

## Guidance for Reviewers

### Scoring system:

We ask our Reviewers to consider and review each proposal in line with our assessment criteria, and to score each application accordingly based on the scoring system below. The scoring system is used at triage, external scientific peer review and at our Grant Review Board (GRB) meeting and comprises a 1 - 5 scale (including half points) with 1 as the best score. We invite our GRB members to use the full range of scores when considering applications at both the triage and review meeting stages.

Guidance on the score system can be found below:

Very Good	Excellent scientific proposal, with potential for high benefit to the research field and to people with dementia. Applicant and team have the necessary skills and equipment. Applicant has an excellent track record of wider contributions to leadership, research culture and practice, that are likely to maximise the potential of the science proposed. The proposal fits the scheme and resources requested are appropriate.	1.0
Very Good/Good		1.5
Good	Good scientific proposal, with potential for benefit to the research field and to people with dementia. Applicants or wider team's skills and equipment are likely to benefit the research outlined in the proposal. Applicant has a moderate track record of wider contributions to leadership, research culture and practice. The proposal fits the scheme, but the resources requested need revision.	2.0
Good/Average		2.5
Average	The proposal presents some weaknesses which diminish its potential to benefit the research field and people with dementia. Applicant's or wider team's skills and equipment do not align with the needs of the science proposed. Applicant does not have a track record of wider contributions to leadership, research culture and practice. The proposal fits the scheme, but the resources requested need revision.	3.0
Average/Below Average		3.5
Below Average	The proposal presents significant weaknesses which make it unlikely that it will have positive effect on the research field and/or people with dementia.	4.0
Below Average/Poor		4.5
Poor	The proposal is of very poor scientific quality and/or is out of remit.	5.0

## Criteria for assessing Research Grant applications:

Our reviewers play a crucial role in ensuring that we support the best quality science and researchers, and that we uphold a robust, fair and transparent review process that is free from bias or undue influence. Our reviewers are experts in their field of work, and we rely on their expertise, experience and impartiality to make recommendations on the very best research for us to invest in.

Broadly speaking, we expect our reviewers to assess applications for funding based on three key assessment criteria:

1. The excellence of the science, and the potential for impact in the field and people affected by dementia
2. The skills and expertise of the applicants, and the suitability of the team and environment that surround them
3. How well the proposal meets the scheme criteria, and whether the resources requested are justified

We know that there is no single definition of excellence when it comes to what high quality research might look like, and that indicators of quality will vary between disciplines, career stages, the type of work being proposed or the scientific area. We therefore ask that reviewers consider the assessment criteria holistically in terms of the overall quality of the proposed research in order to determine a final score. Further examples of the elements that may be considered under these assessment criteria are detailed below, however we recognise that this is by no means an exhaustive list of considerations, and that not all of the examples will be relevant to all applicants, research proposals or schemes.

Excellence of the science and the potential for impact on the field and people affected by dementia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong scientific rationale that is supported by scientific literature or data</li> <li>- Overall feasibility and likelihood of success of the proposed work - achievable objectives, appropriate methodology and robust experimental design that is supported by adequate power calculations and statistical analysis</li> <li>- How novel and innovative the proposed work is</li> <li>- The value and importance of the proposed work in terms of advancing the dementia research field by addressing fundamental gaps in our knowledge of disease processes, diagnosis and detection of dementia, reducing the risk of dementia or work towards a potential treatment.</li> <li>- The significance of the proposed study in terms of its potential impact for people living with dementia</li> <li>- In clinical studies: applicants have considered and justified the diversity of the study population, how it may differ from a real-world population, and how the study (including recruitment, exclusion/inclusion criteria, feasibility and outcomes) is designed to promote equity, inclusion and diversity.</li> <li>- A clear plan for making generated outputs available and accessible to the scientific community in line with best practice data sharing regulations.</li> </ul>
Skills, expertise and track record of the applicants, and the suitability of the team and environment that surround them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If the applicant has the necessary skills and expertise to carry out and deliver the proposed research</li> <li>- The value added through collaboration with other grant participants, and ensuring that the proposal involves individuals with the required expertise and/or disciplines needed to support the research</li> <li>- If the applicant/team have access to the necessary resources or facilities that may be required for the fulfilment of the project</li> <li>- The opportunities for career development and training of personnel involved in the grant</li> </ul> <p>Note: When assessing the suitability of the environment that surrounds the applicant, we ask reviewers to please do so independently of whether they are staying in the same institution where</p>

they did previous research or not. This applies particularly when assessing proposals from early career researchers: as long as the criteria for the start of an independent scientific career are met, and the environment meets the scientific needs, at ARUK we do not consider changing institutions a necessity.

#### Scheme remit and resources requested

- Whether the proposal is appropriate for the [scheme in question](#)
- Whether the costs requested are eligible and represent good value for money
- Whether the requested resources are appropriate and well justified in relation to the delivery of the proposed work
- If salaries are requested, are they reasonable considering the expertise and experience required by the role.
- Is the staff time allocated appropriate and sufficient to deliver the proposed project
- Whether any animal use is fully justified, and if all ethical considerations been fully considered

Note: The presence or value of funding contributions (including matched funding) by the host institution **is not assessed** unless specified in the scheme criteria or funding call.

\*Although reviewers are asked to consider if costs are reasonable, scoring decisions should be made without the consideration of the total budget in any given round.