



Neuromuscular Research New Zealand

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Protocols for assessing research proposals for grants funding

Research supported by Neuromuscular Research New Zealand may be qualitative or quantitative, and/or investigative, and/or experimental.

The Trustees will assess research proposals in accordance with the following criteria, as relevant and appropriate to each proposal:

1. **Significance:** The Trustees will place considerable weight on the significance of the work to the lives of New Zealanders living with neuromuscular conditions (covered by MDANZ).
2. **The aims of the proposal:** The aim of the project should be briefly and clearly defined. The way in which the subject of the proposed research arose and its position in the current thinking on the subject should be given in the context of a review of all significant and relevant literature.
3. **Novelty and uniqueness:** Proposals should demonstrate how the research compares to work by others in New Zealand and overseas, why it is more appropriate for it to be conducted and funded locally rather than by overseas research entities, and how the approach asks questions not asked or addressed by others.
4. **Responsiveness to Māori:** Proposals should reflect the responsibilities of researchers to protect the rights and interests of Māori when conducting research. If Māori are involved as participants, proposals should address the needs of Māori in their research methodology and design.
5. **Design and methods:** The general design of the research should be described in a way which will allow non-expert reviewers, as well as specialist referees, to judge whether the design is sound. Proposals should be clear about what is to be measured and how any results will be analysed. Timelines should be included, including comment on their feasibility
6. **The appropriateness of the level of funding requested:** Funding and grants requests should be sufficiently detailed and justified to allow the Trustees to decide as to the sufficiency or otherwise of the requested level of financial support, and should include; the total amount of funding sought; details of the costs, number and qualifications of staff who will be engaged to carry out the project; equipment requirements and costs; and, working expenses.

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Proposals will be considered which have requested and/or received funding from other sources, in which case full details will be required. Overhead expenses or permanent academic staff employment expenses will not be funded.

7. Collaboration: Research projects that foster collaboration will be considered. However the proposal should include written confirmation from the named collaborator(s) to demonstrate that he or she has considered the proposal and is willing and able to contribute to it as described.
8. Ethical Considerations: The applicant must demonstrate that benefits, risks and outcomes of their research have been considered using ethical principles. Applicants should indicate whether ethics approval is required and has/has not been granted. Full documentation of approval by all relevant ethics committees will need to be submitted prior to funding being made available.
9. Previous research supported by grant(s) from the NRFT: The Trustees will require available details of previous projects, level of financial support and the outcome of the research. If the project encountered problems these also need to be discussed. Relevance to the present project should be explained if appropriate.
10. Clarity: The proposal should be able to be understood by those who are not experts in the field of the proposed study.
11. Decision making: The quality of the proposal in the opinion of appropriate national and international referees. (The final decision however is that of the Trustees and need not correspond with the opinions of its advisors).
12. The standard of submission: All proposals must be submitted in writing on the correct application form (available separately in the Research section of the MDA website www.mda.org.nz), be clearly laid out, and use single space text in a font of point size 12. As a guide proposals should be limited to 12 A4 pages, and to 6 A4 pages for proposals requiring funding of less than \$10,000.
13. Proposals should nominate not more than three people in the field who the Trustees can approach for the purposes of peer review should this be required.
14. MDA support: All proposals must be consistent with the research priorities of the Muscular Dystrophy Association of New Zealand (available separately in the Research section of the MDA website www.mda.org.nz).
15. If a postgraduate student scholarship is being sought this should be clearly indicated as part of the application and be by or on behalf of a named student.

July 2017

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