Research grants 2018

These grants help young outstanding investigators pursue ground-breaking research in the fields of clinical microbiology and infectious diseases.

The application period for 2018 is now open and closes on 11 October 2017 at 12:00 noon CET. Please only submit projects dealing with **Bacterial Infections & Diseases** (incl. diagnostics, pathogenesis, antibacterial susceptibility & resistance, antibacterial stewardship, vaccines).

Please submit any projects dealing with **Fungal/Viral/Parasitic Infections and Diseases** (incl. diagnostics, pathogenesis, antifungal/antiviral/antiparasitic susceptibility & resistance, stewardship, vaccines) next year, since these proposals will neither be reviewed this year nor be kept for next year.

For more detail, please consult the Research Grant FAQ or download all research grant application information in one package.

By complying with the criteria below you optimize your chances of success.

Funding

The maximum amount granted per project is EUR 20,000. This includes any potential overhead costs charged by your institution. ESCMID's funding may be used to support the entire project or part of it.

ESCMID has reserved up to EUR 50,000 each for two excellently rated projects, where the reviewers see a great potential and are of the opinion that they merit additional funds to take the topic further.

Project criteria

- The research project may consist of laboratory investigations, clinical studies, experimental animal studies, or a combination of these.
- For the Research Grant programme 2018 ESCMID only accepts projects dealing with **Bacterial Infections & Diseases** (incl. diagnostics, pathogenesis, antibacterial susceptibility & resistance, antibacterial stewardship, vaccines).
- Research projects usually run for 12 months (and may continue for a maximum of 24 months) and must start during the year the grant is received.

If your project does not meet the criteria stated above, it will be rejected directly without any peer review.

Applications will be peer-reviewed and the best projects will be selected based on a ranking of the applications and research proposals (see "Important guidance" below).

Eligibility criteria of applicants

Applicants must
- Be principal investigators of the proposed research.
- Have a valid Full or Young Scientist ESCMID membership.
- Be born on or after 1 January 1978.
- Have a medical degree (MD, MBBS, PharmD or equivalent), a PhD or be enrolled in a PhD programme.

Applicants who have received an ESCMID research grant before may only apply for a subsequent grant in the year after official completion of the first project.

Members of the ESCMID Executive Committee cannot apply for Research Grants nor submit a support letter for an application.

If the eligibility criteria are not met, your application will be rejected directly without any peer review.

What do you need to apply?

You must submit all documentation electronically; no hard copies are required. Make sure you upload the correct documents. After the deadline, you cannot change any part of your application. When submitting, please have the following documents ready:
- **Proposal PDF document** (labelled "YourSurname".pdf; max. 4MB) which includes:
  1) **Abstract** of your research project (max. 750 words; with 3-5 keywords that best describe your project): Please enter the abstract/keywords separately into the online form (in addition to them being part of the PDF document) to facilitate reviewer selection.
  2) **Introduction/background** (max. 500 words);
  3) **Objectives** (max. 300 words);
  4) **Purpose** (max. 700 words), significance and potential impact of the project;
  5) **Research plan** (max. 2,000 words) including design, materials & methods, data analysis, project timeline, co-investigators and their contribution to the project;
  6) **Budget** (max. 1,500 words; use tables wherever possible) including personnel, equipment, consumables;
  7) **Description** of your present research (max. 750 words);
  8) **CV** (max. 1,500 words): The CV should show that the applicant has the skills required to complete the project. If the applicant lacks qualification, the letters of support must outline that adequate mentoring is available for the project to proceed. You should discuss this with your supporters;
  9) Applicant's **publication list**: should contain max. 10 publications over the last five years; they must be relevant to the project or illustrate the relevant competencies.
- **Two supporting letters** (labelled "YourSurname"_support1.pdf and "YourSurname"_support2.pdf; max. 4MB each).
- **Potential reviewers:** You must suggest at least two suitable potential reviewers for your application. They should not be directly involved in the project proposal or have the same affiliation as the applicant. If possible they should not be from the same country, where the applicant is based. Please specify a reason if you want a certain person **not** to be selected as reviewer.
- A **colour photograph** file (labelled "YourSurname_Firstname".tiff, .eps or .jpg; max. 4MB) at least 4 x 6 cm with 300 dpi resolution for publication.

Important guidance for your application

- Write succinctly, i.e. you do not need to use the maximum number of words;
- Bullet points are encouraged to facilitate the reviewers' work;
- If you do not write in English fluently it is advisable to have the text reviewed;
- If your project combines different funding sources, it is **essential** to clearly specify what source is intended to fund what part of the project. (Omission leads to rejection.)
- To be transparent about the review process, please find below the instructions and rating options the reviewers use to rate your application (see pages 5-6).
- If you have any further questions about the procedure or the criteria, please read the FAQ document (see pages 7-10).

Reporting on the outputs of the grant-funded project

A financial report and a scientific report should be submitted within two months after completion of the project.

In the financial report, you need to provide a detailed breakdown of the funds used. The grantee's head of department needs to sign the document.

The scientific report (max. 1,000 words) should include:
- Short introduction summarizing the current stage of knowledge for non-specialists
- Study hypothesis
- Specification of what was funded by the ESCMID grant assess output
- Main findings: these may also include how the data contributed to other projects within the department(s)
- Conclusion(s)

Should the funding period exceed one year, you need to submit an interim report (i.e. including a scientific and financial update of the project) halfway through the project.

If a published scientific article is submitted with the report, the report may be abridged and refer to the relevant sections in the article. The article needs to disclose work within the project that received funding from other sources.

Publication of grant-funded projects

The recipient will acknowledge ESCMID as a provider of financial support for the project in all scientific publications on the project using the wording "*This study/project has been funded by a Research Grant [year of grant] of the European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) to [initials of grantee]*".

ESCMID makes no further claims on the intellectual property resulting from the project. The society's journal Clinical Microbiology and Infection (CMI) is the expected journal for initial submission of the manuscript(s), but alternative journals may be considered depending on the scope of the project.

ESCMID strongly encourages grantees to send proof of all published scientific articles based on the outputs of grant-funded projects to the ESCMID office – even if the project has officially

been closed and all reports have been sent. We will publish this information continuously on the grantees' website as well as annually in the ESCMID Yearbook.

Payment of the grant

After approval, 50% of the funds are transferred to the institution upon start of the project or by April at the latest, if the project has already started. The remaining 50% of the approved funds are paid out upon receipt of the final report or equivalent (see "Reporting" above).

Application procedure

Applications are **accepted** until **11 October 2017, 12:00 noon CET**.

The ESCMID Executive Committee will select the project(s) and determine the appropriate grant support. Applicants will be notified of the decision at the **beginning of February 2018**. Please refrain from inquiring about the status of your application before this date.

Last updated: June 2017

Research Grant Reviewer Info

Please find below the instructions ESCMID gives its grant reviewers. By addressing the questions set out below in a concise and precise manner you not only help reviewers in their assessment, it also increases the chance of your proposal being selected.

Reviewer statement: While reviewing, I am aware that this granting scheme is for younger scientists (up to 40 years of age) to receive possibly one of the first grants (of up to EUR☐20,000) in their career. [Reviewer will have a box to tick]

Section One: Principal clarity (answer required)
Does the applicant clearly identify how ESCMID funds will be used to deliver the stated objectives? If the proposed project combines different funding sources, does the applicant clearly declare which part(s) will be funded by the ESCMID grant and for which part(s) of the project funding is sought or already guaranteed through other sources?
Yes, please proceed with Section Two.
No, please do not examine this application further.

Section Two: Scientific value of the grant application
Please consider
Strength of the research proposal – is a significant question/knowledge gap being addressed?
Limitations of the research proposal
Level of innovation
Feasibility of methodology
Identification of likely impact

Scoring (required):
0= Does not meet the stated objectives or the objectives are not logical;
1= Very poor; addressed in a cursory and unsatisfactory manner;
2= Poor; there are serious inherent weaknesses;
3= Fair; broadly addresses the stated objectives but with significant weaknesses;
4= Good; addresses the objectives but minor improvements are possible;
5= Excellent; successfully addresses all the objectives.

Reviewer comment (min. 120 words, answer required)

Section Three: Practicability of the grant application
Please consider
Justification of essential resources (including animal numbers if necessary)
Appropriateness of timeframe of the project
Investigator time and involvement
Value for money
Objectives are clearly achievable within the stated budget and timelines

Scoring (required):
0= No attempt to do so;
1= Rather poor; with serious inherent weaknesses either in timeliness or feasibility within the stated resources;
2= Rather good; feasible but minor improvements are possible;
3= Excellent; in that it addresses all the objectives in a timely and resource-feasible manner.

Section Four: Quality of CV/background of grant applicant
Please consider
Suitability of research environment and group
Level of host support
Track record of individuals

Is it apparent from the CV/references/support letters that the applicant has the necessary competences to progress this topic? Areas where the applicant has little experience should be mentioned by the applicant and the letters of support should make clear that there is adequate mentoring for the project to proceed.

Scoring (required):
0= No attempt to do so;
1= CV and references and support letters do not reassure the referee;
2= Minor issues only;
3= There are no concerns.

Reviewer comment (optional)

Section Five: Declaration of conflicts of interests of reviewers (required)
Do you have any possible conflict of interest to declare in relation to this project?
Yes, please detail:
No

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Research Grants – Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

Thematic rotation for submissions

Q: What does this rotation mean for my submission?

A: For the Research Grant programme in **even years** (for this application period: Research Grants 2018), only projects dealing with **Bacterial Infections & Diseases** (incl. antibacterial susceptibility & resistance, diagnostics, pathogenesis, antibacterial stewardship, vaccines) are accepted.

For the Research Grant programme in **uneven years** (for Research Grants 2019), only projects dealing with **Fungal/Viral/Parasitic Infections & Diseases** (incl. diagnostics, pathogenesis antifungal/antiviral/antiparasitic susceptibility & resistance, stewardship, vaccines) are accepted.

IMPORTANT: Please do not submit projects dealing with Fungal/Viral/Parasitic Infections and Diseases this year. If you want to submit such projects, please wait until next year.

Q: What if my project spans both separated areas, e.g. a diagnostic assay for bacteria and fungi? And what if the project's main focus is in one area, but it also touches the other area?

A: In the first case, you may apply for the Research Grant programme in even and uneven years. In the second case, please apply for the programme, where your main focus is covered. If in doubt, please contact the grant secretariat (nancy.gerits@escmid.org).

General

Q: Who is eligible to write supporting letters for my project? May they be from my institute?

A: The supporters should know you professionally and be able to judge your work. They could include your advisor during your training or other collaboration partners, but not your current direct supervisor and/or anybody from the same department.

Q: What if supporters insist on sending the supporting letter directly to ESCMID?

A: Please submit your application online. For the pdf file with the letter, submit a pdf with the correct file name and please state in the file: *„This letter will be submitted directly to ESCMID by the supporter"*. Upon submission, you will receive a confirmation with your name, project title, and email address. Please give this information to the supporter, so they can refer to this data in their email to ESCMID. Let them know how to name the file they will send to the grant secretariat (nancy.gerits@escmid.org).

Project timelines

Q: Is there a minimum/maximum duration of project?

A: There is no minimum, the usual length should be about 12 months, the maximum is 24 months. You may apply for an extension if you encounter unforeseen delays.

Q: When is a reasonable time to start the project?
A: The project must begin in the year the grant is awarded. Usually researchers do not start the project before they receive the decision on the funding, but this is up to the researchers.

Eligibility

Q: Concerning eligibility criteria: is it possible for anyone (with a MSc) to apply or do you need to have a PhD/MD title?
A: A PhD/MD title is not required. The principal investigator must be working in the fields of clinical microbiology or infectious diseases or a combination of the two, and be at least enrolled in a MD or PhD programme. The project must be supervised by the head of department/group.

Q: Are there special regulations for applicants with career breaks (e.g. maternity, paternity leave)?
A: Yes, if you had a proven career break (such as but not limited to maternity/paternity leave, serious illness, care for close relatives, military service) please send an email explaining the case plus document(s) as proof as attachment to nancy.gerits@escmid.org as early as possible but not later than two weeks before the application deadline. Decisions to extend the age limit will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Q: Do I have to be affiliated with an institution to apply?
A: Yes, researchers need to have the backing of an institution for their project to apply.

Q: How close does my project need to be to the fields of CM and ID?
A: The project proposal should be related to CM and/or ID. Translational research proposals will be given priority, but the project does not have to focus on clinical application.

Q: Do you accept applications also from private / profit-oriented hospitals or only from public or non-profit hospitals / research institutes?
A: Yes, applications are also accepted from private / profit-oriented hospitals.

Q: Do you accept applications also from companies / start-up research firms?
A: No, applications are not accepted from companies / start-up research firms.

Q: What do I have to do, if I move to another institution?
A: This depends on the point in time when you move (between application and start of project = Case 1; while project is already running = Case 2) and whether you want to take the project with you to the new institution (Case a) or whether you agree with your old institution that the project remains there (Case b). In any case, all parties involved (grantee, old and new institution) must agree on the planned solution. If this is not the case, the grant will need to be returned to ESCMID.

- **Case 1a:** The grantee and the new institution send a joint letter to ESCMID asking for approval of the transfer of the grant to the new institution. A statement of agreement by the old institution should be enclosed with this letter. Upon ESCMID approval, ESCMID will issue a new Grant Acceptance Agreement to be signed by the grantee and the new institution.
- **Case 2a:** The grantee and the new institution send a joint letter to ESCMID asking for approval of the transfer of the grant to the new institution. In this letter, the grantee has to give a progress report, a statement on the budget already used and a plan for the transfer of the remaining funds and usage at the new institution. A statement of agreement by the old institution should be enclosed with this letter. Upon ESCMID approval, the grantee must organise the transfer of funds between the institutions.
- **Case 1b:** The grantee and the old institution send a joint letter to ESCMID asking for approval of the grant to remain at the old institution. The grantee will specify his/her new role in the project (no longer involved, supervising, collaborating) and the old institution will name a (co-)investigator running the project (enclose investigator's CV). ESCMID will evaluate whether or not to give approval and whether the original grantee will keep his/her grantee status or whether it will be

transferred to the (co-) investigator. If necessary, ESCMID will issue a new Grant Acceptance Agreement to be signed by the relevant parties.

- **Case 2b:** Grantee and old institution send a joint letter to ESCMID asking for approval of the grant to remain at the old institution. The grantee must send a progress report, a statement on the budget already used and specify his/her role in the project (no longer involved, supervising, collaborating) and the old institution will name a (co-)investigator running the project (enclose investigator's CV). ESCMID will evaluate whether or not to give approval and whether the original grantee will keep his/her grantee status or whether this will be transferred to the named (co-) investigator. If necessary, ESCMID will issue a new Grant Acceptance Agreement to be signed by the relevant parties.

Application process

Q: Is there a maximum number of files that I can submit online?

A: Yes, the maximum number of documents you may upload is four (main information, two support letters, and one picture). The document "'yoursurname'.pdf" must include all required information in one file. On the webpage http://www.mergepdf.net/ you may combine pdfs free-of-charge.

Q: Who is eligible to be proposed as reviewer for my project? Can they be from my home institute?

A: They may not be directly involved in the project proposal or be employed at the same department/institution as you. Preferably they should not be from the country where you reside.

Budget

Q: May I use at least part of the grant for personnel costs (temporary worker), consumables, services like sequencing?

A: Yes, these types of costs are eligible. Please detail in the budget; you should give the actual breakdown in the final report.

Q: Can I include travel expenses or contributions to course/conference costs?

A: This depends on how relevant the travel/event is to the project. If the travel can be considered absolutely necessary to the project, then yes. For coverage of course/conference costs, ESCMID provides a number of attendance grants for this purpose.

Q: Is it allowed and/or required to include overheads for the home institution in the project budget?

A: You are allowed but not required to include overhead costs, up to a maximum percentage of 10%.

Administration and payment of grants

Q: How is the grant paid out?

A: After approval, 50% of the funds are transferred to the institution one month to two weeks before start of the project or one month after notification if the project has already started. The remaining 50% of the approved funds are paid out after receipt of the final report or equivalent.

Q: What do I need to do if I need the grant to be paid in full upon the start of the project?

A: If more than 50% of the funds are needed at the beginning of the project, the recipient may submit a request to receive all funds before the end of project. A detailed explanation of the reason for this request must be included.

Q: Does the grant have to be paid to my institutional account?
A: Yes, we do not allow any bank transfers to individual accounts.

Q: May we include VAT in the calculations?
If the budget will cover overhead costs or taxes/VAT, the amount must already be included in the total grant amount.

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