in the area and how it will occur.

- **Influence on policy and practice**
- **Developing IP, products and services**
- **New Knowledge**
- **Improved research based on patient and public involvement (PPI)**
- New Networks and Partnerships
- Capacity Building
- Leveraged funding

Examples of the types of outcomes we may anticipate progress towards from an award from this scheme include:

- **Influence on policy and practice**
    - Research included in policy discussions within government to improve clinical care pathways or improving the use of holistic care.
    - Research included in development of guidelines (e.g. NICE, BSR).

    - Policy changes which include use of products, devices or services developed by the research.
- **Developing IP, products and services**
    - The development of new devices which help detect markers or risks more accurately – enabling proactive screening and early detection or diagnosis.
    - Registration of IP which is subsequently used to develop to safer, more effective treatments for more people.
    - Improvements in tools to help decide the most appropriate treatment.
- **New Knowledge**
    - published research which is taken up by the wider research community to further progress the development of detection and treatment of arthritis.
    - New datasets which are widely used by the research community.
- **Improved research based on patient and public involvement (PPI)**
    - Improvements to the research questions or approach based on PPI involvement.
    - New understanding among research team as to how to successfully involve people with arthritis.
    - New understanding and skills among people with arthritis to contribute to research.
- New Networks and Partnerships
    - The establishment of new networks of researchers from other institutions or other disciplines which are focused on researching arthritis.
    - The building of partnerships with non-academics to increase the opportunities for progressing diagnoses and treatments for, and management of, arthritis. This includes policy, government, healthcare, industry, charity and community groups.
- Capacity Building
    - An increase in the human capacity for arthritis research through the development of researcher skills and expertise.
    - An increase in the technical capacity for arthritis research through the investment in or development of new technical capacity, or new uses for current technology.
- Leveraged funding
    - Successful additional funding based on the research of an award.

Statistical analysis plan: Detail the statistical analysis plan for the chosen design, highlighting statistical technique to be used, sub-group analysis if appropriate, proposed frequency of analysis and power assumptions. If possible, consult a research statistician at your institution to ensure this is thoroughly conducted. This section has a limit of 500 words.

Will the research include a secondary economic evaluation? Select yes or no. If it does include a secondary economic analysis provide details of the methodology for the economic evaluation. This should be arranged under the following headings: 1) how economic data will be collected; 2) economic evaluation methodology; 3) quality of life measurement. This section has a limit of 500 words.

Project plan: Outline the arrangements for the management of the research, paying attention to the study design principals outlined in the Call for Applications. This should include a project timeline including any individual workstreams, plus arrangement for the day-to-day management of the research including details of who will carry out specific duties such as co-

ordination, randomisation, recruitment, data handling and statistical analyses. This section has a maximum of 2000 words.

Please attach a Gantt chart to illustrate the work package and deliverables.

What facilities are available to support the application: Describe the facilities available to support delivery of the research. This section has a maximum of 300 words.

Discuss any potential risks to the award and highlight mitigation strategies: Discuss any potential risks to the success of the research and highlight mitigation strategies. Please consider all types of risk – commercial, technical, financial, and organisational. This section has a maximum of 300 words.

For clinically related studies: With the current clinical research challenges in the NHS, please indicate how any clinical capacity and capability required for the project, will be monitored, and maintained, continuing in an attached document if needed.

Collaborators at NHS sites are asked to support proposals only if there is a certainty that they can meet recruitment targets and timelines indicated. It will be taken that host institution signatories are wholly satisfied and supportive of the assurances provided upon submission of the application.

Research types – Research involving humans

Please only complete this section if applicable to your application.

Regulatory Approval

On 16 April 2018, Health Research Authority (HRA) Approval became HRA and Health and Care Research Wales (HCRW) Approval and now applies to all project-based research taking place in the NHS in England and Wales. HCRW approval applies where the NHS organisation has a duty of care to participants, either as patients/service users or NHS staff/volunteers. References to participants include people whose data or tissue is involved in a research project.

If your project is led from Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales and involves NHS/HSC sites then you will not apply to the HCRW. You should apply through the appropriate NHS/HSC permission process for that lead nation.

Will your research require HRA or equivalent approval? Check on the HRA website what approvals and decisions you will need. If answering no to this question, you will be asked to provide a justification for this i.e. prior approval in place.

Method of allocating participants to groups: Describe how participants will be allocated to groups. If this is by randomisation, give details of the randomisation technique**.** This section has a maximum of 300 words.

Inclusion/exclusion criteria (including justification for exclusion): Give a clear statement about the inclusion and exclusion criteria, including detailed justification for any exclusions. This section has a maximum of 300 words.

Planned recruitment rate (including feasibility analysis): describe how recruitment will be organised and over what time period. Include evidence that the planned recruitment rate is achievable and from where the potential pool of patients is to be taken. This section has a maximum of 300 words.

Sample size calculation: Please state the sample size for the study, providing a detailed description of how the sample size has been calculated, including details of which outcome measure this has been based and give the event rates, means and standard deviation, effect size, and power as appropriate. This section has a maximum of 250 words.

What measures are being taken to ensure inclusion of diverse groups in the recruitment? It is important to be as inclusive as is practical when designing and carrying out the research. Please describe the measures that will be taken to ensure as diverse a population as possible. This section has a maximum of 300 words.

Research types – Research involving animals

Please only complete this section if applicable to your application.

Arthritis UK is a signatory to the Concordat on Openness on Animal Research and supports the principle of the 3Rs. We are committed to the principles of reduction, replacement and refinement in animal studies.

Arthritis UK is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities and has signed up to their position on animal research (Position statement on the use of animals in research | Association of Medical Research Charities (amrc.org.uk). Before completing this section, please read the AMRC statement.

Regulatory Approval

Have the following necessary approvals been given by:

- **The Home Office (in relation to personal, project and establishment licences)?** Select yes, no, or not required. If all licences are not in place, please select **No**.
- **Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body?** Select yes, no, or not required. If all approvals are not in place, please select **No**.

What is the maximum severity of the procedures involved? Please select from mild, moderate, severe, non-recovery. Provide details of any procedures of moderate or substantial severity, as well as non-recovery. This section has a maximum of 300 words.

Does your proposal involve the use of animals or animal tissue outside the UK? Select yes or no.

If yes, **What steps have been taken to ensure standards are consistent with the UK?** This section has a maximum of 200 words.

Animal species to be used: Please select animal species to be used and provide the number of animals that will be used for each strain and species. Several lines can be added.

Does the proposed research involve a protected species? Select yes or no. If yes, please select which species: non-human primate, cats, dogs, equidae, other.

Does the proposed research involve genetically modified animals? Select yes or no.

Justify the use of animals, species, techniques and number of animals used: Please justify the use of animals, the species and techniques proposed and the number of animals to be used per experiment. Please include details of sample size calculations and statistical advice sought for the number of animals required to reach statistical significance.

Use the ARRIVE guidelines when designing and describing your experiments.

There should be sufficient information to allow for a robust review of any applications involving animals. Further guidance is available from the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/responsibility-use-animals-bioscience-research, including an online experimental design assistant to guide researchers through the design of animal experiments: http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/experimental-design-assistant-eda.

This section has a maximum of 500 words.

Replacement, reduction and refinement (3Rs) of animal experiments: Indicate how the proposed research will employ the 3Rs (replacement, refinement or reduction in the use of animals) and how it will do this.

- Replacement - methods which avoid or replace the use of animals.
- Reduction - methods which minimise the number of animals used per experiment.
- Refinement - methods which minimise animal suffering and improve welfare.

Further information on the 3Rs is available from the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs) https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs. These guidelines should be thoroughly consulted before developing the plan to ensure the 3Rs are employed to their fullest.

Detail which of the Rs the proposed research will advance and how this will be achieved: This section has a maximum of 200 words.

Bridging support

Justification for the need for bridging support: Provide justification for why the bridging support is required and a detailed plan for the next steps of your career. Include details of any funding schemes or academic positions you have applied for already or intend to apply to during this time. This section has a maximum of 500 words.

Scientific references

Detail all references (citing all authors) that are of interest for this application. Please include the full title and all authors.

Additional support

Is there any additional financial or in-kind support for this application? Select yes or no. Additional support, including in-kind costs such as salary and provision of intervention. You will be asked to upload a letter of support from each provider.

Select yes for each type of support included – you will be prompted for the name, amount and description as well as a letter of support. Where support is in kind, enter 0 in the financial field and provide details in the description field.

- Institutional support – from either the lead or collaborating institutes
- Support from another funder
- Clinical Research Network Support
- Treatment Costs and excess treatment costs
- Industrial support (including collaborations and donations) - please refer to our industrial support policy and provide contact details, details of the support/collaboration and any conflicts of interest
- Other type of support.

Intellectual property (IP)

Intellectual property (IP) means patents, copyright, trademarks, trade names, service marks, domain names copyrights, moral rights, rights in and to databases (including rights to prevent the extraction or reutilisation of information from a database), design rights, topography rights and all rights or forms of protection of a similar nature or having equivalent or the similar effect to any of them which may subsist anywhere in the world, whether or not any of them are registered and including applications for registration of any of them.

Is there or is there the potential for new IP associated with the proposal? Indicate whether the proposal is likely to produce new IP. Select yes or no.

- **If yes, provide information on the IP potential of your research:** This section is 500 words.
- **If yes, detail the IP management plan:** Detail how the new IP will be managed. Where appropriate explain how you will engage with your Technology Transfer/ Enterprise Office. This section is 500 words.

Is there existing IP associated with the proposal? Indicate whether there is existing IP associated with the proposal. Select yes or no.

- **If yes, please provide further information on the existing IP:** This section is a maximum of 500 words.

For further enquiries on any aspect of IP, please email the Awards Team at awards@arthritis-uk.org.

Lead applicant details

The lead applicant is the individual who will lead the work on the award and be responsible to Arthritis UK 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 lead applicant must open the application form on Grant Tracker and add the other key personnel who can then add information. Before creating a new application, please ensure that your CV is up to date in your Grant Tracker profile. Lead applicant and sponsors will need to do this. For further details see Grant Tracker user guidance.

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 Arthritis UK homepage.

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 you 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.

Publications: Provide a complete list of the candidate's research publications to date (full citations including title and all authors), organised by the types below. Do not include abstracts.

- **List all publications that are original peer reviewed papers**
- **List all publications that are reviews**
- **List all publications that are books or book chapters**
- **List all publications that are editorials, letters or case reports**

Other research outputs: Other than the publications and awards already listed in this application, please 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.

Sponsor(s)

The Sponsor:

- Must hold a tenured position at the host institution, or in the case of an NHS employee, an honorary academic appointment, with tenure beyond the duration of the proposed fellowship

- should give an undertaking that if an award is made, they will negotiate with the host institution to ensure that the fellow is granted status and prerogatives of other academic staff of similar seniority
- are also encouraged to view their support and mentorship of the fellow as part of the longer-term committee to assist the fellow to realise their future career aspirations in research
- does not need to be the head of department.

A sponsor is directly responsible for providing support for yourself and the project. They are likely to be involved in the project on a day-to-day basis and should hold an established post at the host institution. They are also responsible for guaranteeing facilities and resources for the tenure of an award. You do not need to include the head of your department as a sponsor (unless they have a significant involvement/role in day-to-day support of the fellowship). You can have multiple sponsors, and they can be based in different institutions however you should have a main sponsor situated at your host institution. You cannot cost sponsor's time into your fellowship.

You will be asked to provide the name of the sponsors(s) associated with the fellowship, if the sponsor is already on our Grant Tracker system, their contact details will appear, and an automatic message will be generated to allow you to notify them and provide a link to the application for them to confirm their role. If the sponsor does not have a Grant Tracker account, you will be asked to enter their contact details so that a registration request can be sent. Sponsors will have to register for a Grant Tracker account if they do not have one.

The sponsor(s) basic information, degrees and qualifications and employment record will be populated to their CV automatically based on the information stored in their Grant Tracker account. To amend these details, the sponsor will need to save and close the application form and visit the 'Manage My Details' section on the Grant Tracker Arthritis UK homepage following the same instructions highlighted in the lead applicant CV section.

Grants and publications must be added to the CV by each individual sponsor via the Relevant Grants and Publications section later in the form.

This section allows the sponsor(s) to choose which grants and publications to list as part of their CV. The sponsor(s) can each choose to list up to a maximum of ten grants and ten publications that are most relevant to the application. This section will appear different to each individual filling it in and only the individual's own publications and awards as listed in Grant Tracker will be visible to that user.

The sponsor(s) must individually complete this section before the form can be submitted.

Relevant grants and publications

Before adding relevant grants and publications to this application, the lead applicant and sponsors should ensure that their entire profile is up to date in their 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 (PDF) for full instructions on how to use the Research Outputs section.

Once the profiles are up to date, each participant can then add their own relevant grants and publications in the **Relevant grants and publications** section of the application form.

This section allows the participants to choose which grants and publications to list as part of their CV. The participants can each choose to list up to a maximum of ten grants and ten publications that are most relevant to the application. This section will appear different to each individual filling it in and only the individual’s own publications and awards as listed in Grant Tracker will be visible to that user.

The participants must individually complete this section before the form can be submitted.

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.

Candidate information

Candidate’s statement: Outline how you are suitable for this Fellowship, including how this fits with your future career plans and reflecting on your overarching goals. This section has a limit of 600 words.

Outline how much time the candidate will spend on the fellowship per week: Give the percentage of your time to be spent on the fellowship, and details of other commitments you will continue to carry out. Confirm whether you will be undertaking the fellowship full or part time. This section has a limit of 250 words.

Sponsor’s statement: Provide a sponsor’s statement including how they intend to address the following needs of the fellow:

- Induction, orientation, and administrative support

- Supervision (giving an indication of the frequency of meetings, setting of timelines, and provision of verbal and written feedback)
- Training opportunities (e.g., including both generic research, leadership skills, and transferable skills)
- Environment (e.g., group meetings, journal clubs, opportunities for ideas exchange)

This section has a limit of 400 words.

To be completed by clinical candidates only

SpR training number: Select yes or no.

Provide **Date of obtaining MRCP or equivalent.**

What clinical commitments will you continue to carry out during the tenure of your fellowship? This section has a limit of 1000 words.

What grade of honorary clinical contract would you expect to be put on? Select SP Registrar or Consultant.

Provide your **GMC reference number.**

Support from host institution

Head of department's statement: The statement from your Head of Department should demonstrate a strong commitment from the institution to the fellowship and to the future career of the applicant. For example:

- A financial contribution towards the fellow's salary costs, equipment, expenses or animal costs
- provision of an additional member of staff or PhD studentship
- a commitment that the fellow will move into a tenure track post either during or at the conclusion of the fellowship. Please provide details of the host institution's process for assessment and confirmation of appointment to a tenured track position.

For Foundation and Clinical research fellows, we expect one or more of the following types of support:

- Access to training and development programmes
- Encouragement and support of the fellow to apply for future funding

This section has a limit of 400 words.

Impact of COVID-19 and other breaks

Delay statement: This is an opportunity for you to inform reviewers and panel members of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, periods of parental or long-term sick leave, caring responsibilities, part-time work, secondments, volunteering, or time spent in clinical training or different sectors to your:

- Research
- Publications

- Funding
- Research time
- Institutional support.

In your statement please avoid:

1. naming any third-party individuals,
2. identifying the relationship with any third parties,
3. otherwise including anything which might identify the third party.

We encourage you to use phrases such as 'a close relative had COVID-19 and required significant support in order to recover' or ‘I had to carry out caring responsibilities in addition to my research and admin workload, which had an impact on the amount of time I could dedicate to my research’.

This section has a limit of 500 words.

Other roles in the application

For further details on how to enter other roles see: Grant Tracker User guidance (opens as PDF).

Collaborators

Collaborators are individuals who are named in the body of the application who supply research materials, specific expertise or access to patients, but will not be involved in the day-to-day execution of the research.

To enter a collaborator select add collaboration and enter the name of the collaborator, their institution and a detailed description of the collaboration.

You do not need to provide a letter of support in your application, but you may be asked to provide them at the point of award.

Award administrators

Award administrators can access and edit the application form; however, their details will not appear explicitly on the completed form.

Mentors

It is not obligatory for a fellowship applicant to include mentors in their application: however, we do encourage our fellows to have mentors as we believe they are very beneficial for career development. Information on your proposed mentors should be uploaded as an attachment to your application in the attachments section of the online form.

Finance and costs

Click here for full details on costing your Fellowship

Full economic costing

In line with other UK medical charities, Arthritis UK does not provide funds for administrative costs or overheads, and funds directly incurred costs only. Ineligible costs include directly allocated costs and indirect costs:

- Directly Allocated Costs – shared costs, based on estimates and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis, such as:
    - Estates
    - Other Directly Allocated: the costs of shared resources, such as staff and equipment.
- Indirect Costs – necessary for underpinning research but cannot be allocated to individual projects, and cover computing and information support, central services, general maintenance, and other infrastructure costs.

Eligible costs within a bridging fellowship application:

- The fellow's salary
- Any additional salaries/staff time (e.g. statistician/data manager/trial manager) should be costed as a consultancy under expenses and not as a salary. These costs will be considered by the panel
- Access charges for use of specialist equipment may be applied for within expenses
- Any requests for computers must be fully justified and integral to the success of the research proposal
- Costs to cover travel and accommodation (if required) to a collaborating institution can be requested
- Training courses for the professional development of the fellow can be applied for. These should be relevant to the aims of the fellowship and justified within the application
- Costs associated with patient and public involvement/engagement can be applied for. Please see NIHR Involvement Payment Guidance on how to cost these activities appropriately
- Reasonable costs associated with carrying out a pilot clinical or feasibility study can be applied for.

Ineligible costs within an application:

- Costs relating to staff recruitment and relocation costs
- Personal licence fees and home office licence
- Good clinical practice (GCP) training
- Funding to provide maintenance of equipment
- Office stationery costs unless required for the project and justified accordingly
- Indemnity insurance
- Apprenticeship levy
- Travel support and open access are not to be included within standard grant applications, these are additional awards that can be applied for by a Arthritis UK award holder.

Further details on eligible and ineligible costs for fellowships can be found on our fellowships webpages.

Attributing the costs of health and social care Research and Development (AcoRD):

Applications that propose research conducted with human participants within a health or social care setting should be formulated in line with Department of Health Guidance "Attributing the costs of health and social care Research & Development (AcoRD)". Arthritis UK will only fund Directly Incurred Research Costs and applicants should ensure that they have consulted their local NIHR CRN, where appropriate, to discuss NHS Support Costs and NHS Trust Management to discuss Treatment Costs before submission. Please see information below from the National Institute for Health Research regarding the online Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Template (SoECAT):

Please be aware that if your planned project includes the recruitment of participants, your application should be accompanied with the Funder Export from the online SoECAT, obtainable via the NIHR Central Portfolio Management System (CPMS).

To create a SoECAT, you will need to create an account in CPMS. After creating the account, you will need to login to CPMS to activate this account. If any assistance is required in creating the account, please refer to our user guide. Once your account has been created and is active, you can proceed.

Guidance for the completion of the SoECAT by the applicant is present in the online tool to assist at each page and stage of the application process and further details can be found on the Online SoECAT Guidance page.

There is also an Online SoECAT Guidance Module which includes video tutorials and linked resources (an NIHR Learn account is required to access and enrol onto the module) and a helpful Study Representative - Online SoECAT Top Tips infographic.

Please note that completion of the **SoECAT may not be necessary** when applying for funding to support: overarching programmes with no specific research study protocol; infrastructure; fellowships; anything where the grant is to be used for direct employment of a member of staff or purchase of an asset; and data or diagnostic reviews where recruitment data is not collected. Such applications should be submitted with supporting documentation to explain why a SoECAT was not submitted in this instance.

Staff members (salaries)

For the bridging fellowship application, the only staff member salary included should be that of the fellow. No other salaries will be accepted in this section.

Please provide the following information for your salary:

- Select the closest description for position from the dropdown list.
- Describe the role of the staff member. This section is a maximum of 100 words
- Indicate the % inflation applied to the costing, this must not exceed the maximum allowance set by Arthritis UK (currently 3.5% as at July 2025)
- Input the costs broken down by basic salary, employer contributions and London weighting if applicable

- Input the full time equivalent (FTE) as a percentage (1-100), the total will auto complete.

Further information on carrying out fellowships part-time is available on the fellowships pages on our website.

(i) Requested salary costs should be based on a recognised pay model or the host institution's local salary scale, including London weighting if appropriate. We must be advised of the pay model used and, where a local pay model is to be applied, a copy of the appropriate scale must be attached.

(ii) Annual increments must be included which should be based on the host institution's own salary scale, including London weighting if appropriate.

(iii) London Weighting allowance will be payable at the rate appropriate to each host institution.

(iv) Inflationary salary increases for funding in future years must be included in the costs requested. A compound allowance should be factored into the costing for this purpose. The percentage used to calculate the compound inflationary allowance must not exceed the maximum allowance set by Arthritis UK (currently 3.5% as at July 2025).

(v) If the Fellow is promoted to a higher pay scale/grade during the fellowship, it is the responsibility of the host institution to pay the difference. Arthritis UK is unable to supplement salary increases or alter the project's equipment and consumable expenses to increase the Fellow's salary other than the salary agreed in the original application.

If the host institution is contributing towards salary expenses, please indicate this on the form.

Please note that 24 month bridging fellowship awards can only be requested if the host institution is contributing a minimum of 50% of the applicant's salary costs.

Animals

Add an entry for each group of animals.

- Input species, strain and price per animal
- Input the number of animals to be purchased for each year, the total purchase cost will auto complete
- Input the weekly maintenance cost. Please contact the office if the costs vary between years
- Input the number of animals to be maintained and number of weeks required for each year, the total will auto complete.

Expenses

Please do not include all running costs as one entry/item. Running costs should be broken down into suitable categories, providing full justification so that sufficient information is provided for review.

Equipment

Add an entry for each item of equipment. Fully justified items of equipment of up to £30,000 can be requested, requests for items of equipment included in applications with a cost greater than £5,000 must be supported by an estimate.

- Input a description of the equipment, its use and total cost.

Signatories

Enter the details of the signatories required to sign off the application. The head of department and finance officer details should be completed. Before submitting your application to Arthritis UK, you must obtain the necessary signatories prior to the deadline. A workflow diagram can be found here (opens as a PDF).

Attachments

Only text can be added to the fields of the online application form. Where additional files (e.g. data figures) are required, they can be uploaded in this section.

The maximum size per attachment is 10 MB

The following documents should be included as attachments where relevant:

- Resubmission cover letter (maximum 1 page of A4)
- SoECAT Funder Export
- Letter from Mentor (maximum 1 page of A4)

You do not need to provide the following documents in your application, but you may be asked by the Arthritis UK office to provide them at the point of award:

- Letters of support from collaborators
- Ethical approval
- Animal licence(s)
- Salary scales
- Quotes for pieces of equipment over £5,000 in value

Disease category

In this section, we ask you to provide some research classification information on your application. This will be used by Arthritis UK to categorise the applications it receives and the work that it funds. Select up to 3 relevant disease classifications from the list.

UKCRC HRCS

We subscribe to the use of the UK Clinical Research Collaboration's Health Research Classification System; more information and guidance can be found at hrcsonline.net

- Please select up to 5 of the UKCRC Health category classifications that you feel best fits your proposal from the list
- Please select up to 5 of the UKCRC Research activities classifications that you feel best fits your proposal from the list.

Suggested reviewers

Here you may add names of potential reviewers (not connected with you or your proposal) or any reviewers that you do not wish to be approached. Please note, these will be treated confidentially.

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, and that your sponsors have confirmed and approved their role(s). 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 View/Print

Download a PDF version of your application and check that all the content appears as you expect.

4. DECLARATION

Please confirm that you have downloaded a PDF version of your application and checked that the sponsor(s) on the application have each completed the Relevant grants and publications section. Acknowledging that failure to do so may cause your application to be rejected.

5. Click Submit

Once you have submitted your application an automated email will be sent firstly to your finance officer, once they have approved the application a second email will be sent to your Head of Department.

Please note:

It is *only upon your Head of Department's approval* that the application is finally submitted to Arthritis UK. **This must be completed by 16:00**.

6. After submission

Receipt of your application will be acknowledged by email.

If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your application, please contact us on awards@arthritis-uk.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.