

Brain Research UK

Research Strategy

1. Introduction

- In 2015, we broadened our objectives to enable us to fund nationally, having previously funded exclusively at UCL Institute of Neurology.
- The aim of this research strategy is to set out how Brain Research UK can deliver the greatest impact for people affected by neurological conditions.
- Our remit encompasses a wide-range of disease areas and the strategy identifies research priorities to enable the charity to target funding towards areas of unmet need.

2. Geographical remit

Following the broadening of our objectives in 2015, all new funding streams are advertised nationally and are open to application from institutes across the UK.

Research outside the UK can only be funded as part of a UK-led collaboration.

We hold a number of endowments from which funding is restricted to research at the UCL Institute of Neurology. Funds from these endowments will continue to be restricted to the Institute of Neurology and will not be nationally advertised.

3. Funding remit

Given the charity's position as a national, pan-neurology and neuroscience funder, our remit encompasses a wide range of disease areas. These include:

- diseases of the central and peripheral nervous systems
- neurological conditions relevant to both children and adults, with a particular focus on translational research into mechanisms of disease
- the underlying neuroscience behind mental health conditions as well as neurology
- the underlying neuroscience behind brain injury as well as neurological diseases
- dementias and neurodegeneration, particularly relating to improved multidisciplinary working and coordination of effort

4. Research priorities

To help us target funding towards areas of unmet need, we have identified three research priorities for the short- to medium-term:

- **Acquired brain damage:** research into interventions that promote recovery at the impairment level, particularly those that bring together enhanced plasticity or stimulation with rehabilitation.
- **Neuro-oncology:** research addressing the biology, treatment and diagnosis of primary brain tumours and associated neurological complications.
- **Headache and facial pain:** research addressing the fundamental causes, mechanisms and relief of headache and facial pain.

These priority areas will form the basis of our national funding calls (see below) and will be reviewed annually.

5. Research funding mechanisms

A range of mechanisms to deploy funding will be applied to fund research within the priority areas.

In the short- to medium-term, we will focus our funding on **PhD studentships** and **project grants**. Both of these types of grants cover both clinical and non-clinical research. Project grants include provision for pilot/ proof-of-principle studies.

Funding permitting, each of these schemes will be run annually, in open national competition.

In the medium- to long-term, funding permitting, we hope to launch a post-doctoral fellowship scheme.

6. Research funding principles

The following principles underpin our research funding:

- **Patient benefit** - we will support research with tangible benefits for patients. Translational research lies at the heart of our research strategy, moving knowledge about basic biological mechanisms towards the development of new treatment and diagnostic tools.
- **Collaboration** - we will pursue an integrated approach that encourages scientists and clinicians to work closely together, across different neurological conditions and different scientific and medical disciplines, sharing insight and ideas on the biological mechanisms of disease and clinical challenges, and recognising the inter-related factors and overlapping pathologies between different conditions.
- **People** - we will nurture the next generation of researchers through funding schemes that are designed to support researchers – both clinical and non-clinical - in the early stages of their careers.
- **Partnership** - we will work in partnership with other organisations to tackle common interests, exploiting opportunities for matched funding
- **Innovation** - we will support the development of new ideas and initiate early stage projects

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