



Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre: Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)

Applications for Funding

Guidance for Board Members and Applicants

SAB Remit

In order to explore and delineate the priorities for research funding in the field of learning difficulties, the Salvesen Mindroom Research Centre (SMRC) and The Salvesen Mindroom Centre have delivered a priority-setting partnership with the James Lind Alliance¹.

The Top Ten areas prioritised for research are listed at the end of this document.

Proposals for consideration for funding by the SAB should aim to address one or more of these priority questions. In addition, the applicant should demonstrate that their project will:

- Meet the standard of international excellence required by the association of medical research charities
- Deliver impact, whether in the local community, or at a national or international level
- Take on board the perspectives of stakeholders from outside academia, including practitioners from relevant organisations and / or people with relevant lived experience.
- Serve as an effective investment of SAB funds in relation to the achievement of SMRC strategic goals.

In addition, the SAB will consider smaller proposals for specifically outreach and impact-focused work, for which there is a dedicated application form.

Please see the SMRC website for details of the centre's strategic goals, and discuss directly with the Director of the SMRC.

Application process

The application form for SMRC research funding has been updated to reflect the agreed priorities. The process for application and review is:

- a. Applications for funding should be discussed with the SMRC Director well in advance of submission;
- b. Applications for funding may be submitted by external groups but will normally require a co-Investigator from within the SMRC;
- c. All applications must be submitted on the agreed application form;
- d. After submission, the SMRC director will append a statement of strategic fit before forwarding the application to the SAB;

¹ <http://www.jla.nihr.ac.uk/priority-setting-partnerships/learning-difficulties-scotland/>



- e. The SAB will review applications at its biannual meetings (March, September); applications may exceptionally be reviewed by virtual meeting out of cycle at the discretion of the Chair

SAB decision-making process

The SAB will consider the following criteria when making a decision:

- The scientific merit of the application;
- The value for money of the application;
- The fit of the proposal with the strategic goals of the SMRC and alignment with the Top Ten priorities

The SAB membership provides a wide range of expertise, and it is expected that the majority of applications can be reviewed by the members. The Chair of the SAB may decide to seek further external peer review of applications if additional expertise is required.

The SAB will approve funding for research projects with decision by consensus, up to the total amount agreed with The Salvesen Mindroom Centre as being available for research projects. Normally awards are in the region of £50,000 - £100,000 though smaller awards are also made. In exceptional circumstances awards of >£100,000 may be considered.

If the level of approved projects exceeds the funding available, the Chair will discuss with the chair of the board of trustees of the Salvesen Mindroom Centre whether additional funding can be made available. In the event of no further funding being available the SAB will prioritise the available funding for approved research projects.

Following review of applications the SAB may decide to:

- i. Fund;
- ii. Reject: rejected submissions will not be reconsidered by the SAB unless specifically invited to resubmit;
- iii. Request further information or propose amendments for further review.
- iv. Approve but defer pending available funding

The decision of the SAB will be final. Applicants may appeal only on the basis that the procedures as set out above have not been adhered to. In such a case an appeal will be reviewed by the Registrar of the College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine and the Director of Edinburgh Neuroscience.

Reporting

The SAB will provide an annual report to The Salvesen Mindroom Centre board of trustees that will include:

- v. Details of the number of applications received and approved;
- vi. Short summary of each project approved; its cost and duration;
- vii. Update on funding allocated for research projects compared to the budget forecast.



The SMRC and any external Principal investigators receiving funding from the SAB will report on research progress, outcomes and completion to The Salvesen Mindroom Centre board of trustees, in accordance with requests from that Board.

Top Ten Research Priorities for Learning Difficulties:

1. What knowledge, skills and training do educational professionals need to identify the early signs of learning difficulties and provide optimal support for children and young people affected to help them achieve the best possible outcomes?
2. What is the best educational and community environment for children and young people with learning difficulties?
3. How can multiple types of professionals work together with parents and carers to improve identification, diagnosis, interventions and treatments and achieve the best outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties?
4. Which early interventions are effective for children and young people with learning difficulties, at what ages and stages are they best introduced and what are the long-term outcomes?
5. What knowledge, skills and training do health, social work and “third sector” (e.g. charities and support services) professionals need to understand the best support to give children and young people with learning difficulties and their families/carers?
6. How can parents, carers, brothers and sisters and extended families of children and young people with learning difficulties, be best supported to achieve their best quality of life before, during and after the diagnosis or identification in home, school and community contexts?
7. How can we best identify early features, symptoms and signs of learning difficulties amongst children, young people and their families/carers?
8. What is the best way to assess learning difficulties in children and young people?
9. Which strategies are effective in preventing stigma and bullying towards children and young people with learning difficulties?
10. Which strategies are effective in helping children and young people with learning difficulties live independent lives, including during times of transitions?