BACKGROUND TO THE MRC CONFIDENCE IN CONCEPT AWARD
The University has been awarded a block grant of £280k from the MRC under its Confidence in Concept Awards scheme to fund a programme of activity under the title ‘Enabling Translational Discovery of new neuroscience therapeutics.’ These funds will be allocated through an open internal scheme to fund a number of preliminary-stage translational projects.

The aim of the MRC Confidence in Concept Award scheme is to accelerate the transition from discovery research to translational development projects by supporting preliminary work or feasibility studies to establish the viability of an approach.

The University will use the MRC award to translate our excellent neuroscience discovery science to:
- understand the links between biological mechanisms and human disease
- identify and develop biomarkers for disease stratification
- identify novel lead compounds for discovery science and clinical development
- influence future clinical practices.

PURPOSE OF THE INTERNAL FUNDING SCHEME
The projects supported should be highly focussed, achievable within the specified timelines and aim to provide sufficient preliminary data, within neuroscience and mental health, to establish the viability of an approach therefore enabling the project to be competitive for more substantive external funding, such as the MRC’s Developmental Pathway Funding Scheme (DPFS) and other available translational funding schemes.

Only one call will be made under this scheme. Total funds available for this call are £280k and it is expected that successful applicants will receive funding in the range of £50k-£100k. It is very important that funds requested are consistent with the focussed nature of the proposals and therefore bids of < £50K will be considered providing they fit the remit of the call. Projects would normally be expected to begin with 3 months of notification. If you need to recruit staff please allow enough time for the recruitment process when selecting a project start date. Projects are expected to run for between 6-12 months.

Multidisciplinarity is not a requirement but is encouraged.

Applications need to provide a convincing case:
- For the necessity of pilot work to be undertaken before an external application can be submitted.
- That specific external funding applications will be made within 12 months of the start of the CIC award.
- That the timeframe of the project is realistic.
- That the funds requested are fully justified and provide value for money.
- If the project involves Research Assistants or PhD students, their roles need to be specified, and specifically in the case of the latter, how their involvement fits in with their thesis and any third party considerations (e.g. if their PhD is funded by a third party).
ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS
The scheme is open to faculty from all relevant disciplines.

The scheme is open to all research staff (PIs and research fellows), however, we expect the applicant to be employed during the CiC funded project period and also during the proposed externally funded project(s) which would occur after the CiC pump-priming activity.

Staff on teaching-only contracts are ineligible to apply.

Staff who applied and were unsuccessful in the first round of this scheme are eligible to apply but must discuss resubmission with Paul Beswick, P.Beswick@sussex.ac.uk

INELIGIBLE COSTS
The funding is not intended to support:
- Continuation of normal research grants
- Administrative costs
- PhD costs, e.g. maintenance and fees
- Bridging funds for staff between posts
- Permanent staff time (e.g. PI, Co-I)
- Costs relating to protection of intellectual property
- Industrial partner costs
- Equipment costs

ELIGIBLE COSTS
Projects can request 100% of Directly Incurred costs (excluding those listed above) plus Major and Small Research Facilities, and MRI scanning costs. If you plan to hire a Research Assistant as part of your project, please include recruitment costs in your budget.

APPLICATION PROCESS
Applications from all faculty are encouraged but a single Principal Investigator should be identified. Applicants are encouraged to be as concise as possible and not exceed the maximum page limits specified. Any material beyond these page limits will not be considered. Single line spacing can be used and font should be 11pt Arial. The application form must be used - continuation sheets will not be accepted.

Applications are structured as follows:

Part 1: Cover sheet
Part 2: Project description and methodology.
Part 3: Outcomes
Part 4: Budget and justification of resources
Part 5: Intellectual property

Applicants should submit their completed application to Carly Brownbridge C.Brownbridge@sussex.ac.uk by 12 noon on Wednesday 19 April 2017. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be reviewed.

KEY COMMISSIONING DATES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Call issued</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Panel meeting</th>
<th>Decision to applicants</th>
<th>Earliest project start date (if no staff to be recruited)</th>
<th>Earliest project start date (if staff to be recruited)</th>
<th>Latest start date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 17 March 2017</td>
<td>12 noon, Wednesday 19 April 2017</td>
<td>Monday 22 May 2017</td>
<td>Friday 26 May 2017</td>
<td>Monday 5 June 2017</td>
<td>Monday 4 September 2017</td>
<td>Friday 1 December 2017</td>
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REVIEW PROCEDURE
Applications will be reviewed by a panel consisting of:

- Prof Simon Ward, Director Sussex Drug Discovery Centre (deputy chair)
- Dr Paul Beswick, Sussex Drug Discovery Centre
- Prof Jenny Rusted, Experimental Psychology
- Prof Mara Cercignani, Medical Physics (Clinical and laboratory investigation)
- Prof Leon Lagnado FMedSci, Director Sussex Neuroscience

External panel members

- Dr Katy Kettleborough, MRCT Centre for Therapeutics Discovery
- Dr Declan Jones, Vice President, Neuroscience Scientific Innovation, Janssen

Applications should address the following criteria which will be used to review the proposals:

- Project’s focus and ability to generate innovative research which is eligible for onward funding (e.g. via MRC DPFS) following completion of pilot study
- Potential for industry engagement. Applications that have an identified industry collaborator either during the CiC phase or to provide onward funding/commercialisation will be prioritised for review.
- The results of the project have potential to address an area of clear unmet medical need with a link to clinician and/or patient groups
- Viability of programme of activities and appropriateness to the call.
- Evidence of a clear plan and a deliverable that, if realised, will be the project endpoint.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
Successful principal applicants will be supported by Dr Paul Beswick and other panel members during the project and will be expected to submit 3 reports per year detailing progress and outcomes to date plus a follow-on report 3 months after the project end date.

Reports should address the following:

- Progress towards anticipated outcomes.
- Priorities/planned activities for next period.
- Any issues identified and plans for their resolution

FURTHER INFORMATION

All applicants should discuss their planned proposal with Paul Beswick P.Beswick@sussex.ac.uk

All costing queries should be directed to Carly Brownbridge C.Brownbridge@sussex.ac.uk