Animal Free Research UK

Guidance for **Pilot Study Grants**

Applicants 2022

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1. What we will and won't fund

1.1 Animal Free Research UK general criteria

In awarding grants, Animal Free Research UK will only fund research that is animal free.

Grants are not available simply in support of non-animal research per se. The research must be directed towards replacing the use of animals in current procedures within the Research Group, the University and/or, preferably, in the wider field.

Only research that is directly relevant to human health will be funded. Acceptable approaches may include, but are not limited to, the use of human volunteers, epidemiology, human cell lines, *ex vivo* or primary human tissues or cells, 3D organoids, organ-on-a-chip, microorganisms, plants, human sub-cellular components in vitro, biophysical and biochemical analytical techniques, or computer technology.

Full details of our policies can be found in the Animal Free Research UK Policies, [Terms and Conditions for Pilot Study Grants](#).

Animal Free Research UK will not:

a) support research that requires or involves the use of living animals, animal tissue, animal cells or cell lines, even though the ultimate aim may be to replace their use;
b) fund the purchase or maintenance of animals, animal tissue or animal cell lines for any reason;
c) fund the purchase of animal serum or any animal-based biomaterials where non-animal alternatives exist and can be used;
d) fund the use of human embryonic or foetal stem cells;

Researchers whose work is directly supported by Animal Free Research UK must not be involved in any way with such research.

Animal Free Research UK shall only consider funding research:

a) using human cells, if the Grant Holder has provided evidence of cell authentication or incorporates an authentication protocol to eliminate the possibility of misidentification or cross-contamination of cell lines and comply with Good Cell Culture Practice. Guidance on Good Cell Culture Practice can be downloaded from the [Animal Free Research UK Website](#).
b) using human foetal tissues, cells, cell lines or embryonic tissues, cells, cell lines, if these have been freely donated by the consenting individual or derived from freely donated consenting individuals and/or their nominated and ethical provider/source. The Grant Holder must provide details of the ethical and consent aspects of donation. Research using human embryonic or foetal stem cells will not be funded. Embryonic and foetal tissue and cell research remains a contentious issue, if the Grant Holder has any concerns or doubts about their use contact Animal Free Research UK;
c) using human placenta, amnion, and umbilical cord, if these have been freely donated by the consenting individual and/or their nominated and ethical provider/source following normal full-term births, miscarriage or stillbirth. The Grant Holder must provide details of the ethical and consent aspects of donation;
d) using specific animal derived biomaterials, with the exception of animal serum and polyclonal antibodies, where their use has been fully justified and where there is clear evidence that without their use, the Funded Activity cannot take place. There should also be clear instruction on how the Funded Activity will, during the course of the Funded Activity, aim to replace their use over time. For the

avoidance of doubt, Animal Free Research UK will not fund the purchase of any animal serum, or the development and production of de novo polyclonal antibodies.

1.2   Project criteria

The proposed project must be relevant to any biomedical research or clinical fields, and should aim to develop, test, or improve new approach methodologies to move towards animal free research. We also support animal free projects that focus on drug repurposing and/or contribute to patient care and life expectancy improvement. We will accept applications for both lab-based and computer-based research projects. For example, we encourage applications for bioinformatics, computational or systematic review projects.

We work with researchers to help them unlock major sources of funding and a Pilot Study Grant is a great opportunity to provide confidence producing preliminary proof-of-concept data to support an ambitious and high-risk project delivered by a modern, impactful, and animal free research team.

Pilot study grants are not available to 'top-up' existing research projects.

Research that requires or involves the use of animals (defined as any organism of the Kingdom Animalia, excluding humans) in any way, even though the ultimate aim may be to replace their use, will not be supported.

2. Who can apply?

Applications from any geographical area within the UK are eligible for consideration.

All applications from previous recipients of grants or from previously unsuccessful applicants will be considered on their own merits. Although Animal Free Research UK will have regard to the outcome of the previous grant, any new application will in no way receive preferential or adverse consideration.

Animal Free Research UK will willingly work in partnership with other organisations, such as universities, charities and industry to fund initiatives beyond the financial ability of a single organisation.

Animal Free Research UK reserves the right to make funding decisions based on independent scientific recommendations of its Scientific Advisory Panel and Board of Trustees. Individuals can be involved in more than one Animal Free Research UK grant at a time. The award of a grant does not guarantee any further commitment to funding by Animal Free Research UK.

The Grant Holder is responsible for the leadership, management and execution of the research project. The Grant Holder must be based in the UK at an eligible Research Organisation (RO). The grant holder is expected to hold a PhD in a relevant discipline, with demonstrated research experience and a good publication record.

3. Review process and notification of decision

All grant applications will be subject to initial internal assessment to ensure they meet the basic criteria for funding.

Pilot Study Grant applications will be subject to peer review and the scrutiny of the Scientific Advisory Panel (comprising of external advisers with extensive expertise relevant to Animal Free Research UK funding priorities). Grants will be awarded on the basis of an assessment of the application's academic quality, novelty, value for money, feasibility of the research plan, competence of the applicant/the research team and suitability of the research environment. Above all the application must meet our strategic goal of funding human relevant, animal free science.

Animal Free Research UK will aim to inform applicants of the outcome of their application for funding within six months of the grant call deadline.

4. Grant monitoring and publications

It is the policy of Animal Free Research UK to monitor all grants made. To this end, before a grant can be confirmed, conditions will be stipulated, appropriate to the work to be carried out, and progress will be assessed against agreed targets and/or milestones. Animal Free Research UK reserves the right to withdraw the grant on receipt of unsatisfactory progress reports. Failure to submit reports at the time specified may also jeopardise the continuation of Animal Free Research UK's support.

Visits by representatives of Animal Free Research UK may be expected during the period of a grant for purposes including monitoring of the grant progress, marketing, fundraising and promotional activities.

Following the conclusion of the project, the grant recipient will be expected to submit a final achievement report, normally within one month of the end of the grant, detailing fully the results and outputs from the project.

5. Publication of work and engaging the public

Animal Free Research UK is committed to engaging the public with the science we fund. This is of particular importance as the public fund our scientists and are actively interested in how our research is meeting our strategic aims. Our Grant Holders have a responsibility to consider where and how best to engage the public with their science. Applicants should indicate in their proposal how they intend to communicate their project and expected results to scientific and public audiences. All grant holders are required to acknowledge Animal Free Research UK's support in any published articles, papers or other outputs which may result from the work the grant has supported, and to provide copies of all such publications to Animal Free Research UK (both during and after the period of the grant).

6. The Application

All applications must be made through the Animal Free Research UK application portal. Links to the various applications can be found on the Animal Free Research UK website:
https://www.animalfreeresearchuk.org/funding/

During the online application process, applicants will be required to upload and submit additional documentation. A summary of the information required in each additional document is given below.

We would very much appreciate if you could comply requirements:

- o   File format: Office365 compatible - Word (doc, docx)
- o   Page size: A4
- o   Font: Arial/Calibri size 11/12pt
- o   Margins: Page margins must not be less than 2cm
- o   References: Can be provided with numbered in-text citations.

The proposal form provides a summary of the whole project and how the pilot study will provide important proof-of-concept for future grant opportunities.

Heading	Information required
Applicant(s) Details	• A short CV is required for the Primary and the Co-Applicants. • The CV should only include information relevant/appropriate to the proposed project. **Maximum of 2 sides of A4.**

Project Details
 	
A word template can be downloaded here or from application portal section (Project Proposal Pilot Study Grant 2022)
	• Rationale for research
	• Research questions proposed
	• Aim/Objectives
	• Relevance to the Animal Free Research UK Strategy
	  o Our strategic goal is to transform medical research and regulation so that there is a clear pathway to develop and deliver effective treatments for human diseases faster and without animals
	  o We fund transformational research with a focus on developing new approach methodologies to replace animals and on drug repurposing to treat diseases.
	• Methods to be developed or tested
	  o Enough information to enable an appraisal of the proposed methods, but not a detailed step-by-step breakdown.
	• Plan of research activities
	    o Include timeline/Gantt chart of planned activities and relevant milestones
	• Outputs (papers, planned large grant applications, workshops etc)
	  o What are you expecting the main outputs of the project to be?
	• References
	
	Maximum of 3 sides of A4 including images & references, not including the front page.

Budget	For Pilot studies, there is a maximum consumables budget of £10,000. • Please provide a complete budget including breakdown of expenses, for the duration of the project, along with justification for resources outlining the need for the requested consumables. **Maximum of 1 side of A4 or 1 excel spreadsheet.**

7. How to apply online – submission process

7.1 Blackbaud Grant making

IMPORTANT: **Late applications will not be accepted, regardless of the reason** (computer problems, power outages, internet connectivity issues etc.), so plan to fill in and "SUBMIT" the application well in advance of the deadline. If you are "in progress" at the deadline, you will be locked out of the application. This is the default behaviour of the system and is not a policy of Animal Free Research UK.

7.1.1 To Start a new Online Application

Either: Click on the link (from our website or Science e-newsletter) to access the new application screen. You will be redirected to the Application login page (Figure 1) if you are not already logged in, otherwise you will be taken straight to the application page. Links to all application forms and to the portal are available at: www.animalfreeresearchuk.org/funding/

OR: Log into (or create) your online account to access the application form. If you have previously applied using our Online system you can access your account using the following link:
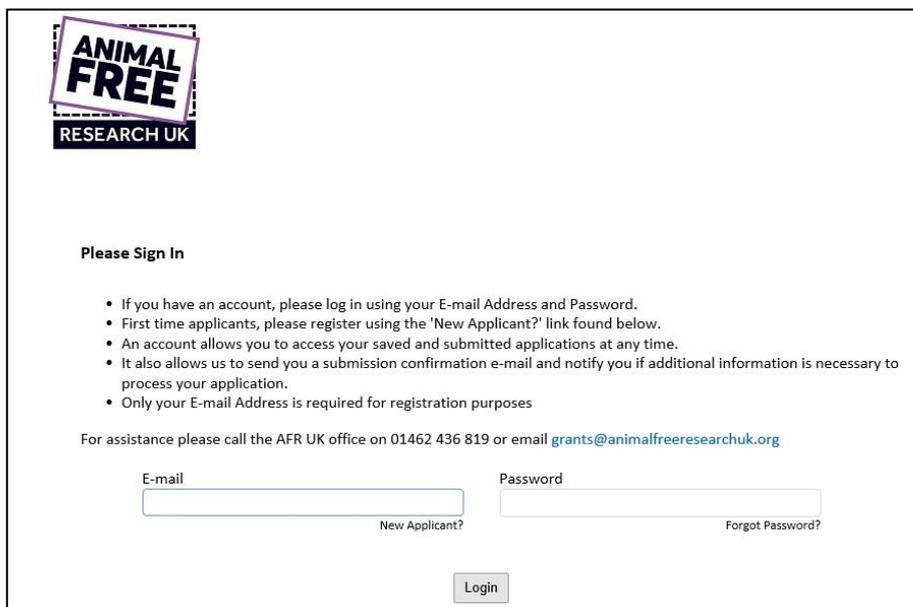
www.GrantRequest.co.uk/SID_63?SA=AM

Supported internet browsers:

  Windows or Mac: Firefox or Chrome
  Windows only: Internet Explorer 10, 11 or Edge for Windows
  Mac only: Safari for Mac

ANIMAL FREE RESEARCH UK

Please Sign In

- If you have an account, please log in using your E-mail Address and Password.
- First time applicants, please register using the 'New Applicant?' link found below.
- An account allows you to access your saved and submitted applications at any time.
- It also allows us to send you a submission confirmation e-mail and notify you if additional information is necessary to process your application.
- Only your E-mail Address is required for registration purposes

For assistance please call the AFR UK office on 01462 436 819 or email grants@animalfreeresearchuk.org

E-mail   Password

                     New Applicant?   Forgot Password?

Login

Figure 1 – Screenshot of the Applications landing page

7.1.2 Creating your Online Account

Each applicant should use one online account with a unique e-mail address, so all applications are saved individually in one account. This will allow easy access to your online application history. If you create multiple accounts using multiple e-mail addresses, it will complicate the access to your history/documents.

We strongly recommend you note the e-mail and password used to create your account and to use these to login to your account on the grant portal. Please check that mail@grantapplication.com is on your safe senders list to ensure you receive all system communications.

New Applicant?

An account allows you to access your saved and submitted applications at any time. It also allows us to send you a submission confirmation e-mail and notify you if additional information is necessary to process your application.

E-mail

Confirm E-mail

Password (must contain at least 5 characters, with both letters and numbers)

Confirm Password

Continue

Figure 2 – Registration screen for first time users of the Blackbaud Grantmaking system.

7.1.3   Accessing Your Online Account

Once you create an account, you will be able to access new or saved applications, and if successful, submit reports and other documentation.

Accessing your saved applications ("in progress/drafts" or "submitted"):

Log into your account at www.GrantRequest.co.uk/SID_63?SA=AM to access your saved drafts and your submitted requests; sign in and select "in progress" or "submitted" in the drop down menu to see those applications (Figure 3).

If you use the application form link, it will create a new application each time you use it. If you keep entering the system through the application form link, you will end up with multiple copies of "draft/in progress" applications.

- **Select "in progress"**, to continue working on draft applications which have not been submitted and are still in draft form
- **Select "submitted"**, to view the applications that you have submitted. You cannot edit submitted applications.
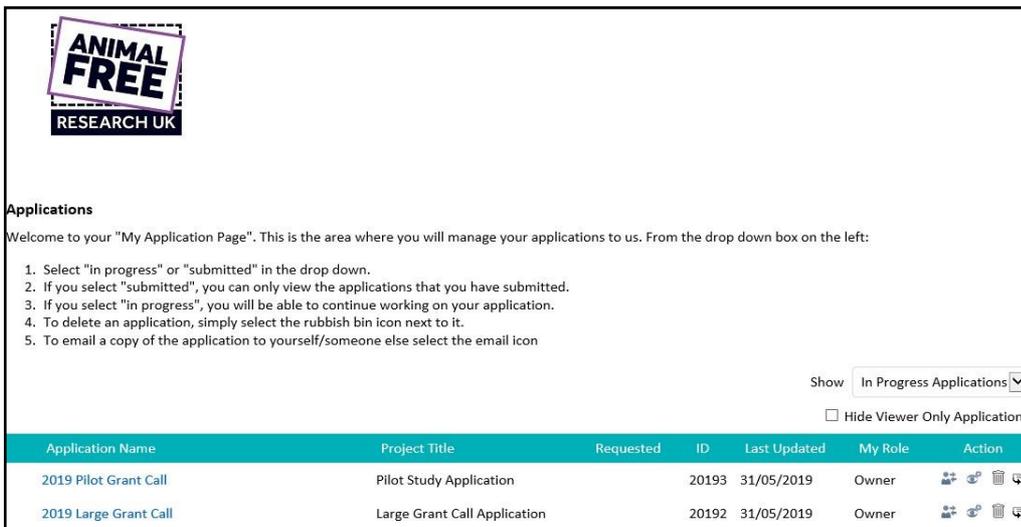- **To delete an application**, select the rubbish bin icon next to it.

Figure 3 - Your personal applications landing page. This is where all your saved applications will be listed.

7.2   Application Form: "How To" start a new application

Click on the "new application" link on the [Animal Free Research UK website](#) or Science e-newsletter email.

If you are trying to access an application already in progress (and NOT start a new one), see "Accessing Your Online Account" above and use the account URL not the "new application" link.

When working on the application: always click the "SAVE" button at the bottom of the page before closing or your work will not be saved. You do not have to complete the application in one sitting. To come back and work on the application later: Click "SAVE", and sign out. You can then and sign back into your account later to complete and submit it at a later time (directions below). Click "SAVE" regularly in case of computer or internet issues or power outage.

The application will not be submitted to Animal Free Research UK until you click the "SUBMIT" button.

Figure 4 – 2021 Pilot Study Grant application welcome screen.

When the application is in your account as an "in progress" draft, Animal Free Research UK cannot see or access the application.

7.3   Contact Information

The contact information relates to you, the applicant, not to a Grants/Programme Manager at your organisation. If these details (for a Grants/Programme Manager) need to be provided, then please use the "Request Contact" field ONLY, as this information will be added as a secondary contact.

The e-mail address listed on your application form as the "organisation e-mail" is used as your unique identifier, so each applicant must have a unique e-mail address. If you use the same e-mail address as the "organisation e-mail" for different applicants, the account/records may be merged by the system when importing, possibly deleting important information related to the specifics of an application.

When filling in an application, we strongly recommend you use your organisational contact info (e-mail, phone, mailing address) in the fields listed as "Organisation". Please, Do NOT use your personal (home) information in these fields.

7.4   Filling in the Form

You are able to work directly in the application window and save and return to it when necessary.

> **PLEASE NOTE: the application form does not 'auto-save' any data entered – you MUST press the save button at the bottom of each page of the form to save any data you have entered.**

- Fill in the application form, by entering your data directly in the fields.
- To navigate through the pages, use the buttons at the bottom or the tabs at the top of the page.
- Limit the use of bullets, extra lines as spaces and other formatting. For points in a list in a field form, use a dash then enter your text.
- "SAVE" the application as "in progress" using the buttons at the bottom to come back and work on it later.

To return to your application DO NOT use the new application form link on the website. Log into your account here: https://www.GrantRequest.co.uk/SID_63?SA=AM. If you use the new application form link, it WILL create a new application each time you use it.

- Remember to "SUBMIT" the application prior to the application deadline. If the application is open and you are working on it when the deadline cut-off occurs, the system will close and will not allow submission past the deadline.

7.4.1   To print a paper/offline copy of the questions

If you prefer to read through a print copy before entering your answers in the online form, or read through the questions then draft your answers in a word processing program to then copy and paste into the online form fields, you can 'export' a copy of the questions by following the instructions below:

Open the application and select "**Printer Friendly Version**" (Figure 5). Note: the check box answers will not print off unless you select each of the boxes.

You can then read the form, draft your answers in a word processing program, then copy and paste each answer into the appropriate field in the online application form.

If copying and pasting from a word processing program, limit your use of bullets, and other formatting. Use a dash (-) instead of bullets (•).

Figure 5 – Click 'Printer Friendly Version' to get an overview of the complete application. You can copy+paste the questions and any inputted text into a word processing document if you prefer to complete the application offline.

7.4.2   To e-mail a copy of the draft application

To e-mail a copy of a completed (but not submitted) application or a draft version of an application to yourself or to someone else for review or discussion, select "e-mail draft" (Figure 5). Note: the check box answers will only print the ones that have been selected. If no choice/option has been made these will appear blank on any email/printed version of the application form.

7.4.3   Attachments

Attachments are allowed (where requested in the application) up to a **MAX of 20 MB per application** (not per file uploaded). If you have very large images or additional documents that need to be submitted with your application, it is better to provide a link to an online storage solution (Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive etc.) from where we can download the files.

If you have multiple documents (such as letters of support) it is best to either scan or copy and paste them together to combine them into one document to upload.

When attaching electronic files, use PC compatible file formats (.doc; .docx; .xls; .xlsx etc.). We will not be able to open/process MAC-only compatible files/formats.

7.5   How to Submit the Completed Application

NOTE: Late applications will not be accepted, <u>regardless of the reason</u> (computer problems, power outages, internet connectivity issues etc.), so plan to fill in and "SUBMIT" the application well in advance of the deadline.

When your application is complete: you must click the "SUBMIT" button on the final screen of the application form and submit the application before the deadline.

Once you "SUBMIT" successfully you will receive a confirmation e-mail (sent to the registered e-mail) with a copy of your application.

If you do not see the e-mail in your inbox, which should arrive within a few minutes of submission, check your "junk" or "spam" folders. Add mail@grantapplication.com to your safe senders list in your e-mail program to ensure you receive all system communications.

If you still do not see the confirmation e-mail, log out and log back in to your Blackbaud Grantmaking online account – if the draft is still "in progress" then re-submit.

7.6   Browser Compatibility for the Online Application Portal

Internet Explorer 10, 11 for Windows
Edge for Windows
Mozilla Firefox for Windows or Mac
Chrome for Windows or Mac
Safari for Mac

Issues Common to All Browsers

- Viewing is best using a resolution of 1680 x 1050 or larger. Lower resolutions may require use of full screen mode (F11) to access some buttons or fields.
- Custom modifications to the default browser settings may cause compatibility issues.
- Zoom levels (more than 100%) may cause loss of scroll bars.
- If your browser blocks cookies (especially third party ones), you may experience problems logging in.

Known Browser Issues

Internet Explorer

If using IE and your computer is blocking the site, or not allowing pop-ups, please use the following steps: Setup/Verify Pop-up and Security Settings

- Go to Tools > Pop-up Blocker > Pop-up Blocker Settings.
- Add the Online Applications site to the list of Allowed Sites in your Pop-up Blocker: https://www.grantrequest.com
- Click Close.
- Go to Tools > Internet Options > Security tab.
- Click Trusted Sites and then click the Sites button.
- Add the Online Applications site: https://www.grantrequest.com

Firefox

Scrolling may not be available In Firefox for Windows: When using Firefox, you may encounter scrolling issues depending on which version of Firefox you are using. Screens may not display horizontal and vertical scroll bars. If scroll bars are present, the scroll wheel on your mouse may not work.

The workaround: As an alternative, use the arrow keys to navigate the website. If scroll bars are displayed, you can click and drag the scroll bar to move through the page. If the issue persists, it is recommended to use IE/Chrome.

8. Contact

For further information/enquiries/queries, contact Animal Free Research UK.

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Animal Free Research UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (No. 1146896) and Scotland (No. SC045327) and a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (No. 08015625).