King's Health Partners

Diabetes, Endocrinology and Obesity Clinical Academic Partnership

Seed Grant Scheme: Application for grant funding

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Version: 1.0

1. Purpose

King's Health Partners Diabetes, Endocrinology and Obesity (KHP DEO) Clinical Academic Partnership has secured funds to provide several Seed Grants to KHP researchers for the period March 2023 to March 2024

The purpose of this award is to build research capacity by supporting applicants to produce data that will lead to substantial externally funded research projects which showcase KHP's research expertise.

Projects should be translational, leading to benefits for people living with diabetes, obesity or other endocrinological diseases. Proposals that involve collaboration between clinical and basic science professionals are favoured.

This guidance has been produced to support applicants in developing an application for the KHP Seed Grant funding opportunity.

Queries about the application process can be forwarded to deo@kcl.ac.uk.

Applications close at 5pm on 31st January 2023, and the awards will be allocated in March 2023.

2. Amount available

Four grants are available with a maximum award of £15,000 per applicant, to be provided in a single instalment. Applications will require a breakdown of estimated costs which may include:

- Salary
- Equipment and facility fees
- Patient and public engagement

This scheme will **not** fund:

- Retrospective funding for completed projects
- Research activities not specified at the time of application
- Educational activities

Applicants need to ensure that they have the appropriate mechanism within either the NHS Trust or KCL to receive these funds, as payments cannot be made to individuals' private accounts.

3. Background

King's Health Partners brings together clinical, operational, and academic teams from across three leading NHS Foundation Trusts; Guy's and St Thomas', King's College Hospital and South London and Maudsley, and one of the world's top research-led universities, King's College London.

Collectively, we are the largest provider of diabetes and endocrinology services in Europe, and uniquely positioned to improve the lives of a culturally diverse population facing significant deprivation, multi-morbidity, and worsening health inequalities.

Our wide-ranging investigations in diabetes and obesity have led to publications in key areas, for example:

- **Insulin resistance and inflammation**: preclinical models and clinical studies to understand the role of effector and regulatory T cells in metabolic physiology and pathophysiology
- **Islet dysfunction studies**: the fundamental science of islets of Langerhans, from the molecular biology of beta cells to their effects on whole-body physiology

- **The role of the gut in obesity and diabetes**: using both pre-clinical and translational approaches encompassing methods ranging from organoid culture to single-cell transcriptomics to physiological studies
- **Researching links between type 2 diabetes and ethnicity**: why ethnicity becomes a key factor in developing type 2 diabetes, what impact socio-economic conditions may have on its acceleration, and how the disease can be prevented, treated, and managed
- **Prevention and management:** nutritional prevention and management of type 2 diabetes, prediction and management of complications with an emphasis on ethnically diverse populations.
- **Research on mitochondria**: understanding how mitochondria are involved in diabetes and its complications, developing methods to study mitochondrial dysfunction in complex diseases along with strategies for improving mitochondrial function
- **Novel interventions for diabetes and obesity**: including novel pharmacological approaches for the management of obesity and metabolic diseases
- **Type 1 diabetes**: clinic research related to hypoglycaemia and diabetes technology
- **Development of Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyles for Diabetes (Heal-D)**: a culturally tailored diabetes self-management education and support programme for Black-British adults
- **Collaborative studies with industry partners on novel endoscopic techniques for managing metabolic disease**; alongside programmes such as Heal-D and HarpDoc (an education programme focused on type 1 diabetes and severe hypoglycaemia)
- **Diabetes and microvascular complications**: evaluating novel technologies to detect very early microvascular disease in diabetes and pre-diabetes

The KHP DEO Research Joint Advisory Group is now providing dedicated (non-recurrent) seed funding to support new research that aligns with KHP's ambition to develop greater synergy across the partnership, strengthen links between basic scientists and clinicians, and mobilise our long-term plan for the expansion of research in diabetes, endocrinology, and obesity for the benefit of the local, national, and global populations.

4. Eligibility criteria

The KHP DEO Seed Fund is a pump-priming grant to support researchers initiating projects that will lead to future fellowship or grant applications. Early career professionals who are developing their research careers but have not yet established their own independent research programme are therefore encouraged to apply. Applicants are expected to be working in partnership with a senior collaborator.

- Research or research pilot proposals must be in the fields of diabetes, obesity and endocrinology and have a focus on translational research through collaboration across basic and clinical research.
- Applications are open to researchers who are employed by a King's Health Partners organisation:
    - Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
    - King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
    - King's College London
    - South London and Maudsley NHS Trust

5. Additional Criteria

Applications will need to be able to demonstrate:

- Scientific quality
- Scientific impact within the field of diabetes, obesity, or endocrinology
- Benefit to applicant, including how this will lead to future research
- Benefit to healthcare / translational research, including evidence of collaboration between basic and clinical research

6. Review process and timetable

Applications will be reviewed by an impartial panel of senior clinical and academic representatives from across the KHP partnerships organisations.

A preliminary screening of applications will take place using the eligibility criteria.

Applications will then be assessed against a scoring matrix (Appendix 1) and through review panel consensus, allocated a numerical score.

Where the number of shortlisted applications exceed the grants available, applications will be ranked and prioritised according to their numerical score.

Further shortlisting, if required, will be at the discretion of the panel, in line with the Seed Grant application criteria.

Key dates for applicants are as follows:

- Applications open: 22nd December 2023
- Application deadline: 31st January 2023 at 5pm
- Grant awarded: March 2023

7. Grant conditions

Grant recipients will be required to produce an interim report at six months to be reviewed by the KHP DEO Research Joint Advisory Group. An end of grant report will be required at 12 months.

During the award, we expect you to:

- build a collaborative network with other researchers in your field, including across KHP organisations and the south east London system
- conduct research responsibly and promote a positive and inclusive culture
- Share your learning from the research activities and collaboration across KHP.

Appendix 1 | Marking criteria

	Scientific quality	Scientific impact within DEO	Benefit to applicant	Benefit to healthcare/Translational Research
1	Unclear hypothesis, aims and objectives Poor experimental design Unrealistic or missing timetable	Project is of no scientific merit, is flawed, or is duplicative of existing research within the diabetes, endocrinology, and obesity (DEO) field,	Project is unlikely to advance the applications career	Project is unlikely to have an impact on healthcare or is not translational. It does not demonstrate a clinical and basic research link.
2	Unclear hypothesis, aims or objectives Unrealistic timetable or milestones	Project is of some merit, and may progress research in the field of DEO	Project may benefit the applicant's CV if successful, but unlikely to lead to further academic opportunities	Project may lead to translational findings that could positively impact healthcare. Some joint clinical and basic research covered.
3	A hypothesis, aims and objectives have been identified. Good experimental design Timetables and milestones have been specified Work may be led to a publication	Work has merit, and is likely to progress DEO research or lead to publication	The project will likely benefit the applicant's CV, and may lead to further academic opportunities	Project will likely lead to translational findings that will positively impact healthcare. Collaboration between clinical and basic research outlined.
4	Strong hypothesis, aims and objectives. Excellent experimental design Good timetable and milestones Likely to be published or lead to publishable work	Work is of a high standard, is worth of publication or will lead to leading edge progress in a DEO research area	The project will benefit the applicant's CV and will lead to further academic opportunities. It may provide the basis for a fellowship application or further grant funding	Project will have or lead to translational findings that will have a tangible impact on care delivery, diagnosis, prevention, or treatment of disease. Named collaborators from basic and clinical research.
5	Excellent hypothesis, aims and objectives. Excellent experimental design including timetable and milestones Worthy of publication	Work is of an excellent international standard, is publishable, and is or will lead to leading edge progression in the DEO research area	Work will clearly benefit the applicant's career and create further academic opportunities. It will provide the basis for a fellowship application, larger scale grant funding or further internationally competitive research	Project is at the leading edge of international research and is or will be hight translational. It leads or will lead to a significant impact on care delivery or diagnosis, prevention, or treatment of disease. Clear outline of collaboration across clinical and basic research, with named lead collaborators.

Appendix 2 | Scoring Matrix

Domain	Score
Scientific quality	/ 25
Scientific impact	/ 25
Benefit to applicant	/ 20
Benefit to healthcare / Translational research	/ 30
	/ 100