

Platform Grants - advice to applicants

Purpose

These grants are intended to support the establishment or expansion of a research platform of national and international relevance, based in New Zealand.

Scope

- A five-year grant for a platform that provides nationwide access to resources enabling research into neurological conditions
- Directorship that includes early/mid-career researchers/clinicians with succession planning
- An advisory board/steering committee
- A business plan that considers fees for service (where appropriate) and options for charity/government/industry/pharma partnership
- Involves an educational aspect (i.e., student or trainee involvement, teaching, engaging with patients or community groups)
- Partnership with Māori (Māori consultation or participation, Māori team members, alignment with Māori research principles and ethics, significance to Māori health)

Who can apply?

- Post-doctoral researchers, clinicians, academics

What can be funded?

- Salaries for post-doctoral research fellows
- Salaries for named investigators
- Salaries for research assistants and technicians
- Salaries for administration and support staff
- Working expenses, including publication costs
- Equipment
- Travel for conferences and training courses directly related to the programme, this should be included in the programme budget

What will not be funded?

- Institutional overheads (see Funding Intent)
- Salaries for those whose salary is funded by their institution

Important Dates

- EOI deadline – 1 November 2024
- EOI results announced – 17 February 2025
- Full application deadline – 12 May 2025
- Referee feedback released – 21 July 2025
- Referee rebuttals due – 4 August 2025
- Interviews will be held in late August 2025
- Results announced 22 September 2025

Maximum value

- \$1,000,000

Process

- Applicants submit a two-page expression of interest (EOI), focusing on what they plan to do, how it fits with the funding criteria and what impact it will have. A full budget is not required at this stage
- Create an application on our online portal at <https://grants.neurological.org.nz/>. You will need to create a new account if you are a first-time user
- Your application will go to your configured research office for review, before being sent on (at the institution's decision) to the Neurological Foundation
- If more than ten applications are received, EOIs may be triaged through pre-scoring. Any applications that are not deemed to fit the purpose of the available funding will also be triaged out at this stage. The Foundation will provide feedback to those that are unsuccessful at the EOI stage
- For applicants invited to submit a full application, the deadline will be three months after the announcement of the EOI outcome. The full application will require a budget and supporting documentation
- The budget requested should be in NZD. The Neurological Foundation will not award more than is requested in the budget and does not fund institutional overheads. Only actual costs for ACC and superannuation should be included in salary associated costs
- Supporting documentation:
 - NZ Standard CVs for all named investigators, including research assistants and subcontractors, using the template available on the application form
 - Partial funding and ethics approval letters, as required
 - Quotes for items of equipment or subcontracts, and letters of support for collaborations, should be attached at the end of the research proposal
- Full applications will receive up to four external reviews, which will be made available to applicants prior to interviews. Applicants will be invited to provide rebuttals to referee comments. If the average of the referee scores is *Satisfactory* or less, applications may be triaged at this stage after the committee review the referee reviews and applicant rebuttals
- The committee will interview remaining applicants via videoconference. Up to three of the investigators may be involved in the interview, and at least one of the principal investigators must be present. Each interview will be strictly half an hour. Questions will be structured around the written application, scoring criteria and points raised by external referees. Applicants will also be given time to ask questions of the committee
- The committee will make funding recommendations to the National Council of the Foundation. The final decision will be made by the Council.
- Successful applicants will work with the Foundation and their host institution(s) to create a Memorandum of Understanding

Funding Intent

The Neurological Foundation is a registered charity funded fully through charitable donations for research and education. Institutional overheads are indirect costs that cannot be attributed to a particular grant, and therefore do not align with our purpose. The funding is intended to support a platform where the host institution agrees to provide the necessary infrastructure and services. It is not intended to support a platform that requires overheads.

Scoring criteria:

1. **Alignment of purpose** (fits with Foundation purpose and intent of funding offered)
2. **Programme/platform quality** (comprehensive and appropriate aims and objectives, potential to lead to advances in the field)
3. **Calibre of team** (calibre of CV in relation to years of research experience, previous grants, skills cover all required expertise, advisory board/steering committee)
4. **Collaboration** (collaboration nationally and internationally, involvement of early career researchers, industry and scientific/clinical input where required)
5. **Research environment** (calibre of institution, level of support for applicants, access to all resources required, sound business plan)
6. **Educational outcomes** (student or trainee involvement, teaching, engaging with patients or community groups)

Partnership with Māori

A reciprocal and respectful partnership with Māori is a responsibility under Te Tiriti o Waitangi that allows Māori to assume tino rangatiratanga over their health needs and aspirations and enhance the health and wellbeing of the people of Aotearoa under the Pae Ora Act (2022).

The New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework states that *“An optimal relationship between health researchers and Māori will be a real partnership that extends beyond the timeframe of any one research project or single instance of consultation. Research is likely to be improved if it is recognised that iwi, hapū, whānau, and other Māori communities can make an important contribution to health research and improving health outcomes for Māori and, therefore, for all New Zealanders”*.

Developing partnerships with Māori through consultation and collaboration, application of kaupapa Māori approaches to research and ethics and aligning outcomes to meet health needs and aspirations as determined by Māori will lead to more equitable health outcomes and opportunities for the people of Aotearoa. Recognition of your partnership with Māori should be visible throughout the scoring criteria.

Neurological Foundation purpose

The Foundation will accept applications that align with our purpose. Our purpose statement:

1. *Arrange for, promote, foster, develop and assist the study of and acquisition, dissemination and application of knowledge and information concerning:*
 - a) *the causes, diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases and disorders of the nervous system, and*
 - b) *the education of members of the public in relation to matters concerning the causes, diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases and disorders of the nervous system and caregiving arrangements in respect of those persons who suffer from such diseases and disorders*
2. *Encourage, stimulate and aid research and investigation into the causes and treatment of diseases and disorders of the nervous system*
3. *Encourage, arrange and assist students, medical practitioners, scientists, welfare works and others from New Zealand and overseas to undertake research in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases and disorders of the nervous system into the care and rehabilitation of patients suffering from such diseases and to train them in methods of research in the fields of medical and social science.*

Contracts

Successful applicants will work with the Foundation and their host institution(s) to create a Memorandum of Understanding that outline the conditions of the grant, including the following:

- If required, ethics approval must be obtained prior to establishing the platform
- The host institution will administer the grant and will assign a representative to work with the Foundation if the details of the MoU require changing as the platform evolves
- The MoU will have a specific start date and end date, with exit clauses for all parties
- The Foundation may appoint a representative to the advisory board/steering committee
- Funded salaries will cease at the grant's end date, and the Foundation will not fund any leave owing at the end of the grant
- Annual progress reports are required on the anniversary of the start date. A final report will be required within 12 months of the platform end date. Reports should be submitted to the Foundation through the application in the grants portal
- Presentations or publications resulting from the platform will acknowledge the Foundation's support
- The team will endeavour to meet reasonable requests from the Foundation to support and participate in publicity and promotional events from time to time

Questions?

If you have any queries please contact the Foundation at research@neurological.org.nz