

# MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL CONFIDENCE IN CONCEPT - NEWCASTLE AWARD APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2021

PLEASE READ THE WHOLE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT CAREFULLY BEFORE APPLYING

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Confidence in Concept (CiC) awards are intended to accelerate the transition from discovery research to translational development projects. The scheme also encourages the use of the award to develop academic-industry interactions.

Newcastle University's 2021 awards will consist of funding from both the MRC CiC and the Wellcome Trust Translational Partnership but is smaller in value than previous years/ and is £304,460. This funding will support investigators to undertake further scientific and technical development of an idea that is close to translation, to establish the scientific and/or commercial potential of a concept.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY, SCOPE AND FUNDING LIMITS

**Eligibility:** Applications are accepted from Newcastle University researchers and academics (including NHS staff with honorary University contracts), basic scientists, and clinician scientists.

**Scope:** Applications relevant to any area of translational research will be considered. Priority will be given to projects that have the greatest potential for near-term impact and the ability to attract additional investment (i.e. from larger translational funding schemes, such as MRC DPFS or NIHR EME and/or through the development of translational industry collaborations. It is desirable that projects also include plans to create/develop new interactions aimed at forming partnerships for future translational funding opportunities.

Downstream translation is at the core of the call and basic scientists are strongly encouraged to seek collaboration with translational researchers.

The award **will not** fund:

- Entire translational projects
- Admin costs
- Industrial partner costs
- Staff between posts/funding (i.e bridging) or PhD studentships
- Continuation of normal research grants
- Costs related to the protection of IP
- Staff exchange into a Newcastle University spin-out company

Whilst the scheme encourages collaboration with industry, applications should not seek to undertake research prescribed by/on behalf of the company.

**Duration:** Projects should be no more than 12 months in duration and must start no later than **finish by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023** (extensions beyond this date will **not** be permitted).

**Value:** £25-100k.

## 3. APPLICATION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

There is a two-stage application process:

### 1. **Expression of interest (Eoi)**

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Three panel members (clinician scientist/non-clinician scientist/industry representative) and a representative from the University's Global Challenges Academy review all EoIs and select projects for full application.

EoIs should be submitted on the outline application form to [cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk) by **24/09/2021**.

Details of the following must be included:

- the **estimated** value of a full application and the funding band (£25k-£49k/£50k-£75k/ £75k-£100k).
- the project proposal, innovation potential, and significance.
- the anticipated downstream translational outcomes and target funding stream and timeline (explaining how the proposed project will enable this and how the project will inform future study design).
- any proposed academic-industry engagement activity and its benefits.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of EoIs by **15/10/2021**.

Successful applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

### 2. Full application

Each application is reviewed by three panel members (clinician scientist/non-clinician scientist/industry representative) and a representative from the University's Global Challenges Academy before being discussed by the full panel, which includes non-University staff and has experts in methodology, clinical governance, clinical trial design and delivery and statistics. Panel members will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the contents of CiC applications are considered in confidence.

Applicants who are invited to submit a full application will receive a form with some information pre-populated from the EoI, which can be updated accordingly. Applicants should ensure that titles and summaries of proposed projects are worded in such a way as to protect any commercially confidential or sensitive areas. Details of the following must be included:

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	<b>Content</b>	<b>Additional information/support</b>
<b>Translational opportunity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The nature, potential benefits, and competitive advantage.</li> <li>Translational pathway and outcomes, target funding stream, target strategy, and how the project will inform future study design.</li> </ul>	
<b>Project milestones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include go/no-go decisions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Academic-industry engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed engagement activity (this can include, for example, short-term people exchanges aligned to the delivery of the project’s objectives or showcases/workshops to develop relationships with potential industry partners to submit joint funding applications/carry out collaborative translational research).</li> <li>Existing/potential industry/international involvement.</li> <li>Nature of collaboration with project partner(s) (if applicable) and their contribution to the project. <i>N.B. Collaborative research activities must be carried out in an appropriate contractual framework. Project partners should not expect to acquire IP rights as a condition of their contribution to the project.</i></li> </ul>	BDM <i>JRO - template agreement</i>
<b>Ethical review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethical review requirements and status.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">University Ethics</a> JRO (for projects involving NHS patients/facilities)
<b>Intellectual property and commercial potential</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results of patent search.</li> <li>The BDM must complete a separate section outlining any relevant existing IP and the commercial potential of the initiative.</li> </ul> <p><i>N.B. Any new IP arising from the funding will be subject to current research grant conditions, that is, ownership and responsibility for exploitation of any IP rests with the host institution.</i></p>	BDM
<b>Costing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Upon invitation to submit a full application, applicants must complete the standard university <b>Project Initiation Form</b> <a href="https://www.cognitofoms.com/NewcastleUniversity1/NewcastleUniversityNuTHProjectInitiationFormV2">https://www.cognitofoms.com/NewcastleUniversity1/NewcastleUniversityNuTHProjectInitiationFormV2</a>. This will determine the level of costing required for the project proposal. A full costing will be completed for projects that are recommended for funding.</li> <li>An <b>estimated</b> cost breakdown should be provided for directly incurred costs (PI time is not funded), all of which must be explained and justified. Budget lines without a reasonable justification will not be approved and successful applicants may be asked to adjust the budget after the full application panel meeting. Other costs can be outlined, plus any financial contribution from the applicant’s Institute and/or collaborative partner(s).</li> </ul>	Research Officer JRO (for NHS costs)

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The application form must be completed in 5 pages (plus up to 2 pages of preliminary data and a 1-page CV of the PI) and be emailed to [cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk) by **26/11/2021**. Outcomes will be notified by **31/12/2021**.

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### 4. POST-AWARD MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW

Following confirmation of a project's funding award, a project set-up meeting will be arranged to review the details of the experiments to be conducted, the stated outcomes, and the milestone go/no go decisions for successful progression through the project. The meeting will be attended by the investigative team, at least one panel member, the CiC programme manager, the BDM, and others as deemed necessary.

All required approvals must be in place before funded projects can start.

A schedule of meetings to monitor the progress of the award, and to ensure opportunities to secure funding for the next stage of development, will also be agreed at the set-up meeting. These meetings will be attended by the PI and project team, the CiC programme manager, the business and translational development managers, and others as required.

Project funding may be withheld, or projects terminated, if:

- awardees do not engage in this process
- milestones are not met.

### 5. EVALUATION/REPORTING

All awardees must provide information at specific points during the project and for several years after its completion (as required by MRC who fund the CiC award). Reporting requirements include:

- A short progress report for discussion at the progress meeting(s).
- A project completion report.
- Annual updates on outputs, follow-on funding applications (submitted/awarded), publications, patents (applications/published), impact activities, industrial collaborations, and spin-out companies that are directly related to the project. *N.B This information is required by MRC to be included in the CiC award's annual Researchfish submission as well as for the annual funding renewal application).*
- Written case studies (as requested internally and/or by the MRC).

If awardees do not contribute to the reporting requirements, they will not be eligible to apply for CiC funding in future award years.

### 6. ENQUIRIES

If you have any questions about the scheme, please direct these in the first instance to the CiC programme manager: [cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:cic.pm@newcastle.ac.uk).

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**7. FLOWCHART**

