Research Consortia 2025
Application guidance

Contents

VERSUS ARTHRITIS

1 Introduction

Versus Arthritis seeks to support team science working 'across and together' to bring integrated thought and ambition toward unlocking a problem area at pace. Creating a community of shared expertise and knowledge to deliver a cohesive series of research to achieve the aims.

There are two areas in which we are first inviting Research Consortium proposals:

a) **Clinical epidemiology**: Versus Arthritis has long supported research into the clinical epidemiology of arthritis and musculoskeletal conditions. The strength of UK research in this area is well recognised and Versus Arthritis seeks to further support and enhance UK musculoskeletal clinical epidemiology research - putting the application of these methodologies to work with urgency on issues around arthritis.

b) **Inflammatory arthritis**: We are inviting Consortium-based research that contributes to people with inflammatory arthritis having access to more personalised and effective treatment at all stages of their condition in order to halt or reverse disease progression; this includes understanding the biological mechanisms of these diseases to spot the signs of arthritis and understand people's risk factors in these specific diseases.

Please use the descriptions above to select the correct application form.

Applications can request support of up to 60 months duration and up to £3 million. A proportion of the Consortium funding can be allocated to support the core facilitatory resources and assets required for the research delivery.

We plan to invest up to £3 million in a single award (one for each of the two research areas above).

This is a one-step application process, however an Expression of Interest should also be sent by email to awards@versusarthritis.org with a PDF document outlining: i) summary of the proposed Consortium in plain English (500 words); ii) a list of Consortium members (name, institution and role). This ideally should be sent by 16:00 Wednesday 10 July 2024. Should you need to add additional Consortium members after the EoI submission, please notify the office by email (as above).

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.

Applications can be from lead applicants and/or co-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.

3 How to apply

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 applications is 16:00 on the stated deadline in the call document. No application will be accepted after this deadline. We strongly recommend that applicants allow sufficient time for submission before the deadline in order 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@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, 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 application summary and involvement sections should be written in non-technical language, 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:

- 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 full application form

Please ensure you refer to each section of the guidance before completing the online form.

Help icon

Additional information and guidance is 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 May 2025. 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 Versus Arthritis. 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 Versus Arthritis potential patient benefit. This information may be used in public summaries of our funded researched and must be accessible by 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 basis 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

This section will be reviewed by Versus Arthritis Research Partners (people with lived experience) and scientific experts, so must be completed in non-technical language. Further guidance on writing for a lay audience is provided in the Note on language.

Involvement refers to an active partnership. This means that people with lived experience work alongside the research team and are actively involved in contributing to the different stages of the research process. Patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) can occur at any point in the research process, from identifying a research question to disseminating the results.

Meaningful involvement and engagement of people with arthritis 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.

Versus Arthritis endorse the INVOLVE National Standards and expect that these will be adhered to throughout your PPIE. For further information, please refer to the INVOLVE National Standards for Involvement and their INVOLVE top Tips.

To find out more on how to plan and carry out meaningful patient involvement please use the links below or contact researchinvolvement@versusarthritis.org

- Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) | Versus Arthritis
- Involving people with arthritis (versusarthritis.org)
- How to involve people in research | INVOLVE
- Plain English summaries | NIHR
- Ways that people can be involved in the research cycle | INVOLVE
- Resources: Learning for Involvement
- NIHR Race Equality Framework

How have people living with arthritis inputted into the design of the research? Explain how people with arthritis, especially from under-served groups, have inputted and informed this application. This could include identifying and prioritising the research question, input into the theory of change, helping to design the study protocol and patient information, inputting 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 have relevance for, 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 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.

Project details

Background and context: Provide a technical summary of background information and research in support of the application. Applicants should give the current context in which this Consortium will be established, in terms of global research in this area. This section has a maximum of 1500 words.

Aims (from Theory of Change): Applicants should include:

A) Challenge and impact: What is the challenge that your consortium intends to overcome and, linked to this, what tangible impact (benefit) will the Consortium bring for people with arthritis? (Approximately 50-100 words)

B) Root causes and outcomes: What are the main root causes of this challenge and what changes (outcomes) will your Consortium achieve linked to these? Please list each root cause with its corresponding outcome. (Approximately 300 words)

C) Activity: What are the main areas of activity which will be undertaken to tackle the root causes and deliver the outcomes? This should include research and non-research related activity. (Approximately 300 words)

D) Why is this essential for people with arthritis? How will your Consortium's efforts contribute to essential longer-term benefits for people with arthritis? (Approximately 100 words)

E) Assumptions: What assumptions is the logic of your theory of change based on? These are current uncertainties which could affect the ability to deliver change? (Approximately 100-150 words)

This section has a maximum of 900 words.

Attach a PDF of your Theory of Change: Maximum attachment size is 10 MB.

A theory of change is a logical plan for addressing how a complex problem can be overcome. It is often shown in simplified diagrammatic form, with a logical flow of challenges through to activity and then intended outcomes and impact. The logic of a theory of change is developed by seeking to understand the problem from multiple perspectives, by including a wide range of stakeholders in the development process. By building a good understanding of the problem and its underlying causes, a clear vision of the intended outcomes and impact can be built. The outcomes and impact should be a reflection of the root causes and problem, respectively. The activity required to move from the 'root causes' to 'outcomes' should broadly cover everything needed to make the change, and could include both direct action, and also influencing activity. Finally, being a model of the future, a theory of change is based on set of assumptions. These assumptions need to be clearly stated so they can

be tested throughout the project. A theory of change will need to adapt as the project progresses and assumptions are tested.

We will be holding a presentation in July 2024 to provide supportive information about developing and managing a theory of change delivery framework; there will also be additional opportunities for one-to-one 'surgery' time regarding the theory of change specifically, before the submission of your application. Please email researchliaison@versusarthritis.org for further details.

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. 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 (from Theory of Change): This section to include:

A) Activity plan: using your theory of change as a guide, outline the broad plan for your consortium, showing how your activity relates to tackling the root cause of this challenge and achieving your outcomes.

B) Describe your consortium structure and how it will help you achieve your outcomes, in terms of your skills, experience, and networks.

C) How will you monitor progress and measure your success? Outline the arrangements for monitoring progress of the consortium. This should include an indicative project timeline of the work packages and deliverables.

This section has a maximum of 2000 words.

Attach a Gantt chart to illustrate the indicative work packages and deliverables: Maximum attachment size is 10 MB, one page of A4.

Leadership and governance: Provide details on the leadership management team as well as any additional governance and advisory boards or groups. Noting that the consortium leadership must encompass a team science approach.

In this section you should: i) describe the leadership management structure, as well as the skills and attributes that are being provided by the different members of the leadership team; ii) include details of additional governance and advisory boards or groups; iii) refer to and include a visual plan of the leadership and associate governance structures uploaded as a PDF here.

This section has a maximum of 500 words.

Attach a PDF of your plan of the leadership and governance structures: PDF only. Maximum attachment size is 10 MB, one page of A4.

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: What assumptions have you made which may limit your ability to achieve impact? What mitigations have you put into

place? 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.

The NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN - previously CRN) portfolio adoption criteria includes a criterion on 'deliverability'. Co-applicants and collaborators at NHS sites are asked to support proposals only if there is surety 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, 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. HRA 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 HRA. 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 e.g. 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 calculations: 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 and power as appropriate. This section has a maximum of 150 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

Versus Arthritis is committed to the principles of reduction, replacement and refinement in animal studies.

Versus Arthritis 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 not all licences are in place, please select **No**.
- **Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body?** Select yes, no or not required. If not all approvals are 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 if the proposed research will lead to the advancement of 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

Detail which of the Rs the proposed research will advance and how this will be achieved: This section has a maximum of 200 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 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
- 'Research Delivery Network (previously 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 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@versusarthritis.org

Finance and costs

The total cost requested in the application must be no greater than £3,000,000.

Full economic costing

In line with other UK medical charities, Versus Arthritis 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:
    - Investigators: the time spent by tenured lead applicants (Chief Investigators) and co-applicants
    - 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.

Lead applicants and co-applicants can apply for their salaries if they don't hold a tenured position. Please note all applications must have a lead applicant or another co-applicant that holds a tenured position. Lead applicants and co-applicants that are employed on full time NHS contracts can apply for funding to release them from clinical commitments to conduct research activities.

Eligible costs within an application:

- The percentage of inflation used must be included in the application and be in line with the most recent pay award agreed by the Institution and no more than 2% (as at February 2023 and this will be periodically reviewed)
- London weighting applies to any applicant applying from an institution in London and will be payable at the rate appropriate to each host institution
- A maximum spine point 43 on the national scale is allowed for postdoctoral research staff, special justification is required for funding senior postdoctoral research staff above point 37
- Requests for external consultancy costs should be included in expenses

- Training and supervision of staff costs by non-tenured applicants within the project must be justified
- Costs for the purchase and maintenance of laboratory animals. Please email the Awards Team at awards@versusarthritis.org to check eligibility. Studies involving animals must provide adequate details on the number, species, strain and associated costs of animals
- 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
- 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.

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 Versus Arthritis grant holder.

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)". Versus Arthritis will only fund Directly Incurred Research Costs and applicants should ensure that they have consulted their local NIHR RDN, where appropriate, to discuss NHS Support Costs and NHS Trust Management to discuss Treatment Costs before submission. Please see information below from the NIHR 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).

In order 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.

Complete the relevant financial detail for your application.

Salaries: Add each position on the award.

- 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 Versus Arthritis (currently 2% as at February 2023)
- 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.

(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 be the same as the most recent pay award agreed by the institution for the grade on which the individual is to be employed.

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.

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 application form on Grant Tracker and add the other key personnel who can then add information.

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.

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.

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.

Other roles in the application

Co-applicants

Co-applicants are individuals who will have had intellectual input into the application and are expected to be involved in the project. All co-applicants are expected to make a substantive contribution to the delivery and management of the research described in the application.

Please add details of all co-applicants involved with the project. You will be able to select individuals who already have an account with us. Individuals who do not have an account with us will be asked to register and will be sent details via an automated email.

There are no restrictions on the number of additional co-applicants. Please note you will also be able to identify co-applicants who do not have grants or publications (for example early career researchers).

If you wish to add a co-applicant that is based outside the UK please contact Versus Arthritis' Awards office (awards@versusarthritis.org).

Recruiting centres do not necessarily have to be co-applicants they can alternatively be collaborators or listed as a recruiting centre only.

Lay Co-applicants

Where appropriate, people with lived experience should be named as lay co-applicants. You will need to provide their name and role in the application, but these individuals will not be asked to provide a CV or add grants or publications.

You will be able to provide further detail of the role of these co-applicants as appropriate in the "Involvement and Engagement" section of the application form. N.B. Should lay co-applicants have grants or publications they wish to be included, these individuals should be included as co-applicants as above, allowing these to be added.

Collaborators

Please list any collaborations that are not listed as co-applicants. 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 details of the collaboration into the box.

All collaborators associated with an application are required to provide a letter of support with the application.

Award administrators

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

Relevant grants and publications

Before adding relevant grants and publications to this application, the lead and co applicants should ensure that all their 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 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.

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 Versus Arthritis, you must obtain the necessary signatories prior to the deadline.

Attachments

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

The maximum size per attachment is 10MB.

The following documents should be included as attachments where relevant:

- Additional figures / data referenced in the project details section
- Gantt chart
- Visual plan of the leadership and associated governance structures
- Statement of how clinical capacity and capability to deliver the project will be monitored and maintained, if needed to supplement the answer given to 'Risks/ mitigation strategies'
- Letters of collaboration/support
- Ethical approval
- Animal licence(s)
- If the application is a resubmission, a cover letter should be attached detailing how the application has been altered in response to the feedback received from the original submission.

Disease category

In this section, we ask you to provide some research classification information on your application. This will be used by Versus Arthritis to categorise the applications it receives and the work that it funds. Please 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 co-applicants 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 you and the co-applicants 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 Versus Arthritis. **This must be completed by 16:00**.

6. **Receipt of your application will be acknowledged by email**

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.