



Psoriasis Association Research Strategy 2012 – 2017

Introduction

The Psoriasis Association is a charity founded in 1968, with the three following objects:-

1. To promote research into the causes, nature and cure of psoriasis and to publish and disseminate the results of that research.
2. To advance public education in the causes, nature and cure of psoriasis.
3. To relieve all those suffering from psoriasis.

Since its' registration, the Psoriasis Association has awarded over £4 million in research grants exclusively to further the understanding of psoriasis. The grants have included project grants and PhD studentships, from basic science research to social science research.

The 2009 membership survey highlighted how important the members feel it is for the Psoriasis Association to continue the commitment to fund research into psoriasis. All monies donated in order to fund research into psoriasis are valued and appreciated, and so the Psoriasis Association is committed to research of sound quality and promise of future development. Applications are welcome from all disciplines committed to improving the lives of people with psoriasis.

What the Psoriasis Association will fund

- The Psoriasis Association funds research in the United Kingdom only, into the causes, treatment and care of psoriasis including psycho-social aspects of the condition and factors affecting quality of life.
- The Psoriasis Association will fund research into the various types of psoriasis – plaque psoriasis, palmo-plantar pustulosis, generalised pustular psoriasis, erythrodermic psoriasis and nail psoriasis. Applications regarding the comorbidities of psoriasis will also be considered on scientific merit.



- The Psoriasis Association wishes to encourage and improve the quality of research in order to establish an appropriate, broadly accepted evidential base.
- The Psoriasis Association recognises that researchers in fields related to Medicine & Dermatology, including for example Pharmacy, Nursing and Psychology also have an interest in psoriasis, its impact and treatment and broader issues. Our policy is to stimulate, and where possible, to sustain such interest in the widest possible research community and to contribute to the building of a diverse skill base in psoriasis research.
- The Psoriasis Association recognises the involvement of other grant awarding organisations such as the Wellcome Trust, National Institute of Health Research and the British Skin Foundation in offering substantial awards, and so following review wishes to encourage new researchers by offering PhD Studentships under the guidance of well established researchers.
- The grants available for PhD Studentships are £75,000 over three years.
- The Psoriasis Association may consider funding small project grants at the discretion of the Trustees.
- The Trustees of the Psoriasis Association will agree the programme of grants in any financial year according to funds available.



General Principles

The following are broad general principles. The Psoriasis Association also has guidelines on Good Research Practice as well as a comprehensive Conditions of Grants Awarded document.

Quality of work being funded

- All applications will be judged on scientific merit. Successful applications must be of the highest scientific excellence, including the research team, with research teams appropriately qualified in terms of training, background and publication record.
- Key criteria will be scientific and therapeutic potential in relation to psoriasis. All applications must have clear aims and stated goals to advance scientific understanding of psoriasis and therapeutic interventions. Projects must be feasible and achievable in the stated time period. Special consideration will be given to collaborative and multi-disciplinary research.
- Applicants must be employed by a recognised research centre within the United Kingdom with an established record of research achievement. There must be a critical mass of active researchers within the department/ research establishment. The award of funding will require named supervisors, and will depend on an assessment of the training environment. Applicants should clearly demonstrate the quality of the training environment and evidence of an explicit process for appraisal and monitoring of progress. Only staff listed in successful applications will be accepted as a supervisor of the grantee. Supervisors should usually have no more than three research students under their supervision (MRC guidelines). The Psoriasis Association does not pay university overheads in addition to the grant
- Researchers will be required to sign formal undertakings which cover the Psoriasis Association's ownership of outcomes which are likely to generate income, as well as the obligation to mention the Psoriasis Association's support in any publication.
- Researchers will be asked to provide annual progress reports which indicate whether the research meets its original aspirations. A lay summary will also be required within the annual progress reports. They will also be required to provide annual financial statements, and a final review of monies used and outstanding balances, including an undertaking by the university to return any unspent monies within a specific time period.



- At the end of the grant period, a final report will be required, including a lay summary, along with publications in peer-reviewed journals. Grant-holders may be required to present their work at the Annual Conference of the Psoriasis Association, or in some other setting or fashion to be agreed with the researchers.

The Assessment and Award Process

- All applications will be considered by the Research Committee and External Peer Reviewers of the Psoriasis Association.
- The availability of PhD Studentship grants will be communicated to the British Association of Dermatologists, British Dermatology Nursing Group, Primary Care Dermatology Society, Dermatology Departments and Medical Schools. In addition to this, those who have registered an interest in receiving notification of grants will be contacted, and the availability of the grants advertised on the Psoriasis Association website.
- The membership of the Research Committee will reflect a fair balance of experience and scientific disciplines, and may include nursing research and lay membership.
- The Psoriasis Association recognises the need for review of the Research Committee, although recognises the valuable contribution made by international world leaders in psoriasis research. Therefore the Committee will work alongside external peer reviewers, and will include a significant number of non-beneficiaries.
- The Chairman of the Committee should not apply for funding during his/ her term of office.
- The Research Committee makes recommendations to the Trustees of the Psoriasis Association who will make the final decision about the awarding of the grants.
- Grants will be advertised between 1st July and 30th September, and a meeting of the Research Committee held in November. Recommendations will then be sent to the Trustees of the Psoriasis Association for approval or further comment, and applicants notified of the decision by 31st December. Projects are therefore unlikely to start until the calendar year following application.
- The subsequent years payments of grants will be issued following receipt of a progress report (including lay summary) of the first year (and each subsequent year) work and a brief financial summary.



Future Development

- The Psoriasis Association will explore the possibilities of joint funding of awards such as career development fellowship, clinical research fellowship, and senior research fellowship with suitable grant making bodies.
- The Psoriasis Association will consider hosting a conference in order to feed back the results of research that it has funded, and to assess the impact of this research.
- The Trustees may identify priority areas of research and issue a “call” for applications in certain areas.
- Research addressing the questions posed in the NICE Guideline on Psoriasis will be welcomed
- Consideration will be given to the involvement of members in the development of the Research programme, for example, to identify the research issues that matter to patients, to become lay members of the Research Committee or to become involved in projects funded by the Psoriasis Association in their locality.
- The Research Fund is well established but it is important to focus on sustaining funds to maintain the fund into the future.
- The Strategy will be reviewed in 2017.