Therapy Accelerator Competition - Information for Applicants

Please download and complete the application form on this page as a PDF and email your completed application to hsp@herts.ac.uk by 31st July 2017. For any queries, please contact hsp@herts.ac.uk (tel: 01707 286406). Applicants are advised to consult the full terms and conditions of the award before submitting an application.

Please note that sharing information and knowledge about Therapy Accelerator research funding is central to the Hertfordshire Science Partnership’s required outcomes. The following details on successful Therapy Accelerator applications will be made available through publicity routes:

- Project Title
- Lay summary
- Grant holders
- Successful institution
- Value and duration of award
- Value of funding or in-kind matches (where applicable)

Scope of Competition
Therapy Accelerator is an open competition that aims to support basic research and development in therapeutic and diagnostic sciences in Hertfordshire. The scheme will provide support for high quality proposals aiming to research new therapeutic concepts that have an identifiable development plan to commercial exploitation (e.g. novel drug target characterisation, bioanalytical technologies, drug delivery approaches, or generic disease characterisation tools). The competition is directed towards the following applicants and objectives:

1. Start-up companies to undertake a programme of fundamental research aimed at strengthening a future technology pipeline not to undertake further translational research on existing technologies.
2. Academic research institutions to undertake a programme investigating a promising, novel research avenue with clear routes to translation, but for which fundamental research must be undertaken at high risk of failure to secure intellectual property or routes to commercialisation of the research outcomes.

Applications will be accepted from academic research groups or start-up companies who wish to secure the use of University of Hertfordshire researcher(s), research facilities and resources to undertake a defined research project in Hertfordshire. Specifically, Therapy Accelerator will consider funding projects involving collaboration between a University of Hertfordshire co-investigator in the following research areas:

- Medicinal Chemistry and Drug Discovery
- Pharmacology
- Cell Therapies and cell therapy manufacturing
- Tissue engineering technologies
- Formulation and Product Development
- Bioanalytical technologies

Proposals for funding must demonstrate an identified pathway for translation and/or commercial exploitation of the findings of the research. Additionally, the added value that a successful award would contribute to the development of the research area must be demonstrated.
Application Assessment Criteria

The Therapy Accelerator Panel will consider applications against the criteria below. Panel decisions include: Fund, Reject, Positive Feedback and proposal for part-funding. Please note that the decision of the Panel will not be open to appeal, and by submitting an application, the applicant institution waives any right to appeal.

The assessment will be based on three key criteria:

**Importance:** How important are the questions, or gaps in knowledge, that are being addressed, and is the potential for exploitation realistic and achievable?

**Scientific potential:** What are the prospects for good scientific progress, particularly in terms of the development plan?

**Resources requested:** Are the funds requested essential for the work, does the likelihood of success justify the commitment of these resources, and will the funds demonstrate an incentive effect to increase the success of the research programme?

The Application Assessment Criteria that will be considered are:

**Demonstration of the research need and the requirement for Accelerator funding**
- The significance of the therapeutic need the proposal is seeking to address
- Would meeting this need significantly reduce disease burden and/or provide a valuable commercial opportunity and/or alleviate an important development bottleneck such as inability to study a disease mechanism?
- If the need is not significant now, will it become so in the future?
- Is the need met or unmet. If unmet, will the research programme open up an avenue to develop a solution through exploitation?
- The competitive advantage of the proposal should the research outcomes be successful: Has the applicant identified the key competing solutions and their status or are you aware of other similar or complementary research underway elsewhere?
- How likely is it that the proposed solution, if achieved, would be widely adopted?
- Convince the Panel that in the absence of the requested funding and collaboration the planned research could not be undertaken, or that it could not be undertaken to the quality level or timescale proposed

**Demonstration of the quality of the proposed rationale and approach**
- Is there a good medical/scientific rationale for the project?
- Is there a reasonable body of evidence to support the proposed rationale?

**Demonstrate the feasibility and deliverability of the research programme**

**Research Objectives**
- Do the objectives clearly provide a way for the proposed research to make a significant contribution to meeting the identified need?
- If successful, will it achieve an endpoint that has a reasonable chance of exploitation either commercially, through attracting additional investment into Hertfordshire or through protection of intellectual property?
- Do the applicants demonstrate a realistic assessment of the downstream development hurdles and how they could be surmounted?
- Demonstrate good management of potential conflicts of interest and that the management of IP or exploitation of outcomes is appropriate

**Research Programme Management**
- Does the plan propose reasonable go/no-go milestones to judge progression?
- Is the project appropriately statistically powered?
- Are the preliminary budgets and schedule to reach the milestones appropriate?
- What is the likelihood of the project meeting its milestones?
Assets

- What is the quality of the applicant team’s track record to deliver the research programme described in the proposal?
- Are the resources identified as being required to deliver the project appropriate?
- Do the applicants have the necessary project management experience?
- Has the team identified and secured reasonable access to other necessary resources/skills e.g. clinical collaborators, clinical research facilities?

Routes to exploitation of the research findings

Intellectual Property

Does the proposal have an appropriate intellectual property strategy?

Background:

- Does the team demonstrate awareness of existing background, competitive solutions and the potential these have to exploitation of outcomes from the proposed research programme?
- Does the team require access to necessary background intellectual property, and if so is there a persuasive argument for how access can be obtained to undertake the fundamental research programme?

Exploitation of research:

The generation of intellectual property is not an essential requirement for a successful award. Projects that will not generate patentable outcomes but that will nevertheless be capable of providing health benefits, or commercial success through an appropriate, viable pathway are accepted on an equal basis.

- How credible is the route to market for exploitation of the research outcomes?
- Has the applicant considered the routes for funding such exploitation routes?
- How could/must the technology readiness level of the anticipated research outcomes be developed in order to make commercialisation viable?
- If the applicant proposes a non-protected exploitation route (e.g. non-dilutive applied technology development or private funding streams) has the applicant demonstrated the research outcomes that will be required from a successful award to fulfil the criteria for such follow-on funding sources?

Exploitation through protection of foreground:

A clear management plan for shared IP will be required in a collaboration agreement before commencing a project. Criteria:

- Is the intellectual property generated in the course of the project likely to be protectable (i.e. will it be novel, non-obvious and useable)?
- Will the proposed management and exploitation strategy maximize the likelihood that the project will be able to access any required downstream funding to enable the project to meet its identified need?

The project management group will be asked to submit, as part of their Project Milestone and End Reports, details of the intellectual property generated during the course of the project and of the management and exploitation of this intellectual property. The Principal Investigator will be required to submit an annual follow up report on downstream outcomes of intellectual property for up to three years after the project end date.

Will successful funding achieve an additive/incentive to deliver the research?

- Does the plan offer good value for money in terms of the likelihood of successful exploitation of the research outcomes in Hertfordshire?
- Does the proposal demonstrate the additive nature of Therapy Accelerator funding, and value for money: Would award of funding leverage additional investment in the research programme from other co-investigators, funding bodies, the applicant institution itself (note commitment must be secured through a collaboration agreement before the project begins.

In calculating the additive value/value for money, any matched funding contribution to the project by the applicant, or any other co-investigators will be considered as follows:

- The salaries of the personnel working directly on the project;
• Materials consumed in the course of the project;
• Capital equipment purchased or constructed for the project, less its estimated value to the at the end of the project;
• Sub-contract charges and consultancy fees and cost of equivalent services used exclusively for the research activity, bought from outside sources project management costs such as travel, office space etc. that are addition to those normally involved;
• Cash contribution towards the project budget to cover staff and/or non-staff costs (if applicable)

**Collaboration Agreement** - A copy of our standard Collaboration Agreement is available on request from hsp@herts.ac.uk

Any award offer will be conditional upon the University of Hertfordshire completing a fully signed collaboration agreement between the partners within three months of the issue of an award letter and in advance of a project starting. Any changes to the collaboration agreement, including changes of partners, will require prior approval. The University of Hertfordshire will need to be satisfied that the original aims of the project can still be met and that the project continues to meet EU State-Aid rules.
## Scoring Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score indicator</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstration of the research need</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Crucial scientific question or knowledge gap or area of strategic importance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent potential for high health and/or socioeconomic impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of the scientific programme</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Original and innovative; novel methodology and design</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent potential for novel findings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverability of the research programme</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent leadership (track record, team, facilities, and collaborators)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent staging of research programme capable of meeting milestones required to deliver novel findings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriate staff time allocated to deliver project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploitation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear demonstration of freedom-to-operate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Credible exploitation plan, with potential partners involved in the research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Realistic opportunity for protection of intellectual property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value for money and incentive effect</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for high return on investment (resources requested, likelihood of project delivery, anticipated knowledge generation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstration of extra funding being leveraged by the award, and/or matched funding contribution to the project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstration of the research need</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worthwhile scientific question or knowledge gap or a valuable scientific resource</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for significant health and/or socioeconomic impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of the scientific programme</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Methodology and design are sound for the study described</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for novel findings demonstrated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverability of the research programme</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent leadership (track record, team, facilities, and collaborators)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriate staging of research programme capable of meeting milestones required to deliver novel findings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriate staff time allocated to deliver project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Exploitation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear demonstration of freedom-to-operate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Credible exploitation plan, with potential partners involved in the research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity for protection of intellectual property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value for money and incentive effect</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for significant return on investment (resources requested, likelihood of project delivery, anticipated knowledge generation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstration of extra funding being leveraged by the award, and/or matched funding contribution to the project.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demonstration of the research need</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worthwhile scientific question or knowledge gap or a valuable scientific resource</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for significant health and/or socioeconomic impact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality of the scientific programme</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Methodology and design are sound for the study described</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for novel findings demonstrated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deliverability of the research programme</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong leadership (track record, team, facilities, and collaborators)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research programme capable of meeting successful of milestones although novel findings not clearly targeted, posing some risk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate staff time allocated to deliver project (potential for project to require more resources than described in proposal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exploitation**

- Clear demonstration of freedom-to-operate
- Credible exploitation plan, but pathway not fully de-lineated yet.
- Opportunity for protection of intellectual property unlikely

**Value for money and incentive effect**

- Potential for significant return on investment (resources requested, likelihood of project delivery, anticipated knowledge generation)
- Low level of extra funding being leveraged by the award, and/or matched funding contribution to the project.

**Demonstration of the research need**

- Worthwhile scientific question and some potentially useful outcomes

**Quality of the scientific programme**

- Methodologically sound, but would require revision to deliver the research plan

**Deliverability of the research programme**

- Appropriate leadership (track record, scope to strengthen the team, facilities, and collaborators)
- Successful delivery of the programme likely, but risk of missing major milestones.
- Resources (e.g. staff time allocated to deliver project) broadly appropriate to deliver the proposal, but would require some revision.

**Exploitation**

- Has broadly considered freedom-to-operate
- Exploitation plan does not link research outcomes to a credible route of exploitation, although panel identifies potential independently.
- Opportunity for protection of intellectual property unlikely

**Value for money and incentive effect**

- Potential for more limited return on investment (resources requested, likelihood of project delivery, anticipated knowledge generation)
- Low level of extra funding being leveraged by the award, and/or matched funding contribution to the project.

**Demonstration of the research need**

- Scientific research question is poorly defined

**Quality of the scientific programme**

- Methodologically weak study

**Deliverability of the research programme**

- Poor leadership (track record, team, facilities, and collaborators)
- Limited likelihood of new knowledge generation
- Resources (e.g. staff time allocated to deliver project) unlikely to deliver the proposal

**Exploitation**

- Questionable freedom-to-operate as a barrier to future exploitation.
- No credible route of exploitation identified for the research outcomes.
- No opportunity for protection of intellectual property

**Value for money and incentive effect**

- Potentially poor return on investment (resources requested, likelihood of project delivery, anticipated knowledge generation)
- Neither extra funding leveraged by the award, nor matched funding contributed to the project.
Completing your application

Section 1: Application Details

1.1 Title:
Please provide a concise title for your proposal. This title will be published if your application is successful.

1.2 Technical Summary and Lay Summary:

1.3 Project Duration:
Please enter the proposed project start date and the proposed duration of award. These should fit the funding period which must be complete by 31 Dec 2019, and be commensurate with the requested resources.

Section 2: Investigator Details

Principal Investigator
Co-Investigators
Industrial Project Partners
Individuals from collaborating partner Industrial Organisations who would be contributing financially or intellectually to the project (i.e. not from organisations providing services on a contracted or outsourced basis).
Non-Industrial Project Partners (Collaborators)
Individuals from collaborating non-industrial organisations who would be contributing financially or intellectually to the project, e.g. investigators from partner Universities providing materials and intellectual input but not requesting funds.

Section 3: Need

No specific guidance is provided, refer to the application assessment criteria outlined above.

Section 4: Rationale

Please provide relevant references where requested and cite elsewhere within the document as applicable. Note that up to two A4 pages of supporting data can be uploaded as a supplementary document and can be referred to here.

Section 5: Deliverability

How will the project achieve its objectives? Summarise the project workplan including two-three key progression milestones (one being the project end). For each milestone please set out the success criteria that will be used to ascertain whether the milestone has been met. For clinical studies, this should include a summary of (1) study design, (2) study participants, (3) study endpoints, (4) dose, (5) anticipated effect size and (6) analysis plans (max 800 words)

Milestone success criteria should be SMART (i.e. quantifiable) and detail any Go/No go criteria (failure to meet which will result in early termination of the project). For all projects, it is advisable to structure the project so that the critical question(s) are addressed as early as possible in the plan. For the final milestone, the criteria should reflect outcomes that would represent successful prosecution of the project and be reflective of the data that will enable onward prosecution of exploitation of the project.

Skills and resources

Outline personal, equipment, costs etc. required to conduct the project. In relation to named applicants, it is important to consider the funding available for investigator time. For pre-clinical projects, particularly those transitioning to clinical studies, it is generally advisable for clinical colleagues to be involved (albeit with no request for funding to support their time being available in this fund).

Project Management

How will the project be managed and what experience does the team have of conducting and managing similar projects? Each of the investigators C.V.s must be submitted with the application. Please elaborate on why the group is well qualified to conduct and manage the proposed project and how the roles of individual team members reflect their experience.
Section 6: Intellectual Property & Commercialisation

Commercialisation and intellectual property
Note that the generation of protectable intellectual property is not an essential requirement for this scheme; projects that will not generate patentable materials but that will nevertheless have the potential to provide health benefits are accepted on an equal basis. However, ownership and management of IP must be considered so that the panel can assess the likely freedom-to-operate and freedom-to-exploit. Projects with no plausible route to exploitation (whether involving intellectual property or not) and ultimate health benefit or translation of the successful study outcomes are extremely unlikely to be supportable.

Section 7: Finances and resources

Project duration and cost
Please include estimates of the duration and costs you anticipate will be required to reach each relevant checkpoint and any project partner contribution. Please refer to the terms and conditions for the level of available resources and for the manner in which the resources will be managed for a Therapy Accelerator project. Applicants should list the full cost of the research programme (exclusive of indirect and estates costs) and indicate the value of any contribution from other sources that is additional to the available funding. For example, you should indicate the investigator time required (in person months) to deliver the project. Since this will not be funded by Therapy Accelerator, you should indicate in the column ‘Your contribution’ the number of person months and cash value which your organization will provide ‘in-kind’.

In a further example, if £20,000 of chemicals are required in ‘Materials and non-staff costs’, enter this in the column ‘Budget required’. Where you propose to contribute toward this cost (either through a cash contribution to the budget, or by donating the chemicals to the project) the value of the donation (or the value of the goods being donated) should be entered in the column ‘Your contribution’.

End of document.