

# Versus Arthritis Foundation Fellowship Application Guidance

## Contents

I.	Introduction .....	2
II.	Eligibility.....	2
III.	Information on clinical trials within fellowships.....	2
IV.	Multiple applications.....	3
V.	How to apply .....	3
VI.	Note on the language.....	4
VII.	Guidance for completion of the application form .....	4
	Grant Tracker profile .....	4
	Scientific Summary .....	4
	Project Summary .....	5
	Lay case for support .....	5
	Project details .....	6
	Additional project details .....	7
	Public and patient involvement.....	8
	Impact.....	8
	Scientific References .....	8
	Lead Applicant details and Lead Applicant CV .....	8
	Candidate's PHD information .....	9
	Publications .....	9
	Other research outputs .....	9
	Sponsor(s) .....	10
	Relevant Grants and Publications .....	10
	Collaborators .....	11
	Finance and Costs .....	11
	Time allocation.....	13
	Ethics.....	13
	Animal ethics .....	14
	Pre-Award administrators.....	14
	Signatories.....	15
	Referees .....	15
	Attachments.....	15
	Disease category, Research focus, Research category and Methods used .....	15
	End – submitting your application.....	15

## I. Introduction

At Versus Arthritis, we invest in breakthrough treatments, the best information and vital support for everyone affected by arthritis. We believe that by harnessing the power of exceptional science we can overcome the pain, isolation and fatigue arthritis causes, making everyday life better for all 10 million people with arthritis in the UK.

We're committed to building a world-class workforce to continue the fight against arthritis through supporting research careers and ensuring there's sufficient capacity within the UK to translate ideas into benefit for people with arthritis. We aim to encourage the brightest and most committed researchers, from all relevant disciplines based in the UK and beyond, to become involved in research into musculoskeletal diseases.

Foundation fellowships aim to retain the best postdoctoral researchers in areas of research relevant to arthritis and musculoskeletal diseases and provide an opportunity for fellows to develop independent research ideas at an early stage in their career.

## II. Eligibility

Versus Arthritis research awards may only be held in universities, hospitals or recognised academic research institutes in the UK.

Foundation fellowships are open to basic science and other non-medical (including nurse and allied health professionals and veterinary surgeons) PhD students in the final year of training, or within 2 years of completing their PhD at the time application. Projects must demonstrate a clear relevance to the aims of Versus Arthritis and are awarded for 3 years. The application should be made by the applicant and their sponsor(s), who should not be the applicant's previous PhD supervisor. Preference will be given to applicants who wish to move to another laboratory in the UK or, if remaining in the same institution, applicants are encouraged to spend a period of time in another laboratory.

Projects must demonstrate a clear relevance to the [ambitions of Versus Arthritis](#). Before completing your application please ensure the proposal aligns with our current research priorities, by consulting the following:

- [Our approach to research funding & scope of research](#)
- [diseases and disorders that are eligible for research funding \(PDF 75.8 KB\)](#)

## III. Information on clinical trials within fellowships

- Versus Arthritis do not support the funding of a major or substantial clinical trial as a fellowship, trials should be funded through the appropriate Versus Arthritis grant scheme which has a reviewing subcommittee with the right expertise to assess clinical trial application content. It is not considered that running a trial from within a fellowship in a trial manager role represents good training.
- Trials are supported within fellowships in a junior principal investigator role only to support learning of methodology and recruitment and assist protocol development; there should be sufficient fellowship content that is non-trial.

- It is considered suitable for a fellowship to contain methodological development work or supplementary analysis as bolt on activity to an established or proposed trial.
- It is considered suitable to conduct a feasibility/pilot clinical study within a fellowship where studies are expected to be recruiting in small numbers.
- Versus Arthritis are supportive of fellowship applications as an add on to a clinical trial that has been supported by Versus Arthritis, or elsewhere, where the fellowship component is contributing to scientific training.

Standardly we do not support fellowships within clinical study grants. If data collection or review can only be done by clinically qualified personnel and such activities are core to the study proposal, then support for such activity as a fellowship post may be considered within a trial.

#### IV. Multiple applications

We will not accept overlapping applications of the same research proposal to more than one Versus Arthritis funding scheme. We will accept an application that has been submitted to another funding body, however, please check the eligibility criteria of the other funding body before making an application.

#### V. How to apply

All applications for Versus Arthritis funding must be received through our online grant management system Grant Tracker. The deadline for submission of applications is 16:00 on the stated deadline in the call document/webpage – this deadline relates to the time Versus Arthritis receives the application NOT to the time you press submit. When you press submit an automated email will be sent firstly to your finance officer for approval and once they have approved the application a second email will be sent to your Head of Department. **It is only upon your Head of Department's approval that the application is finally submitted to Versus Arthritis.** This must all be completed by the 16:00 deadline so we strongly recommend that applicants allow sufficient time for submission before the deadline in order to obtain the necessary approvals. No applications received after the deadline will be accepted.

The fellowship application is a one-stage process – a full application should be submitted by the deadline. As part of the full application you will be asked to complete a short scientific summary which will be used by the awarding panel for the purposes of triage.

These scholarships are awarded by a panel consisting of members of the fellowship expert group alongside appropriate experts.

There are four stages to the assessment process:

1. Triage: at this initial stage the scientific summaries of each application are assessed by the fellowship funding panel. Applicants will be informed at an early stage if their proposal has been triaged and all other applications will undergo full peer review.
2. Peer review: the full applications of those successful at triage are sent for external peer review by experts from the UK and abroad and of international standing in the field of the proposal.

3. Shortlisting: the full applications and peer reviews are assessed by the fellowship funding panel members. Shortlisted applicants are invited to attend interview.

4. Interview: the fellowship awarding panel interviews the shortlisted applicants and makes funding decisions.

Awards are typically made 5-6 months after the deadline date.

Further information and FAQs about applying for fellowships, are available here:

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/research/information-for-researchers/fellowships/applying-for-a-fellowship/>

## VI. Note on the language

The lay case for support should be written in appropriate non-technical language. For more information on how to write a clear and informative lay summary please use the following resources:

- [INVOLVE plain English summaries](#)
- [The Plain English Campaign](#)

If you have further enquiries on the use of appropriate language, please email the Patient Involvement Team at [patientinsight@versusarthritis.org](mailto:patientinsight@versusarthritis.org).

## VII. Guidance for completion of the application form


### Grant Tracker profile

Before creating a new application, please ensure that your CV and Research Outputs are up to date in your Grant Tracker profile. Lead and co applicants will need to do this. Please refer to our [guidance document](#) for full instructions on how to use the Research Outputs section.

### Application form

The sections to be completed in the application form are presented below. Please ensure you reference each section before completing the online form.

### Help icon

Additional information and guidance is also provided within the form for specific questions, this can be accessed by clicking on this button: 

## Scientific Summary

All fellowship applicants are required to provide a scientific summary of the application which is used for the purposes of triage. The triage panel will be provided with the scientific summary, the CV of the lead applicant and details of the sponsor(s). They will not be provided with the full application form at this initial stage.

The format of the scientific summary is at the discretion of the applicant and it is not essential to use the items in the list below as headers, as long as the required information is provided. The applicant may supplement their scientific summary with one scientific summary supporting diagram (JPEG, GIF or word. Maximum attachment size 10MB).

1. Introduction – to include the background to the project, any preliminary work completed by the proposed team and the objectives of the current proposal
2. Methods - to include details of the techniques to be used, the supervisory team's experience with these techniques and/or the institutional support available in these techniques
3. Predicted outcome/wider impact of research
4. Relevance to Versus Arthritis
5. Training/facilities

If the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe impact on the preparation of the proposal (e.g. delayed publications or reduced preliminary data). Please use the scientific summary to briefly describe these impacts.

The scientific summary has a maximum word count of **1000 words** with an additional **300 words** permitted for candidates to include selected publications (including published abstracts) which are relevant to the application.

## Project Summary

**Scientific title of research:** this should be descriptive. If relevant, please use PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) principals and include a project acronym.

**Scientific abstract of research including key goals (max 300 words):** this should include the purpose, study design, the specific area of research interest for which this application is entered, and the potential application of results.

**Organisation:** This should be the location of the project.

**Proposed start date:** This must not be before 22/02/2022

**Proposed duration:** Please enter your proposed project duration in months.

**Key Words:** Please enter up to 6 key words that describe your application.

## Lay case for support

This section may be reviewed by lay and scientific experts, please complete this section in a lay language. Further guidance on writing for a lay audience is provided at the start of this document.

**Lay Title:** The title should be descriptive and in a lay language.

**Lay Abstract:** This should outline: the background to the problem; the aims and purposes of your proposal and why they are important; a brief experimental plan; and the relevance to Versus Arthritis and potential patient benefit (max 300 words)

**Background:** Briefly and clearly explain the context of your research, the particular area(s) that your proposal seeks to address and the need for further understanding or treatment options. Please avoid going into great detail of the condition in question unless it is rare (max 400 words)

**Hypothesis and aims:** What are the questions you hope to answer and why? (max 300 words)

**Lay project plan:** Give a brief overview of how you intend to answer your research question(s), including details of what experimental models you will use (e.g. human cells, animal models, clinical samples, patient and/or education research studies) (max 400 words)

**If awarded, explain the novelty and relevance of the application to the Charity's ambitions:** How is this research different to what has been done before by your research group and others? Explain the relevance of your proposal to Versus Arthritis's ambitions (max 300 words)

**If awarded, what impact and potential benefit will this application have for those living with arthritis?** (max 400 words) How will the outcomes of your research lead to clinical, patient and/or societal benefits, and what are the likely timescales to benefit? We recognise that, depending on the nature of the research, the applications that we receive can have immediate patient benefit and others increase the knowledge basis for future interventions. In applications where the outcomes directly impact on the quality of life of people with arthritis, this should be clearly detailed in this section. Where benefit is less obvious, for example in basic laboratory research, explain:

- why this study is necessary to inform a gap in knowledge that will be useful for subsequent translational research?
- how future research can be built on the findings toward benefit?
- what are the potential next steps that would be required to get your research findings to clinical intervention?
- when the benefit might be achieved, with realistic justification of these timelines?

## Project details

Please provide details on the proposed project under the following headings. **Please note the word limits for each of these sections.**

**Background (max 1500 words):** Briefly and clearly explain the context of your research. This should include the disease/area and its clinical and/or patient impact, the particular area(s) that your research seeks to address, and the need for further understanding. Also include past and current research, including that funded by Versus Arthritis and include the applicant's own contribution to this.

If appropriate, where a systematic review has been carried out that summarises the available evidence, this should be referenced. If relevant, applicants should describe the policy relevance of the proposed research and the importance of its findings.

**Aims and Purpose (max 250 words):** State the primary hypothesis and outline the aims and objectives of the research.

**Detailed plan of investigation and scientific procedures (max 2000 words):** Outline the proposed programme of work to include clear work packages, milestones and methodology. Please include a Gantt chart using the attachments section of the application form. Please include the following subheadings where applicable:

- **Research design:** Provide a detailed account of the research methodology. This should include a statistical plan, measures to reduce bias, justification for the proposed sampling strategies, sample size calculation, methods of data collection, analysis and outcome measures. The plan should be separated into work packages where appropriate.

- **Data management:** Please describe the approach for data management to include making the data discoverable and the process for data sharing.

**Please outline how you have taken the ongoing impact of COVID-19 into account during the planning of this fellowship application (max 500 words):** Please give an overview of how this project might be affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic including any risks you have identified and your planned strategies to mitigate those risks.

**Candidates statement as to how the training fits in with his/her future career plans (max 500 words):** Please detail why you would like to apply for a fellowship and how fellowship funding will help to further your research career.

**Sponsors Statement as to the nature of the scientific training to be provided (max 400 words):** We expect a strong commitment from the sponsors to provide the necessary training and support required to complete the aims of the project proposed within the fellowship and to the future career of the applicant.

**Please provide a sponsor's statement including how you intend to address the following needs of the fellow (max 400 words):**

- **Induction, orientation and administrative support**
- **Supervision** (giving an indication of the frequency of meetings, setting of timelines, and provision of verbal and written feedback)
- **Training opportunities** (e.g., including both generic research and transferable skills)
- **Environment** (e.g., group meetings, journal clubs, opportunities for ideas exchange)

**Justification for support requested and relevance to the aims Versus Arthritis (max 400 words):** Explain the relevance of your proposal to Versus Arthritis's purpose and strategic focus. Use this section to explain how this research will have an impact on and contribute to achieving the charity's mission and strategic focus. Please provide justification for the costs requested for the fellowship here.

Basic formatting can be applied to each section, but you cannot incorporate images or embed documents. Any additional documents or images can be attached in the Attachments section of the online application form. Please ensure any figure legends are included within the text.

## **Additional project details**

**Please outline the resources and facilities available to support the fellowship (max 200 words):** These should include access to libraries, online journals, generic and research specific software, appropriate work space and laboratory facilities (if relevant), and/or clinical facilities (if relevant).

**Previously submitted:** Please indicate if this or a related application has been submitted elsewhere, including Versus Arthritis. If a similar application has been submitted please provide details of the funder and name of scheme, as well as the outcome or expected date of outcome.

**Intellectual Property (IP):** If appropriate, please provide the following information:

- Whether the proposal is likely to produce new IP (max 500 words)
- How the new IP will be managed (max 500 words)
- Whether there is existing IP associated with the proposal (max 500 words)

IP means patents, copyright, trademarks, trade names, service marks, domain names copyrights, moral rights, rights in and to databases (including rights to prevent the extraction or reutilisation of information from a database), design rights, topography rights and all rights or forms of protection of a similar nature or having equivalent or the similar effect to any of them which may subsist anywhere in the world, whether or not any of them are registered and including applications for registration of any of them. Where appropriate explain how you will engage with your Technology Transfer/Enterprise Office. For further enquiries on any aspect of IP, please email the Research & Programmes Directorate at [research@versusarthritis.org](mailto:research@versusarthritis.org).

**Industrial Support:** Indicate if the application involves any external commercial organisation (including collaborations and donations). If indicated that industrial support is associated with the project, an additional page will appear in the side menu of the application form for completion. Use the additional page to provide further details of the commercial partner including contact details, details of the support/collaboration and any conflicts of interest. Please refer to our [industrial support policy](#).

## Public and patient involvement

We strongly advocate for the meaningful integration of the insights of people with arthritis into the applications we receive through our funding calls. As such, the questions outlined in the application form are for the applicant to detail their interaction with people with arthritis in developing their application and planning of future work. Please refer to our [Involving people with arthritis: A researchers guide](#) booklet, which aims to support you to integrate public and patient involvement into your work so that it enhances your research.

**Explain how people with arthritis have inputted and informed this application:** Please explain (a) how you have involved patients in developing this application, and (b) how patients will be involved in steering and implementing the research should your application be successful (max 500 words).

## Impact

Please describe how the research project proposed will impact the lives of people affected by arthritis in the short and long term and outline what would need to happen after this grant for the long-term impact to be realised.

## Scientific References

Please detail all publications that are referenced in the application. Please include full title and all authors. Please highlight all publications by your own group or current collaborators in bold.

## Lead Applicant details and Lead Applicant CV

For fellowship applications, the lead applicant is the researcher who is applying for the fellowship. They are the individual who will lead the work and they will be responsible to Versus Arthritis to ensure the conditions of award are met. They must be based in a UK university, hospital or recognised academic research institute in the UK.



The Lead Applicant details in this section will be populated automatically based on the information that is stored in GrantTracker. To amend these details, please save and close the application form and visit the 'Manage My Details' section on the GrantTracker Versus Arthritis homepage as outlined below:

**Basic information:** Please ensure all fields marked with a red dot are completed (these are compulsory fields).

#### **Update CV:**

**Degree/Qualification** - please add any degrees or professional qualifications that you hold, and feel would aid your application.

**Employment** – Please list your present and last position held as a minimum. Please list any further positions that feel would aid your application.

The grants and publications sections of the lead applicant's CV should be populated via the Relevant Grants and Publications section later in this application form.

### **Candidate's PHD information**

This section will ask the lead applicant for their current title, supervisors' names, PhD host institution, PhD start and end date, source of funding for the PhD, the date the thesis was submitted or the expected submission date, the date of the applicant's viva or expected date and the date the PhD was awarded. We class the date of the awarding of the PhD, as the date the applicant receives the formal letter from their host institution confirming that they have successfully completed their PhD.

### **Publications**

Please enter a complete list of the fellowship applicants research publications to-date (full citations including title and all authors). These should be separated into

- Original peer reviewed papers
- Reviews
- Books or book chapters
- Editorials, letters or case reports

### **Other research outputs**

Other than the publications and awards already listed in your application please list and briefly describe three to five of your key research outputs or achievements. These can cover any forms of output relevant to your research including but not limited to:

- Development and sharing of new datasets, software, research reagents, tools, methods, products or patents.
- Contributions to collaborations/consortia/team science
- Participation in PPI and engagement activities
- Influences on policy, practice, education or training
- Development of new preventative, diagnostic, treatment or management approaches and interventions
- Improvements to health or quality of life for patients and the public
- Additional relevant publications and pre-prints

## Sponsor(s)

A Host Institution sponsor guarantees facilities and resources for the tenure of an award.

The Sponsor:

Must have a contract of employment with the Institution or, in the case of an NHS employee, an honorary academic appointment, with tenure beyond the duration of the proposed fellowship should give an undertaking that if an award is made, you will be granted status and prerogatives of other academic staff of similar seniority.

Sponsors are encouraged to view their support and mentorship of you as part of the longer-term committee to assist you to realise your future career aspirations in research.

You will be asked to provide the name of the sponsors(s) associated with the fellowship, if the sponsor is already on our GrantTracker system, their contact details will appear and an automatic message will be generated to allow you to notify them and provide a link to the application for them to confirm their role. If the sponsor does not have a GrantTracker account, you will be asked to enter their contact details so that this message can be sent. Sponsors will have to register for a GrantTracker account if they do not have one.

The sponsor(s) basic information, degrees and qualifications and employment record will be populated to their CV automatically based on the information that is stored in their GrantTracker account. To amend these details, the sponsor will need to save and close the application form and visit the 'Manage My Details' section on the GrantTracker Versus Arthritis homepage following the same instructions highlighted in the lead applicant CV section.

**Grants and publications must be added to the CV by each individual sponsor via the Relevant Grants and Publications section later in the form.**

## Relevant Grants and Publications

Before adding relevant grants and publications to this application, the lead applicant and sponsor(s) should ensure that all that their profile is up to date in their Grant Tracker account as follows:

### Research grant and fellowships

Go to 'Manage My Details' section followed by "Update CV" to check or amend the list of grants and fellowships held.

### Publications

Go to "My Research Outputs" to check or amend the list of publications held.

Please refer to our [guidance document](#) for full instructions on how to use the Research Outputs section.


Once the lead and sponsor profiles are up to date, each participant can then add their own relevant grants and publications in the Relevant grants and publications section of the application form.

This section allows both the lead applicant and sponsor(s) to choose which grants and publications to list as part of their CV. The lead applicant and sponsor(s) can each choose to list up to a maximum of ten grants and ten publications that are most relevant to the application. This section will appear


different to each individual filling it in and only the individual's own publications and awards as listed in Grant Tracker will be visible to that user.

**The lead applicant and sponsor(s) must individually complete this section before the form can be submitted.**

### **To add a grant**

Use the  button to add a new field then select a grant from the drop-down menu. If the grant you wish to add is not listed in the drop-down menu, you can add it to your CV in the Manage My Details section of Grant Tracker.

### **To add a publication**

Use the  button to add a new field then select a publication from the drop-down menu. If the publication you wish to add is not listed in the drop-down menu, you can add it to the My Research Outputs section of Grant Tracker.

There is a link to additional online guidance within this section of the application form in Grant Tracker.

## **Collaborators**

Enter details of any collaborators not already listed in under the industrial support section.

Collaborators are individuals who are not be involved in the day-to-day execution of the research but may supply research materials, specific expertise or access to patients.

All collaborators associated with the application will be required to provide a letter of support. These should be uploaded in the attachments section of the form.

## **Finance and Costs**

Further details on eligible and ineligible costs for fellowships can be found on our [fellowships webpages](#). The finances requested for the grant should be entered in this section under the following headings:

### **Staff members (salaries)**

For a Foundation Fellowship application, the only staff member salary included should be that of the fellow. No other salaries will be accepted in this section. Please provide the following information for your salary:

- Name
- Salary scale and grade
- Increment Date
- Percentage inflation rate used
- Staff type (to select from a list)
- Basic salary for each year of the fellowship,
- Employer contributions for each year of the fellowship
- London weighting (if applicable) for each year of the fellowship

The percentage of inflation used must be included in the application and be in line with the most recent pay award agreed by the Institution and no more than 2% (as at May 2015 and this will be periodically reviewed).

You should indicate the full time equivalent (FTE) percentage to show what your time commitment to the fellowship would be. Further information on carrying out fellowships part-time is available on the [fellowships pages](#) on our website.

## **Animals**

We require the costs associated with animal use to be separated by species and strain. Please provide the following information (multiple can be added):

- Animal species
- Animal strain
- Whether they are genetically modified
- Source of supply
- Number of animals to be purchased for each year of the fellowship
- Purchase price per animal
- Number of animals to be maintained for each year of the fellowship
- Number of weeks maintenance required for each year of the fellowship
- Weekly maintenance cost

## **Expenses/Consumables**

Items and their cost should be listed.

## **Apparatus/Equipment**

Small item(s) of essential equipment (costing less than £30,000 in total) which are needed for the fellowship can be detailed here. Requests for individual items of equipment costing more than £5,000 must be supported by a quote.

### Full economic costing

In line with other UK medical charities, Versus Arthritis does not provide funds for administrative costs or overheads, and funds directly incurred costs only. Ineligible costs include directly allocated costs and indirect costs:

*Directly Allocated Costs* – shared costs, based on estimates and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis, such as:

- estates
- the costs of shared resources, such as staff and equipment

*Indirect Costs* – necessary for underpinning research but cannot be allocated to individual projects, and cover computing and information support, central services, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs.

### Eligible costs within a foundation fellowship application:

- London weighting applies to any applicant applying from an institution in London and will be payable at the rate appropriate to each host institution

- Any additional salaries/staff time (e.g. statistician/data manager/trial manager) should be costed as a consultancy under expenses and not as a salary. These costs will be considered by the panel
- Access charges for use of specialist equipment may be applied for within expenses
- Any requests for computers must be fully justified and integral to the success of the research proposal
- Costs to cover travel and accommodation (if required) to a collaborating institution can be requested
- Training courses for the professional development of the fellow can be applied for. These should be relevant to the aims of the fellowship and justified within the application
- Costs associated with patient and public involvement/engagement can be applied for. Please see our [Research Involvement Handbook](#) for guidance on how to cost these activities appropriately
- Reasonable costs associated with carrying out a pilot clinical or feasibility study can be applied for

#### Ineligible costs within a foundation fellowship application:

- Relocation costs
- Home office license fees (personal and project)
- Good clinical practice (GCP) training
- Funding to provide maintenance of equipment
- Office stationery costs unless required for the project and justified accordingly
- Indemnity insurance
- Publication costs
- Travel support and open access are not to be included within standard grant applications, these are additional awards that can be applied for by a Versus Arthritis grant holder

## Time allocation

Please provide information on

- How many hours per week the fellowship applicant spends on research
- How many hours per week the fellowship applicant will spend on this project
- How many hours per week the sponsor(s) spends on research
- How many hours per week the sponsor(s) will spend on this project

## Ethics

### **Please only complete this section if applicable to your application**

The Department of Health requires that research involving patients, service users, care professionals or volunteers, or their organs, tissue or data, is reviewed independently by a Research Ethics Committee (REC) to ensure it meets ethical standards (Favourable Ethical Opinion).

Please tick the box if Favourable Ethical Opinion is required for this research from an NHS Research Ethics Committee

If Favourable Ethical Opinion is not required, please enter justification for not needing it.

If Favourable Ethical Opinion is required, please tick the box if it is already in place for this research and attach the final letter from the REC in the attachments section.

If Favourable Ethical Opinion is required but not yet in place, please provide the approximate date this will be applied for.

## Animal ethics

### Please only complete this section if applicable to your application

Versus Arthritis is committed to the principles of reduction, refinement and replacement in animal studies. Before completing this section please read our policy on [animal research](#).

Versus Arthritis is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities and signs up to their [position on animal research](#).

Please tick the box if the project involves the use of experimental animals or other organisms covered by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act

### You will be required to indicate:

- The maximum severity of the procedures involved
- Whether the proposed research involved a protected species (non-human primates, cats, dogs or equidae)
- Whether the relevant Home Office project and personal licences been obtained. If you do not hold the relevant Home Office licence, please state when you expect to obtain them.

**Justification for the use of animals:** Please justify the use of animals, the species and techniques proposed and the number of animals to be used per experiment. Please include details of sample size calculations and statistical advice sought for the number of animals required to reach statistical significance.

There should be sufficient information to allow for a robust review of any applications involving animals. Further guidance is available from the [National Centre for Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research \(NC3Rs\)](#), including an online [experimental design assistant](#) to guide researcher through the design of animal experiments.

Replacement, reduction and refinement (3Rs) of animal experiments: Indicate whether the proposed research lead to the advancement of the 3Rs and how it will do this. Further information on the 3Rs is available from the [NC3Rs](#).

## Pre-Award administrators

Please add a pre-award administrator to your application in this section if required. Pre-award administrators can access and edit the application form however their details will not appear explicitly on the completed form.

## Signatories

Enter the details of the signatories required to sign-off the application. The head of department and finance office details should be completed. Before submitting your application to Versus Arthritis, you must obtain the necessary signatories prior to the deadline. A workflow diagram can be found [here](#).

## Referees

Please provide contact details for two nominated referees, who should not be your sponsor(s). They should know you both personally and in a professional capacity and be able to write a letter of reference for you as a candidate, in the same manner as if you were applying for a job. The referee is not asked to write in support of the project (or to review the project) but rather to write in support of you and why you are a suitable candidate for the scheme and should in their opinion be given the opportunity to hold the fellowship. Please ensure you have obtained prior permission from the referee.

## Attachments

Only text can be added to the fields of the online application form. Where additional files are required, they can be uploaded in this section.

The maximum size per attachment is 10 MB.

The following documents should be included as attachments where relevant:

1. Scientific summary supporting diagram
2. Letters of collaboration / support
3. Ethical approval
4. Animal licence(s)
5. Gantt chart
6. Additional figures / data referenced in the project details section or lay case for support
7. If the application is a resubmission, a cover letter should be attached detailing how the application has been altered in response to the feedback received from the original submission.

## Disease category, Research focus, Research category and Methods used

In these sections, we ask you to provide some research classification information on your application. You will be asked to select a number of classifications from a standard list in each section.

## End – submitting your application

To complete the application process, the final steps are as follows:

1. Select Validate form

This will check that you have completed all of the sections within the application.

2. Click Save then close

After completing these steps, you will be taken to the details page of your application. The submit application button on the right-hand side of the page should be available.

3. Click Submit

**Once you have submitted your application an automated email will be sent firstly to your finance officer, once they have approved the application a second email will be sent to your Head of Department. It is only upon your Head of Department's approval that the application is finally submitted to Versus Arthritis. This must be completed by 4pm on the deadline day.**

You will receive an automated email containing an acknowledgement that we have received your application. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your application, please contact us on 0300 7900 403, allowing for sufficient time prior to the deadline.

Finally, please email suggested names of potential reviewers of your application (not connected with you or your proposal) or the names of any reviewers that you do not wish to be approached to <mailto:research@versusarthritis.org>. Please note, these will be treated confidentially.

## Contact

For further enquiries on any aspect of your application, or any issues relating to the submission of your application, please email the Research & Programmes Directorate at [research@versusarthritis.org](mailto:research@versusarthritis.org) or phone us on 0300 7900 403.