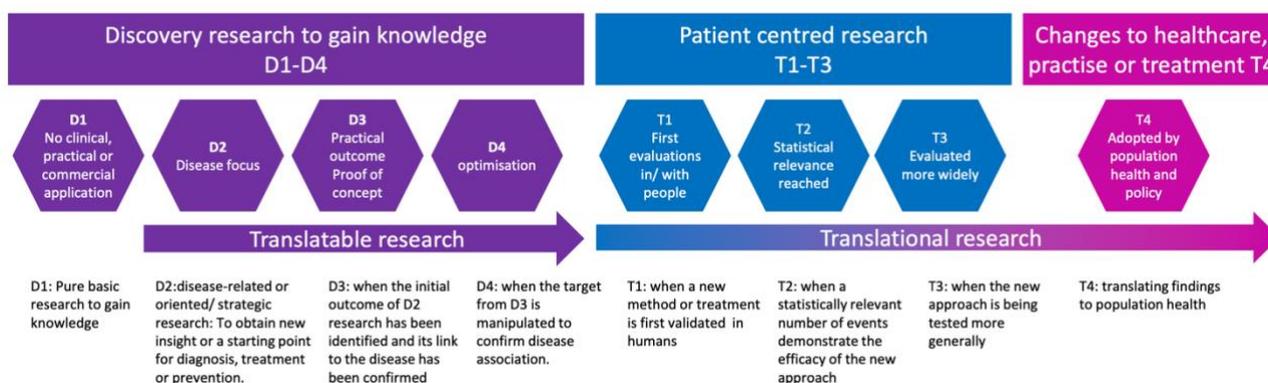# Access To Expertise (A2E) 2024 Application Brief

## Who is supporting this call?

Translation Manchester runs an annual call for [Translation Manchester Accelerator Awards](#) to pump-prime research aimed at translating discoveries into healthcare impact and patient benefit. The [Access to Expertise (A2E)](#) scheme is one of the schemes in this call and brings together funding from:

1. **Institutional Translational Partnership Award** (TPA) from Wellcome which is managed by [Translation Manchester](#).
2. **Medical Research Council Impact Accelerator Account** (MRC IAA) from URKI
3. The **NIHR Manchester Biomedical Research Centre (BRC)** will be supporting this call, with some of the budget ringfenced for projects within the remit of the BRC's Next Generation Therapeutics (NGT) theme. The [NIHR Manchester BRC](#), with its [recent £59.1 million renewal](#), continues to deliver on its vision of driving health improvements and lasting change for all through creative, inclusive, and proactive research. The NGT theme within the BRC is aimed at developing methods to translate discovery, test new therapeutics/interventions, and develop novel trial designs to progress to translation.

## What research does the A2E fund?

The A2E scheme enables investigators to access necessary technical expertise (external to their immediate research group) in order to overcome a bottleneck or hurdle, thereby allowing the research to progress along the [translational pathway](#). Projects at any stage of the translational pathway are eligible for A2E awards, nevertheless the vision to translation should be clearly stated. Projects must move the research along the pathway (e.g.i.e. D2 to D3 or T1 to T2) as a result of the A2E funding.



Translational research projects should address an area of unmet clinical need or improve an aspect of healthcare delivery. We have identified that lack of access to appropriate expertise in a timely manner can be a barrier to translation.

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This scheme is not intended to fund an entire project, the A2E award will allow researchers to access expertise external to their research group in order to overcome a **specific bottleneck or hurdle** by enabling;

- Access to appropriate **technical expertise**
  - **Bioinformatics or biostatistics** expertise to maximally capitalise on large data sets
  - Buy out dedicated time for **trials physicians and nurses** to interact fully with academics, **collect patient samples** or enable academics to spend time in a clinical setting
  - **Software, app design or programming** expertise
  - External **methodology expertise** or access to unique **research models**
- Access to complex and specific **regulatory advice**
- Recruitment of external **mentors/entrepreneurs** in residence to guide academics in engaging with translational research with tailored routes to clinic/market
- Secondment in a **clinical or industrial environment**
- Analysis of **health economics**/**market research/patient need** and competitive landscapes

This list is not exhaustive, and other methods of overcoming research challenges by accessing expertise will also be considered. The expert who will be engaged in the project through the A2E funding should **already have been identified** and be available to work on the project should the application be successful. Applicants are encouraged to apply to access expertise within the Translation Manchester Research Network. Several partners of the network have presented the support they can provide at our monthly seminar series. Should you need advice on identifying suitable experts get in touch with our Translational Research Managers at translation@manchester.ac.uk.

We encourage applications focussing on the Wellcome Trust's health challenges: Mental Health, Climate and Health and Infectious Disease. Additionally, researchers with projects that align with the BRC NGT programme(s) are encouraged to apply. These programmes include:

*Programme 1: A methodological and inclusive platform*
*Programme 2: Designing innovative trial designs*
*Programme 3: Precision therapeutics of high-risk groups and high burden diseases*
*Programme 4: Nanoscale-based technologies and advanced biomaterials to improve health*
*Programme 5: ATMPs for resistant cancers and rare conditions*

For more details on BRC NGT programmes refer to the 2024 call Frequently Asked Questions document. In order to be eligible for BRC funding the project cannot involve the use of animals in preclinical models and need to focus on T1-T4 stages of the translational pathway.

Applications from any other area of unmet clinical need are also welcome.

**Overlap with other calls currently open**

The Pankhurst Institute also has a seed corn funding call live, this differs from the Translation Manchester A2E scheme which enables investigators to access necessary technical expertise external to their immediate research group to overcome a bottleneck or hurdle, thereby allowing the research to progress along the translational pathway. In contrast, the Pankhurst Seed Corn Scheme funds translational research carried out by research groups themselves.

**Multidisciplinary Collaborations**

One of our aims is to build better links between science, technology, and innovation by supporting commercialisation and collaboration with industry and by removing barriers between disciplines. We encourage interdisciplinary proposals, including collaborations across faculties and with associated NHS Trust partners. Investigators are also strongly advised to consult with a clinician on the area of unmet need that their project is addressing. Although collaborating with industry is not essential, one of our goals is to promote academic-industry engagement, applicants are therefore encouraged to explore how the A2E could be used to develop these interactions. We advise applicants to discuss their industry interactions with their Faculty's Business Engagement Team and, if contracts are likely to be needed in the A2E application, to discuss this with Seamus Byers in the Contracts team.

**The A2E will not support:**

- Fundamental or basic research that is not translational
- Entire translational projects
- Projects with no clear translational agenda or applied outcomes
- Staff between posts/funding (i.e. as "bridging" funds)
- PhD studentships
- Continuation or extension of existing research grants

The BRC NGT will not fund preclinical experimental work. However, applicants with projects involving preclinical experimental work (which might include the use of animals) are still welcome to apply as they would be eligible for Wellcome TPA funding.

**What funding is available and what is the project duration?**
Costs will be provided for 100% of directly incurred costs only, up to **£25,000**. The A2E award will fund projects with a duration of up to 9 months. Due to the short timeframe, projects should have the necessary resources readily available and in place. Applications will, in part, be judged on their feasibility and deliverability within timeframe.

Projects will be funded from either the Wellcome TPA budget or the BRC NGT budget at the discretion of the panel. Strict adherence to the relevant spending regulations will be mandatory for successful applicants. Expenditure will be permitted to the end of the agreed timeframe for the project; no spending will be permitted after this date, unless approved. We will not accept proposals with an end date beyond 1st November 2024 as this is a hard deadline from Wellcome. Additionally, for projects funded by the BRC NGT ringfenced budget, all expenditure must be completed by 30th November 2024.

**Who is eligible to apply?**

The scheme is open to applicants from FBMH, FSE and FH undertaking health related translational research. The lead applicant's contract of employment should exceed the duration of the proposed project and cover the duration of a potential follow-on project. Applications are welcomed from both

UoM researchers and partner NHS Trust clinicians with (or in the process of obtaining) honorary contracts at the University of Manchester. For a list of partner NHS trusts see FAQs document. If the project is to be led by a clinician PI with honorary contract yet to be obtained, a UoM Co-I should be identified and will be the main post award contact until honorary status is achieved by the lead applicant. If you need help in identifying potential UoM Co-Is, the NIHR Manchester BRC team and Translation Manchester will be able to assist.

Post-doctoral researchers are also encouraged to apply with a senior academic as co-PI, co-I, guarantor. For post-doctoral researchers, their current contract of employment with the university must cover the duration of the proposed project. The senior academic will be considered as a guarantor on applications made by post-doctoral researchers and will be expected to oversee completion of the project and potential follow-on projects. If the post-doc is the PI, their salary costs cannot be included in the requested budget. Awardees from the 2021, 2022 and the earlier 2023 calls are not eligible to apply unless their project is completed. Refer to the Frequently Asked Questions for details.

### How do I apply?

The application form can be downloaded from our website. If you wish to discuss your application with us for advice and to confirm the eligibility of your project, please contact Translation Manchester including the following information in your email to translation@manchester.ac.uk

- Name(s) of the applicant and co-PI/co-I(s), faculty, school/department
- Project title
- Brief overview of the unmet clinical need been addressed by the research
- Where on the translational research pipeline your current project sits and where it aims to go (e.g. D1 to D2, or T2 to T3)
- The expertise which you need to engage in the project and the specific hurdle or bottleneck that will be overcome.

| Funding call opens | Friday 13th October 2023 |
| RSMs costings deadline (if applicable) * | Friday 10th November 2023 |
| Application deadline | 12 noon Tuesday 12th December 2023 |
| Notification of outcomes | w/c 26th February 2024 |
| Projects start | March 2024 onwards |

*If you are applying, Research Support Managers (RSMs) and Research Support Officers (RSOs) **must be contacted** as soon as possible. Applications might not be accepted for processing if RSMs/RSOs have not been notified by Friday 10th November 2023. All projects should be costed (100% fEC). Contact details for the RSMs/RSOs in your faculty can be found here.

Applicants with projects that will require support from the Contracts team should have contacted Seamus Byers in the contracts to make them aware support will be needed when project starts. This is essential to prevent any delays due to contracts, if awarded.

### Intellectual Property:

Terms and conditions with regards to Intellectual Property will vary depending on the funder that will support your specific project.

### Intellectual Property: Wellcome TPA funded projects

If you project is funded by the Wellcome TPA you are not required to seek consent from Wellcome before you make any commercial use of, or grant to any third party any exploitation rights over, any Wellcome-funded intellectual property that arises from the A2E Award. Nevertheless, **you will be required to accept Wellcome's standard  revenue-and-equity sharing agreement as set out in Wellcome's grant conditions**. This includes the requirement to report to Wellcome once a year on IP and commercialisation activities; this will be performed by The University of Manchester Innovation Factory.

### Intellectual Property: URKI MRC IAA funded projects

Unless otherwise agreed, all intellectual property shall belong to the party that generates them. Where the Grant is associated with more than one Research Organisation and/or other project partners, the basis of collaboration between the organisations including ownership of intellectual property and rights to exploitation, must be set out in a formal collaboration agreement in a way that is proportionate to and appropriately reflects the exact nature of the collaboration. You are responsible for ensuring that all parties engaged in the research make every reasonable effort to ensure that the intellectual assets obtained in the course of the research, whether protected by intellectual property rights or not, are used to the benefit of society and the economy. In individual cases, UKRI reserve the right to retain ownership of intellectual assets, including intellectual property (or assign it to a third party under an exploitation agreement) and to arrange for it to be exploited for the national benefit and that of the Research Organisation involved.

### Intellectual Property: BRC NGT funded projects

If your project is funded by the BRC, you will need to comply with NIHR terms and conditions with regards to IP and commercialisation. The Manchester BRC reports on any patents or licence agreements associated with the NIHR BRC funding both during the annual reporting, and within annual NIHR IP visits.  The BRC team will liaise with the funded teams to regularly collate this information. Before you commercialise any IP, we need to seek consent from NIHR through their IP unit.  This will be done via The University of Manchester Innovation Factory and/or through MFT IP department during the due diligence exercise.

### Reporting

Successful applicants will be required to submit a short interim report halfway through the project and a final report at the end of the project. Applicants may also be contacted for information to be submitted externally (e.g. NIHR and Wellcome annual reporting requirements). Applicants will be contacted to report on their post-award progress up to 5 years after the award has been completed. This is **mandatory** to ensure evaluation of the translational impact of this scheme. You will also be required to engage with Translation Manchester activities such as blogs and events.

**Previous A2E awards**

Information on projects that have been funded by the A2E scheme in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and the earlier 2023 call including case studies can be found at www.translation.manchester.ac.uk.

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**Proposals MUST be submitted to translation@manchester.ac.uk**

**The final application deadline is 12 noon Tuesday 12th December 2023.**
**Late applications will not be accepted.**

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Notification of outcome will be week commencing 26th February 2024 via email to the PI.

For any other query refer to the Frequently Asked Questions for the 2024 call or contact translation@manchester.ac.uk.