

## RCGP Scientific Foundation Board Funding Application Guidance 2024

Please read this guidance document prior to completing an SFB application.

### Introduction

The Scientific Foundation Board (SFB), established in 1976, reflects the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) commitment to research. The SFB awards grants for research relevant to general medical practice and primary care which is undertaken from a United Kingdom (UK) institution, and normally based on subjects within UK general medical practice. The SFB is currently chaired by Professor Sophie Park and includes experienced researchers and other key representatives, including Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE), in the field of primary care. The application form, supporting documents, and relevant deadlines are available on the [RCGP Website](#).

### About these guidance notes

This document contains information and guidance for applicants submitting proposals for an SFB annual research grant. It is important that applicants must read these guidance notes fully before starting to complete the application form to ensure that they provide the correct information. The activities of the SFB are coordinated by the RCGP Research and Innovation (R&I) team. Any enquiries relating to the process, please contact the R&I team via email ([SFB@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:SFB@rcgp.org.uk)).

### General information about the SFB

The SFB views research in its broadest sense, including experimental and descriptive studies, both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The SFB offers two avenues for funding:

- Practitioners Allowance Grants (PAGs), of up to £2,000
- Annual Research Grants, of between £1,000 and £30,000

Annual Research Grant applications of £1,000 to £30,000 are reviewed by board members individually and are then considered in a closed annual SFB meeting. Where appropriate, external peer review may be requested on a case-by-case basis. The closing date for the submission of applications to be considered is posted on the College website.

To apply for the SFB Grant please visit our [Grant Management Platform](#).

## Eligibility

All researchers are eligible to apply for grants, applicants **do not** need to be a College member. Appropriate awards are made on an individual case basis as the prime consideration will be scientific quality, but the following criteria are generally those used:

- Members of any primary care discipline are eligible to apply.
- For all grants, applications that involve multi-disciplinary collaboration and collaboration with academic departments are encouraged.

It is the College's policy that an applicant can apply for funding for one College award for the same piece of work **once within a three-year period**. However, if the application has been substantially reviewed following feedback from an unsuccessful application, a second application will be considered.

Re-submission of an application should include a document explaining in detail what has been changed and how the new application is different from the previous one (this can be added in Section 11).

Previous College grant recipients may only apply for further funding from the SFB within this period if the subject matter for their proposed study has been substantially developed or is significantly different from that supported by their original award. However, in special circumstances where a project which the SFB has funded requires a small amount of additional money to allow its effective completion the SFB may be willing to make a supplementary award to the original application but this application and reasoning for this must be made in advance. Any doubts concerning the eligibility, please contact the RCGP R&I team at [SFB@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:SFB@rcgp.org.uk)

## Priorities

The SFB has no research priorities of its own but does encourage applications that address the College's strategic objectives or clinical priorities. In the event of applications of equal merit being received, the SFB will accord the following priority (with the prime consideration being scientific quality):

- Practicing GPs
- Early career researchers or experienced Primary Care practitioners with minimal research experience including trainees.
- Post PhD primary care researcher
- Research projects that may demonstrate a shorter-term (<5yr) impact on patient outcomes or service delivery.
- Applicants who have not previously been funded by the SFB
- Short-term projects which will normally last up to 18 months

On occasions, the SFB has a working in partnership with other organisations and there will be additional themed calls for submission of research grants. These will be considered on their own merits in conjunction with the partner organization, and potentially require separate review panels.

There are no ongoing partnerships for 2024.

### What the SFB will not fund

It should be noted that the SFB does **not** fund:

- International projects with no substantial component of the project taking place in UK general practice
- Audit projects or guideline development
- Undergraduate students
- Postgraduate fees (although some funding may be available for research including consumable costs)
- Applications in excess of £30,000
- Time for individuals already in receipt of funding for the same research from another source. For example, the SFB would not normally consider funding protected time for an individual working in a research practice that was in receipt of R&D support funding\*
- Institutional overheads as part of its awards
- Supervision fees
- Projects that are already funded by another body, unless there has been a specific theme call.  
Projects that already have funding but have exceeded their budget
- As this is a charitable body, it is expected that senior support will be available and integral to the project

\* The SFB might, however, consider a request for the protected time from an individual currently employed, solely to undertake one specific research project where such a request would enable them to undertake an additional project. Such an application would be considered on an individual case basis. Applicants requiring locum cover will be required to provide receipts.

For any queries, please contact [SFB@rcgp.org](mailto:SFB@rcgp.org).

### General guidance: Creating an application

#### The 2024 Application Form

The application form for SFB Annual Research Grants is hosted on an online platform – Good Grants. Applicants can go in and out of the application form as often as they would like until the deadline. Applicants are reminded to always save their changes as they go.

Throughout the online form applicants will be asked to upload the necessary supporting documents. Applicants should:

- Upload supporting documents must be uploaded as a Word document or converted pdf. Scanned pdfs will not be accepted
- Complete all mandatory sections
- Comply with word count / size parameters

Once an applicant has submitted an application, we ask for up to 24hrs for the SFB to acknowledge the application. If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgement of the application, please contact the R&I Team via email ([SFB@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:SFB@rcgp.org.uk)).

#### Application timeline:

Practitioner's Allowance Grants (PAGs) call is open throughout the year.

Applicants must apply for Annual Research Grants during the submissions window, as specified on the RCGP website. Applications submitted after the deadline and applications not submitted in full, with supporting documents will automatically be rejected. Should applicants miss the deadline, we encourage resubmission the following year. The SFB will review these applications prior to, and during the annual SFB meeting.

The SFB will aim to notify applicants of outcomes within 4-6 weeks of the annual meeting, which is being held in January 2025

**Documents to prepare:**

Annual Research Grant applications must include supporting documents. All grant applications must contain appropriate signatures; these must be submitted as electronic documents.

The necessary supporting documents include:

- Agreement from research sponsor (Section 5)
- Reference List for the literature review (Section 7)

The optional supporting documents include:

- Evidence of ethical approval or application, if applicable (Section 4)
- Evidence of research governance approval, if applicable (Section 4)
- Cost justification, if applicable (Section 8)
- Supporting statement from study advisor, if applicable (Section 9)
- In re-submission cases, a document explaining, in detail, what has been changed and how the new application is different from the previous one (Section 11)
- Any reference to an unpublished instrument, if applicable

**Early career researchers or those new to research**

It is essential that the appropriate signatures and statements are obtained from the applicant's adviser/supervisor and research sponsor organisation. The signature and statement from the adviser/supervisor are required as a means of ensuring that they:

- Have read the application research proposal
- Confirm the proposal has received and incorporated relevant advice
- Are satisfied that the application is ready for review by the SFB and has been through any internal peer review process as appropriate.

Including a supporting statement from a supervisor/advisor is an important requirement for early career or researchers those new to research and it will lessen the likelihood of the SFB either requiring changes to the application before agreeing to fund a study or of rejecting an application because, for example, of major flaws in the study design.

If the application refers to an unpublished instrument, the requisite number of copies (see above) should accompany the application.

Successful applicants are expected to commence work and request a release of funds within six months of being awarded a grant (extensions are possible however if permission is granted by the SFB).

## Start application

Please click the link on the RCGP [website](#) or via this [link](#).

Please create a Good Grants account to begin the application. Once an applicant has an active account please select the relevant application Form to begin the application.

To start your application, please enter your full name (title forname, surname).

*\*Please note once submitted all applications will be allocated a SFB reference number.*

The form has required and optional questions that need to be completed. If any required sections are missing applicants will be unable to submit.

Applicants can enter and exit the application as many times as they would like, but once the deadline has passed they will not be able to make any further amendments. Please remember to select the submit button once complete.

## Section 1A

### Principal applicant details

The principal applicant is responsible for the grant from application until grant closure. The principal applicant will become the grant holder/principal investigator for the research study. This will involve having oversight of the research study and having the responsibility for corresponding and updating the SFB with the study's progress and finances.

If the principal applicant is a member of the College, please provide their membership number and specify the local RCGP faculty.

Where research will contribute towards a higher qualification for the applicant, please include the nature of this qualification (For example MPhil / PhD / MD). Research projects carried out as part of an MSc or other higher degree may be funded, but applications should not include any elements that are normally covered by university fees.

This section allows applicants to enter their current job title and organisation. The current job title should be the most relevant title, if the applicant holds an academic position, then this is the one that should be entered here. Applicants should also highlight, in brief, any other appointments or positions of responsibility that they are currently holding that may be relevant to the application.

## Section 1B

(Optional)

### Principal applicant diversity personal data

This section requests basic information about the applicant's demographic profile, specifically gender, ethnicity and disability. It includes a 'prefer not to say' option to enable applicants who do not want to share this data to opt-out.

The SFB is keen to be able to promote diversity within GP research and ensure underrepresented groups are able to access funding for their work.

To do this successfully it is necessary for the SFB administrators to monitor the demographic makeup of its applicants so it can respond to any underrepresentation appropriately.

Any data included in this section will be kept confidential and secure and will not be shared with the SFB, peer reviewers, or with third parties. No individual data would ever be published.

This data will solely be used for internal monitoring and analysis purposes to promote diversity and inclusion in research funding.

Section 2	Research project summary
<p>Please provide the following summary information about the grant application</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title of project and abbreviated title is relevant</li> <li>• Full amount of funding being requested</li> <li>• Anticipated start date</li> <li>• Anticipated end date</li> <li>• Total duration of the project (in months)</li> </ul>	

Section 3	Principal applicant funding history
<p>If the applicant answers 'Yes' to any of this sections questions a drop-down will appear for specification.</p> <p>Applicants will be asked to specify they have received any previous research grant funding from the SFB, (including if they were named as a co-applicant) and asked to provide their grant reference number (SFB 20XX-XX).</p> <p>The SFB does not confer new awards to any applicant/co-applicant if their final report including invoicing from a previously funded project is still outstanding after the twelve-month deadline.</p> <p>Applications that have been declined for funding are not eligible for resubmission within a three-year period. Previous SFB grant applicants may only re-apply for funding within this period if the subject matter for their project has been substantially developed or is significantly different from their original project. For any queries concerning eligibility on these grounds please contact <a href="mailto:SFB@rcgp.org.uk">SFB@rcgp.org.uk</a>.</p> <p>Any application re-submissions should include a document explaining in detail (in Section 11) what has been changed and how the new application is different from the previous one.</p> <p>If the applicant has applied to another funder for this work, they will be asked to please provide details of whether or not this application has been successful. If the application is still pending a decision, please provide dates of when a decision is expected. Such an application would be considered on an individual case basis.</p>	

Section 4	Research governance & Ethical approval
Section 4A	Research governance
<p>All applicants must conduct research funded by the SFB in line with the provisions of the UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research. Where relevant, the EU Clinical Trials Directive which applies to all trials on human subjects involving medicinal products should be adhered to.</p> <p>UK Policy Framework for Health and Social Care Research:  <a href="https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/uk-policy-framework-health-social-care-research/">https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/policies-standards-legislation/uk-policy-framework-health-social-care-research/</a></p> <p>EU Clinical Trials Directive:  <a href="https://health.ec.europa.eu/medicinal-products/clinical-trials_en#guidelines-on-the-conduct-of-clinical-trials">https://health.ec.europa.eu/medicinal-products/clinical-trials_en#guidelines-on-the-conduct-of-clinical-trials</a></p> <p>For research undertaken in a GP practice, it may be useful to <a href="#">become Research Ready® accredited</a>. Research Ready® is an accessible tool that helps GP Practices ensure they meet the UK's research governance framework. Where the proposed study involves NHS patients, staff or resources, appropriate ethical approval, and local research governance approval must be obtained. It is essential to ensure that strict confidentiality is maintained and that assurance is given to participants that this will be done. This will, in any case, be required by all Research Ethics Committees.</p> <p>Applicants should specify if research governance is required by selecting 'Yes' or 'No' in the first field, then provide the relevant information in the drop-down that will appear. Applicants should explain why governance is not required, or alternatively provide details or evidence of research governance requirements.</p>	

Section 4B	Ethics approval
<p>Applicants should specify if research ethics approval is required by selecting 'Yes' or 'No' in the first field, then provide the relevant information in the drop-down that will appear.</p> <p>Applicants should explain why approval is not required, or alternatively specify if approval has been obtained. Where approval has been granted, applicants are recommended to submit evidence from the research ethics committee confirming ethical approval. Where approval is pending, applicants should detail the organisation they have requested approval from and anticipated dates for receiving a response.</p> <p><b>For more information on ethics approval please see below</b>  <b>England and Wales</b> <a href="https://hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/">https://hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/</a> and <a href="https://www.hra.nhs.uk/approvals-amendments/what-approvals-do-i-need/research-ethics-committee-review/">https://www.hra.nhs.uk/approvals-amendments/what-approvals-do-i-need/research-ethics-committee-review/</a>  <b>Scotland:</b> <a href="https://www.nhsresearchscotland.org.uk/services/research-ethics">https://www.nhsresearchscotland.org.uk/services/research-ethics</a>  <b>Northern Ireland:</b> <a href="https://research.hscni.net/approval-research-hsc/">https://research.hscni.net/approval-research-hsc/</a> / <a href="https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1983.htm">https://hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/1983.htm</a></p> <p><b>Confidentiality and data protection</b>  If a study will use personal data on an individual who can be identified, this may fall under the remit of the GDPR 2018. It is the applicant's personal responsibility to ensure that the provisions of the act are met. Further information on the act may be obtained from the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Email address: <a href="mailto:casework@ico.org.uk">casework@ico.org.uk</a></p>	

Section 5	Research Sponsor
<p>Applicants are required to specify the organisation that has agreed to be the research sponsor of the project in accordance with the UK Policy Framework for Health &amp; Social Care Research, <a href="#">Section 9.10 Sponsors</a>.</p> <p>The SFB itself does not assume the role of research sponsor. In order to secure a suitable sponsor, it may be useful to consult their Principal Study Design Advisor (See section 9), local academic department, primary care research network or local primary care organisation.</p> <p>The applicant should attach a signed confirmation letter from the Research Sponsor legal representative.</p>	

Section 6	Application summary information
Section 6A	Topic Areas and Methodologies
<p>In order to efficiently allocate applications to members of the SFB for review, applicants are asked to indicate the health topic and main methodologies that are to be used within the proposed research.</p> <p>The SFB is interested in funding research across all these topics, but is particularly interested in research that relates to our clinical priorities.</p> <p>In 2024, RCGP clinical priority is preventive medicine.</p>	



Section 6B	Conflict of interest
<p>Applicants should disclose any potential conflict of interest with members of the SFB. Conflict of interest may arise from a personal relationship (family / partner / marriage / close personal friend), departmental connections, co-working, collaborations, association, publications, competition and affiliation with members of the SFB.</p> <p>The position and job title of SFB members can be found on the RCGP <a href="#">website</a>.</p>	

Section 7	Research proposal
Section 7A	Proposal: Background and rationale
<p>This section should include a brief literature review and explain how applicants expect to add to the body of knowledge. Evidence of a thorough review of relevant background literature should be provided to support the research proposal.</p> <p>Citations should be provided in <b>Vancouver style</b> or condensed Vancouver style and recorded in a separate document that can be uploaded at the end of this section.</p> <p>It is expected that the literature review will be up to date and cite recent examples of primary research papers that facilitated a balanced, objective and comprehensive review of the field and demonstrate how this informs the research proposal. A good review would normally cite a minimum of 20 peer review references (subject to the maturity of the field being researched).</p>	

Section 7B	Proposal: Summary
<p>Applicants should provide a short summary outlining the proposed study. Including the purpose, aims, research activities and anticipated outcomes of their research project. Please include how the research will impact primary care. This should be no longer than 300 words.</p> <p><b>The following sections will allow applicants to expand on the proposed research study.</b></p>	

Section 7C	Research proposal: aims and objectives
<p>The aims and/or research question(s) of the project should be clearly defined and articulated, with links to the objectives of the study and anticipated outcomes.</p> <p>For the purposes of the SFB, the aims of the project should be defined as an indication of the intentions of the research proposal, taking the form of a hypothesis. There should be an emphasis on what is to be accomplished (as opposed to how it is to be accomplished).</p> <p>The research question/s are the key question the study plans to answer. In general, the research question(s) should be clearly stated as testable hypotheses if the study is an experimental one. In some types of study design (e.g., descriptive studies), research questions rather than hypothesis testing may be more appropriate.</p> <p>For the purposes of the SFB, objectives should be defined as measurable activities from which it can be determined whether or not the aims of the study have been accomplished. It is recommended that objectives are presented as up to six succinct bullet points. These should be precise, focused, outline the more immediate project outcomes, and place weight upon how the aims are to be achieved. The objectives should demonstrate a clear link to the research methodology.</p> <p>The SFB recommends completing all sections - aims, research questions and objectives if possible.</p>	

Section 7D	Proposal: Plan, Impact PPIE and timeline
	<p>This section should include a plan of the investigation and details of the methodology that is to be used. Applicants may wish to refer to the information provided on the form in Section 6 classifying the methodologies as qualitative and quantitative.</p> <p>Where College support is required for dissemination of materials (such as surveys and resources), this will need to be discussed prior to submission with the RCGP R&amp;I Team at <a href="mailto:sfb@rcgp.org.uk">sfb@rcgp.org.uk</a>.</p> <p><b>Definition of terms:</b> The factors or variables to be studied should be carefully defined and, if applicable, the applicant should demonstrate how these will be measured. If measuring outcomes (for example, of a treatment or intervention) these must also be rigorously defined. It may be necessary to conduct preliminary work in order to define terms or devise or test methods of measurement. In this circumstance, an explicit application may be made to the SFB for funding of preliminary work.</p> <p><b>Instruments:</b> The means by which the applicant will obtain data should be validated, unless the application is for the construction or testing of a new instrument. This applies particularly to the use of questionnaires, especially where these are scaled to produce scores. Construction and validation of a new instrument is likely to be beyond the ability and resources of a novice applicant. It is almost always necessary to use an existing well validated instrument even if this is not completely suitable. Copies of any novel questionnaires and other instruments should be attached to the application.</p> <p><b>Design:</b> The SFB expects a well-written design to produce an answer to the research question posed or meet the specified aim. A good introductory text should be used to explore various designs that may be used and their respective advantages and disadvantages, prior to seeking expert advice. Where qualitative techniques (for example, interviews) are to be used, the applicant should demonstrate familiarity with the rigorous application of these methods, including analysis, and have sought appropriate advice and supervision.</p> <p><b>Impact:</b> Applicants should detail the impact they expect their proposal to have on primary care or general medical practice and patient care or outcomes. Applicants can include how the research proposal will support their career as a researcher.</p> <p><b>PPIE (Patient and Public involvement and Engagement)</b> Applicants should include PPIE in their research. Applicants should consider the intended impact of their research, what they are aiming to achieve and how many individuals could be affected.</p> <p>Please include in this section any relevant PPIE activity to date, and what this has added to the proposal, and a clear plan for meaningful PPIE at various stages during the proposed project. The NIHR provides <a href="#">excellent guidance</a> on this, and applicants are strongly encouraged to consider this.</p>

Section 7E

Proposal: Timeline

Applicants are required to include a brief summary timeline that demonstrates the main activities of the project.

Applicant initials can include principal applicant and any co-applicant (included in Section 10).

Example:

From MM/YY	To MM/YY	Applicant	Activity
01/24	03/24	SFB	Patient recruitment to study
04/24	06/24	SFB	Conduct focus groups

Section 7F and 7G	Dissemination, publication and future projects
<p>We expect the research we fund to lead to outputs and an impact. This will usually be in the form of published papers and conference presentations. Research funded by SFB may also form the foundation for future larger projects or a research fellowship.</p> <p>In order for research to have an impact on the field it is important for it to be translated into practice. Applicants are asked to consider long-term benefits of the research to practice and patients and outline dissemination plans to support the outputs of the research reaching peers within the profession. Applicants should link this 'outputs' section to their aims and objectives.</p> <p>Specify any plans for dissemination of work and anticipated publication via peer review publication, presentations at local, regional, national and international meetings, translation into education/training materials and opportunities for wider PR activities.</p> <p>Recipients of grants are required to inform the SFB of their intention to publish research projects and acknowledge receipt of SFB funding in any publication (including but not limited to research papers, conference posters and conference talks). When publication is confirmed, the SFB will aim to support publicity and PR of the research outcomes, where appropriate, to RCGP members and wider national audiences via RCGP's Research &amp; Innovation team.</p> <p>Where College support is required for dissemination of materials (such as surveys and resources), this will need to be discussed prior to submission with the R&amp;I team at <a href="mailto:SFB@rcgp.org.uk">SFB@rcgp.org.uk</a>.</p> <p>If funding is intended to support work that may lead to subsequent grant proposals, fellowship applications or other forms of funding, the details of the plans should be described.</p>	

Section 8A	Finance support for project
Applicants should include the total cost they are requesting from the SFB. If the project has additional funding please include this in the 'What is the total project cost?' box. If the applicant is requesting the SFB to fund the full study then leave this box blank.	

Section 8B	Breakdown of Costs
<p>Applicants should provide a breakdown of the costs associated with the research project, which you are requesting the SFB to fund. For complex / detailed costings a supplementary document may be submitted. Applicants are required to list the itemised costs under the relevant headings.</p> <p>Masters, MSc or PhD fees will not be funded, although the direct expenses incurred to undertake research projects carried out as part of an MSc or other higher degree may be funded. Applications should not include any elements that are normally covered by university fees.</p> <p>Budgets for salaries, running costs and equipment costs should be shown separately, with a detailed cost calculation and itemised breakdown for funds being requested in the field entitled 'provide a breakdown on anticipated costs for this project'. Applicants are also required to ensure that appropriate arrangements have been made to enable any national pay awards or inflationary pressures occurring over the course of their project to be honoured.</p> <p>The SFB will examine all requests for office costs, including postage, stationery, photocopying, telephone usage, and mileage. Mileage will be paid at the College rate, currently 45p per mile.</p> <p>Requests for payment for the transcribing of tapes will also be funded at a standard rate, to be decided from time to time by the SFB. Currently, the rate is £1.30 per minute of audio and payment will be limited to six hours work for a one-hour tape.</p> <p>When funding for the provision of consultancy services is requested, it should be noted that the SFB will only reimburse the actual salary costs (i.e., salary plus National Insurance and Superannuation costs) of that individual. The SFB will not pay consultancy rates which include an element for institutional overheads and/or a profit element. Individuals acting as a consultant to a project are requested to confirm that they are not in receipt of any other source of income for the hours they are contributing to the project. This confirmation must be included with the application.</p> <p>PPIE representatives should be paid in accordance to current NIHR guidance and this should be included in the costings.</p> <p>The SFB will consider funding appropriate expenses to respondents or research subjects, provided these are fully justified and are in proportion with the scale of the study.</p> <p>Time taken by NHS staff in relation to the research may be funded through NHS R&amp;D support funding mechanisms and applicants should explore the availability of such funding.</p> <p>All applicants should factor in open access publication fees and conference presentations within their application.</p> <p>Please note that applicants will be unable to claim for Full Economic Costing (FEC) due to the RCGP being a charitable body.</p> <p>For more information on research costings the SFB recommends applicants to look at NIHR Schedule of Events Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT).</p>	

Section 8C	Schedule of anticipated withdrawals
<p>Applicants are also required to provide a total project cost, and a quarterly breakdown of anticipated withdrawal throughout the project. The funding given by the SFB is in respect of the direct attributable costs of the research and it will not fund accommodation, Human Resources, IT or Finance Department support, or any type of hosting fee such as full economic cost.</p> <p>The schedule starts in quarter 1 2025/26 as this is the earliest a contract could be signed should grant be awarded will be quarter 4 2024/25. Applicants can add additional quarters if necessary.</p>	

Section 8D	Finance Justification
<p>In this section applicants should provide any justification and reasons for the support being requested; it is likely that it will draw on information presented throughout Section 7 of the form. Applicants are advised to consider the advice given above for Section 7D.</p>	

Section 9A	Sources of advice
	Principal study design advisor
<p>The role of the Principal Study Design Advisor is to provide advice on the design of the protocol prior to the applicant submitting their proposal. This is of particular importance where the applicant has little or no research experience, as proposals which do not offer a reasonable chance of meeting their objectives will be declined funding. Sound advice will also reduce the likelihood of the SFB either requiring changes or rejecting an application, for example, because of flaws in the study design.</p> <p>Applicants are required to confirm details of their Principal Study Design Advisor and briefly detail advice they have received from them. This person may also act as their statistics and finance advisor.</p>	

Section 9B	Study statistics advisor
<p>If the application uses quantitative methods, the SFB will expect applicants to have sought statistical advice when preparing their application, and for information relating to this to be included.</p> <p>Not all studies require a statistics advisor, and this section should be completed only if applicable.</p>	

Section 9C	Study finance advisor
<p>Applicants are required to briefly specify the advice they have received from their finance advisor.</p> <p>Applicants are recommended to seek financial advice before submission.</p>	

Section 10	Co-applicant and Research Team details
<p>The principal applicant is expected to use this space to name additional co-applicants and research team members.</p> <p>Co-applicants are those who are collaborating for research.</p> <p>Research team members are individuals (or applicant can list support facilities) that are available and relevant for the applicant to complete the research proposal.</p> <p>Enter the names of all co-applicants should be provided, along with supplementary information. For each co-applicant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title and Name</li> <li>• Email (co-applicant only)</li> <li>• Organisation they work for</li> <li>• Outline how this person will support this research study. If they are a co-applicants please include their job title, their highest qualification and how their experience is relevant to this research study</li> </ul>	

Section 11	Supporting documents
<p>Applicants can now add up to 5 more additional documents, they believe will enhance their application.</p> <p>This section is <b>optional</b>.</p> <p>Previously applicants have been asked to submit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of ethical approval or application, if applicable (Section 4)</li> <li>• Evidence of research governance approval, if applicable (Section 4)</li> <li>• Agreement from research sponsor (Section 5)</li> <li>• Reference List (Section 7)</li> <li>• Cost justification, if applicable (Section 8)</li> <li>• Supporting Statement from study advisor (Section 9)</li> </ul> <p>If applicants are re-submitting an application for a study that has been substantially altered, this is where applicants should upload a document explaining, in detail, what has been changed and how the new application is different from the previous one.</p> <p><b>Please title all additional supporting documents clearly.</b></p>	

Section 12	Curriculum Vitae – Principal Applicant
<p>We ask the principal applicant for the following details on their professional history, summarising skills, achievements and experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualifications (MRCGP, PhD, DPhil etc)</li> <li>• Professional registration: (Name of body, registration number and date of registration.) <i>In addition to MRCG membership, which was included in Section 1</i></li> <li>• Previous and other appointments - Include previous appointments in the last 5 years and other current appointments.</li> <li>• Research experience - Summary of research experience, including the extent of your involvement. Refer to any specific clinical or research experience relevant to the current application.</li> <li>• Research training - Details of any relevant training in the design or conduct of research, for example in the Clinical Trials Regulations, Good Clinical Practice, consent or other training appropriate to non-clinical research. Give the date of the training, if possible..</li> <li>• Relevant publications: - Give references to all publications in the last two years and any other publications relevant to the current application.</li> </ul>	

Section 13	Declaration
<p>By signing this declaration, the applicant acknowledges that they have read and understood the application form, guidance and that the application is eligible for submission to the SFB.</p>	

## Further information

### Advice

Studies which do not, in the opinion of the SFB, offer a reasonable chance of meeting their stated objectives will be declined funding. In the absence of any previous research experience, applicants are expected to seek advice on the design of the protocol before making an application. If the application relates to a quantitative study, the SFB will expect applicants to have sought statistical advice when preparing their application and for information relating to this to be included in the application.

Some advice which may be helpful, particularly for inexperienced applicants, is set out at the end of this document. Advice may be obtained from the SFB and, in the first instance, an approach should be made to the Research team.

If required, continuing advice may be sought from the SFB by successful applicants throughout the course of their project.

### Decisions

The SFB will notify all applicants within 8 weeks of the meeting whether their application has been successful (expected in February 2025) for Annual Research Grants. An Agreement will be sent to all successful applicants for signing and is to be returned to the College.

Where external peer review is required, applicants will be notified with timelines of the decision.

Successful applicants are required to take up their award within six months of it being awarded. Should it appear that this will not be possible, the grant holder should contact [SFB@rcgp.org.uk](mailto:SFB@rcgp.org.uk).

### Outcomes

The outcome of the SFB's consideration of applications will normally take one of the following forms:

- Approve an application in its entirety
- Approve an application, with suggestions for the applicant that do not impact the award of the grant if they are not adopted
- Approve an application, with conditions for the applicant that must be adopted in order to receive funding
- Request further clarifications prior to making a final decision
- Invite a revised application, prepared in the style requested by the SFB. The SFB will not consider a revised application unless one has specifically been requested
- Request external peer review
- Decline funding (for example, where the study falls below the bar for funding, or when it is deemed fundable, but of insufficient priority to be funded within the funding envelope for this call)



### Well written applications

Although not intended as a comprehensive guide, the SFB suggests that particular attention is paid to the following, which are commonly found in well written applications:

- Clear, specified research questions and/or hypothesis
- Methods that will clearly answer the research question
- Methods that are clearly described and feasible
- Clear evidence of PPIE input
- Plans for dissemination or other outputs that are likely to be of benefit to patients / carers / outcomes
- Good value for money
- Transferable to primary care in <5years or proof of concept and apply for larger scale funding

### Common reasons for rejection

Although not intended as a comprehensive guide, the SFB suggests that particular attention is paid to the following, which are common reasons for rejection of applications, relevant for all parts of the application but particularly in reference to the plans and methodologies:

- Incomplete application forms, missing information and no signatures
- No clearly formulated research aims or research question / hypothesis
- A poorly conducted literature review
- Lack of a research team including the necessary skills and expertise
- Lack of supervision / support for inexperienced researchers
- Unrealistic costing or unachievable timeframes
- Lack of PPIE

## Reporting to the SFB

Successful applicants are required to report any publications or presentations at regional, national and international level to the SFB via the RCGP R&I team. When publishing or presenting the grant holders are required to acknowledge the SFB as a funding source

All grant holders submit a report in line with the SFB's proforma at the conclusion of their project. This must follow the SFB's format. This report should include details of any published material resulting from the project. The content may be used on the RCGP website and in other open access locations of the RCGP.

The final report should be submitted by June, within twelve months of the expected end date of the project. If it appears that it will be difficult to meet this deadline, the Chair should be contacted as soon as possible, via the Research team, to seek an extension. This should include a copy of the annual progress report sent to the ethics committee (if relevant).

Progress on the project should be recorded in the form of reports. Grant holders are required to submit an annual report by 30 June each year throughout the course of their grant. In the first year of their award, grant holders do not need to submit an annual report if the start date for the grant was between January and June of that year. For awards which started from 1 July onwards, an annual report must be submitted by the last day of June of the following year. Each report should contain a predicted end date for the project and indicate what progress has been made towards this.

It is the SFB's policy not to grant new awards to any applicant whose final report from a previously funded project is still outstanding after the twelve-month deadline.

### **Video presentations:**

When returning the Agreement, we will also be expecting all successful applicants to provide a short video presentation (of approximately two minutes) summarising their project. We will be using these videos to promote funded awards through the College website and social media. At the end of the project, and alongside submission of the Final Report, we will also be expecting successful applicants to provide a similar video summarising their findings and the implications of their findings.

## Membership of the SFB

Professor Sophie Park (SFB Chair)  
Professor Helen Atherton (Vice Chair)  
Dr Steve Mowle (Treasurer)  
Dr Victoria Tzortziou Brown (RCGP Vice-Chair for External Affairs)  
Representative of the RCGP Patient Partnership Group  
Professor Rupert Payne (representative of SAPC)  
Professor Carolyn Chew-Graham  
Dr Nicholas Thomas (RCGP Clinical Lead for Research)  
Dr Julia Hiscock  
Dr Mark Lown  
Dr Kathryn Hughes  
Dr James Prior  
Dr Sarah Tonkin-Crine  
Dr Rachel Johnson  
Dr Patricia Schartau  
Dr Jessica Watson  
Dr Hajira Dambha-Miller  
Dr Helen Cramer