**APPLICATION GUIDANCE FOR HTMR NETWORK PROJECT GRANTS**
**V0.9 December 2015**

The MRC Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research ("Network") has been established to create a national platform for research in methodology related to the design, conduct, and analysis of clinical trials. Hub members may submit applications for Project Grant funding. Details of current Hubs can be found online. Please ensure you read the full guidance document and complete the form in accordance with these terms.

**General terms and conditions**
- All successfully awarded Projects will be funded by a one-off payment allocated directly to the Host Institution (university or unit) of the Lead Applicant after the completion of the Project. The Network will pay 100% of directly incurred costs only. Funds must be used only for the approved projects and supported by documentary evidence of expenditure. There will be no carry-over of unspent funds.
- Should there be a change in the status of the Lead Applicant, the Network should be informed immediately.
- The Lead Applicant shall inform the Network of any consultancies, directorships or other commercial relationships with other entities which may give rise to a conflict of interest or otherwise be relevant to the funded research.
- For collaborative research projects, the role of each Hub/Institute should be clearly listed.
- The sum available for standard projects will be up to a maximum of **£50,000,** based on expenditure relating to work specified in the application.
- For workshop costs the maximum amount that can be requested is **£10,000** per workshop. The Network will need to see venue quotes as part of the application. Costs can be claimed up to the value of the award.
- Clear details of intended use of the funds should be given in the application form.
- MRC core staff salaries should not be included in the costs, but non-MRC staff costs where dedicated to the project e.g. temporary administration staff, or any bought in services, may be included in the application.
- Funds may be used to cover expenses such as travel (standard-class rail and economy air fares), subsistence and associated expenses of speakers, hire of venue, catering, and administrative costs connected with running a workshop and publishing proceedings.
- Workshop attendees' time cannot be claimed.
- If you are requesting funds for delegate attendance at a workshop, this must be clearly justified in the application. Accommodation and subsistence costs for people attending a workshop must be reasonable and will be reimbursed on the basis of actual expenditure. A breakdown of expected costs should be provided if part of the funding request.
- Costs for studentships cannot be requested on a Network Project.
- For successful awards, the Network will issue a Research Collaboration Agreement contract which must be signed by a formal representative of the Host Institute (usually the University of the Lead Applicant).

**Guidance notes for applicants: Completing the application form**.
All sections of the application form should be completed in full by the Lead Applicant and emailed to the Network Co-ordinator at the address below as **both Word and PDF copies.** Applicants are strongly advised to discuss their proposal with their unit finance officer, and their Hub Director at an early stage.

Applications will be considered at regular intervals. Application deadlines and specific call details will be listed on the website: www.methodologyhubs.mrc.ac.uk. The Network reserves the right to defer any application to a later meeting date. Submission of an application in no way guarantees that support will be forthcoming.

**Section A**
You should include the full title of the Project, and the expected start date. Successful applicants will be asked to confirm the actual start date of research once awarded. The Network will consider applications for Projects for a maximum duration of 12 months.

Full details must be provided for all co-applicants.

Eligibility criteria
- The Lead Applicant must be based at one of the Hubs for Trials Methodology Research
- Applications must show clear collaboration with at least one other current Hub, in addition to that of the lead applicant. Additional investigators from outside the Network, including MRC intramural and extramural units, CTU staff, and international groups are encouraged to be co-applicants, and their roles in the project should be clearly stated.
- Researchers may participate in more than one application.

**Section B- detail of proposal**
You should complete all sections of the application.

Examples of activities eligible to apply for Network funding include, but are not limited to:
- research workshops,
- training/educational workshops,
- knowledge exchange visits for pilot/feasibility work (Such Projects would need to have pre-defined scientific outputs e.g. guideline development or pilot work towards a specified grant application deadline),
- systematic reviews of methodology (max. 12 months),
- methodological guidelines development.

The lead applicant **must** discuss their application with their Hub Director prior to submission to the Network.

**Section C- Finances**
You should provide a summary of the total costs required for this proposal in this section.

A full breakdown should then be detailed under each sub heading, together with a justification for each request.

***Staff costs***: If your project requires employment of staff please provide names of individuals, where known, or describe the expected recruitment process. If staff recruitment is required, please consider any potential delays which may be associated with recruitment when setting the dates and duration for the project.

***Other research costs***: Detail the costs requested for this project and provide a detailed justification as to how these funds will be used. E.g. for a workshop, provide details of the size of the workshop (and how you estimated this number), costs for facilities/travel/accommodation/admin support, details of the venue etc.

Open-access publication costs can be requested, where appropriate.

Please provide details of any external financial contribution to this Project.

**Types of activities the Network will NOT consider funding:**
The Network will not fund activities which are longer than 12 months duration or where more than £50,000 is required from the Network. Network funds will not be allocated for activities where normal grant funding would be expected to be used. Network funds will not be used to support existing project grants, which would be expected to be submitted to the MRC/NIHR Methodology Research Panel. Studentships cannot be funded through Network projects.

**Assessment criteria**
Applications should be concise, while providing enough information for the Executive Committee to assess feasibility and value.

All funding requests will be assessed by the Executive Committee of the Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research.

All applications will be sent for peer review, with the exception of small stand-alone workshops/consensus meeting. Comments will not be available to Lead applicants prior to funding decision.
Note: Workshops/consensus meetings involving 4 or more Hubs will also be sent for peer review

If further specialist advice is needed to assess any proposal, the Network reserves the right to delay any application.

**Consideration of applications and funding process**

1) All applications for Network project funding will be submitted to one deadline. Deadlines for submissions will be listed on the Network website.
2) Projects will be sent for peer review, with the exception of discrete workshop/meeting applications. Workshop/meeting applications involving more than 4 Hubs will also be sent for peer review.
3) Projects will be discussed alongside peer review, and in line with the Networks strategic aims, by the Executive Committee
4) All applicants will be notified of the outcome within two weeks of the Panel meeting.
5) The Panel reserves the right to delay decision on any application if further information is required.

**Funded applications**
1) Successful applicants will be required to confirm the legal address of the host institution. A formal contract, detailing full terms of the award, will be issued.
2) The Lead Applicant must contact the Network co-ordinator to confirm the actual start date of the research.
3) If a funding offer is not activated within 6 months of the proposed start date, the Lead Applicant must contact the Network to discuss the delay. The Network reserves the right to withdraw an award if progress is delayed for a significant period.
4) It is the responsibility of the Host Institution Finance Department to ensure that all external payments are made using the allocated funds.
5) Awards will be made on the basis of 100% directly incurred costs.
6) There will be no carry-over of any unspent funding at the end of the funding period.
7) Funds will be allocated to the Host Institution only. Within two months of completion of the work, the Host Institution must submit a brief financial

statement to the Network Co-ordinator detailing exactly how the funds were spent compared with the initial request.

8) The Lead Applicant will provide a scientific final report to the Network within two months of the end of the project. Failure to do so could affect payment of remaining funds.

## Outputs from the award

The support of the Network **mus**t be acknowledged in all publications and communications arising as a consequence of the award, including journals and conference presentations. Detail can be found on our website:
http://www.methodologyhubs.mrc.ac.uk/about/network/grantees/

The standard phrase should be:

*This work was supported by the MRC Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research (MR/L004933/1- R/N/P/Qxx)*

The suffix relates to the Network project grant reference number which starts either R or N. Studentship references begin either P or Q. Please contact the office if you are unsure.

## Final report

The Lead Applicant should submit a report on the project to the Network Co-ordinator within one month of the end of the project. This will be considered by the Executive Committee and then published on the website. The Lead Applicant must submit a brief financial statement showing how the resources have been used, and listing the outputs that have been achieved to date (e.g. journal submissions, further applications, etc.).

The Network reserves the right to contact the Lead Applicant at future dates to establish the impact of any funded Projects.

## DEFINITIONS

**Lead Applicant:** The Lead Applicant should be a member of one of the Hubs for Trials Methodology Research and should have a contract of employment with the Host Institution for the duration of the proposed project. It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant and the Host Institution to ensure that all parties, including collaborators, supervisors and staff employed on Network grants, comply with the Terms and Conditions and contractual obligations.

**Host Institution:** The primary place of employment of the Lead Applicant. The Host Institution agrees to administer all associated finances of successful awards. It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant and the Host Institution to ensure compliance with all legal requirements and ethics approval. It is expected the Host Institution will cover all **Directly Allocated and Indirect Costs associated with a Network project.**

**Directly Incurred Costs**: Costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a project, are charged as the cash value actually spent and are supported by an audit record.

**Directly Allocated Costs**: Costs of resources used by a project that are shared by other activities. These cannot be claimed on a project application to the Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research.

**Indirect Costs**: These cannot be claimed on a project application to the Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research, but relate to non-specific costs charged across all projects based on estimates that are not otherwise included as Directly Allocated Costs. They include the costs of the Research Organisation's administration such as personnel, finance, library and some departmental services.

The Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research reserves the right to withhold, suspend or terminate funding if any of the Terms and Conditions is not met.

Details of funded projects will be made available on the MRC Network of Hubs for Trials Methodology Research web site and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

END OF APPLICATION GUIDANCE