



Completing the form – style and word limits

To treat all applicants equally, NICHHS **must** enforce strictly the prescribed format requirements (including font size, font type and word limits) outlined in this guidance.

- Applications **must** be made using the application form and **returned in both a word and pdf version**. Supplementary materials will not be included as part of your application, other than CVs, and if required, letters of endorsement.
- completed using the font Arial 11 Point.
- All sections **must** be completed.
- Word limits and space limits **must** be respected.
- Applicants **should not** regard these limits as targets – your application will benefit from being laid out clearly and concisely.

Applications that do not adhere to these guidelines **will be rejected** on initial checking and removed from the process.

Completing the form – Plain English

Equally important as meeting the four criteria, is the way you present your application. being able to clearly communicate our work –how we use their donations and why research is worth investing in - to the wider community is important. A clear, accessible description of your research is the best way to improve your chances of funding.

We strongly encourage the use of Plain English – simple and straightforward language. This ensures that your work can be communicated to a wide range of audiences. In terms of the decision-making process, clear communication increases the chances of a strong application being accepted:

- Our Senior Leadership Team score your application. Remember, they are not researchers: plain English is the best way to ensure they understand what your study is about.
- The SRC (decision making committee) members possess a range of clinical and research skills and expertise, but they may not be familiar with your research area. Clearly and simply describe your study. You should describe the proposed research in a way that will be clear to members the public who do not have a grasp of medical or scientific terminology.

Please note that final scoring will include scoring on the use of a Plain English approach and the PPI involvement in the study.

- We understand that you may have to use technical / scientific terminology. So, we strongly encourage you to provide a Plain English Glossary.
- PPI: we advise you to involve service users / relevant stakeholders in the design of your study; the writing and review of your application; and as researchers.

Plain English tips & tools:

- www.access2understanding.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Access-to-Understanding-writing-guidance_v1.pdf
- NIHR Plain English guidance: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/plain-english-summaries/27363>
- Plain English campaign: <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>
- Make it Clear campaign: <https://www.invo.org.uk/makeitclear-2/?print=print>
- Readability calculator: <https://readable.com>

Specific points relating to application form

Section 1, Details of you / your research team

Section 1.1 Please provide details of PI, and named alt PI. <u>All fields required.</u>		
Section 1.2 Please name co-applicants ("co-app"). <u>All fields required.</u>		
PI	Principal Investigator. The main applicant, responsible for the project, and primary contact.	<p>The PI <u>must</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> take responsibility for ensuring that the project will be completed; and be based (i.e. work for) an institution <u>within</u> Northern Ireland. All correspondence will be directed to the PI.
Alt PI	"back up" Principal Investigator	<p>The Alt PI <u>must</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> be based (i.e. work for) an institution <u>within</u> Northern Ireland. In the event that the PI is unable to continue, or leaves their post prior to the end of the project, the Alt PI will take over as PI. Doing so, they will assume the responsibilities associated with being PI. Suitable arrangements must be clearly stated in the application form that ensure the responsibilities for all phases of the research will be covered by other members of the research team in the hosting institution.
Hours	the number of hours each will allocate to the study	The number of hours you will allocate to the study.
Co-app	Co-applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-applicants <u>must</u> be suitably experienced. They can be based in suitable institutions located in NI, or outside NI. We welcome studies that name co-applicants who are people living with CHS conditions, patients, members of the public (PPI) PPI co-applicants should have clearly defined and meaningful roles in the project. It is highly recommended that the project team should include at least one individual with a proven track record in statistics or data analysis relevant to the project. Add additional co-applicants, if necessary, on the sheet at the end of application.

Section 2, Curriculum vitae

Please provide CVs for all members of the named research team.

CVs

- A CV must be provided for each applicant.
- This should be no more than one page long. This should outline suitability to conduct the proposed research.
- PPI researchers can, in lieu of a CV, provide a letter of endorsement / statement of suitability. This should be provided by PI or suitable referee.
- CVs should aim to include the following information:
 - full name,
 - current position,
 - major academic and professional qualifications and memberships,
 - brief career history,
 - current research grants held,
 - research grants held in the past five years,
 - total number of publications to date, and
 - details of up to five recent relevant publications.

Type “x” to confirm CVs have been included.

Section 3, Summary of project

3.1 Study title	Where possible, please keep title short, clear, and in Plain English. Avoid Excessive jargon.
3.2 Abstract	<u>maximum of 250 words</u> . We recommend using Plain English. The abstract should provide a concise summary of the major aspects of the project. Describe the background (need for study / gaps), hypotheses, aims, methods to be employed and the anticipated impact of the results. While this summary should be written in a way that it can be read separately, remember it does not replace other sections of the application. Note, 250 word limit.
3.3 Proposed start date	Indicate the approximate start date, duration of the project (in months), and the overall total of grant requested (in sterling).
3.4 Proposed duration	
3.5 Total amount requested	

Section 4, Details of new staff

4.1 new staff	New staff to be employed on the project. Choose type of staff e.g Research, Technical, other You can name up to seven on this sheet, but can name more on an additional sheet – be sure to follow format of table 4.1.
4.2 effort %	Please provide a breakdown of each staff member on the project.
4.3 cost by year	Please provide a breakdown of salary costs, for each new staff member, over the life of the project (annual). Outline both the overall and annual costs associated with the projects for research, technical and other staff.

Re. “justification” of requested resources, in sections 5-7

As a charity, we have a legal and moral duty to manage funds prudently. Given that our research is 100% funded by public donations, you must clearly demonstrate that the money invested in your research will yield a high quality study with real world application. You must demonstrate strong planning, including for contingencies, in your proposed use of resources.

- Be clear. Show planning and forethought in resource allocation. Be realistic about what you can achieve with the money. Provide a strong justification for the decisions you make re. resources.
- Remember, the information you provide in your application will be used to determine whether realistic, and whether the scientific potential and likely impact justifies funding on the scale requested.

Section 5, Consumables

5.1 description	Please provide details of consumables Where possible, items should be listed (in sterling) for each year of the project. Please note, NICHS does not usually support the cost of equipment.
5.2 costs	Please provide annual and total costs for consumables
5.3 justification	Please justify your costings. 500 word limit.

Section 6, Travel

6.1 description	Please describe travel expenses. Where possible, itemise, and include reason for journey, duration, costs including subsistence or fees. Please choose destination e.g. “UK/Ireland” or “other”
6.2 costs	Please provide annual and total costs for travel
6.3 justification	Please justify your costings. 500 word limit.

Section 7, Exceptional items

7.1 description	Please describe exceptional items required to conduct the study. Where possible, items should be listed (in sterling) for each year of the project. Please note, NICHS does not usually support the cost of equipment e.g. laptops, mobile phones, tablets, or software (unless specialist equipment).
7.2 costs	Please provide annual and total costs
7.3 justification	Please justify your costings. 500 word limit.

Section 8 Ethical and other considerations

8.1; 8.1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specify whether your study requires ethical approval. Provide additional details / explanation in section 8.1a• The PI is responsible for deciding whether ethics approval is required, which ethics review procedure is applicable, and ensuring these are in place for the start of the proposed research.
8.2; 8.2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specify whether this will be in place by proposed start date. Provide additional details / explanation in section 8.2a

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If ethical approval <u>will not</u> be in place for your proposed start date, please provide a justification, including a statement of what ethical approval is being sought, at what stage this is at, and anticipated date secured. If not currently seeking approval, when do you intend to do; and contingency planning. • Applications without approval (or a clear plan to have it in place by proposed start date) may be rejected. • Where you have yet to secure ethical approval, NICHS reserves the right to withdraw any grant awarded where changes stemming from ethical review significantly modify the structure of your proposal.
8.3	Please outline any other steps you have taken to protect and promote the interests of service users / patients in your study
8.4	Please outline known (current and future) conflicts of interest for all named researchers. Please outline how these will be managed.

Section 9 Commercial and third-party interests

9.1; 9.1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify third party involvement / subcontracting – provide additional details and justification in section 9.1a • Subcontracted provision is any aspect of the funded research that will be delivered by a third party external to the applicant institutions. A sub-contractor is contracted by the applicants to carry out work or provide a service, for example app or web design, for the project. They are being paid a set amount for a set piece of work. • Any proposed subcontracted work should be clearly described and costed and must adhere to eligible costs outlined in the application. These costs must form part of the overall amount applied for. • Funding of subcontractors should be stated in sterling and as a % of the overall applied amount. We reserve the right to reject any application where the subcontracted amounts are deemed excessive • All sub-contracted work should be subjected to external competition to ensure best value for money through competitive purchasing processes. Where this is not possible because of the specialist nature of the work involved, it must be fully justified in the justification of resources. • The PI / institution is responsible for managing and delivering any grant awarded, including subcontracted services. • If you plan to subcontract any part of the proposed research to a third party, a formal contract must be in place before work can commence. • All issues pertaining to Intellectual Property and all other aspects of contracting are subject to the terms and conditions issued by NICHS to any successful applicants.
9.2; 9.2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify commercial involvement – provide additional details and justification in section 9.2a • If yes please give full details on any potential gains, nature of the involvement, the names of the directors of the company, the projected timescale to market, and any other information relevant to this commercial relationship. (Continue on no more than one separate sheet if necessary) • NICHS does not normally fund research that has chiefly commercial aims. However, each study will be considered on its merits, and thus any relevant details should be given.

Section 10

Proposed investigation

10.1 and 10.2

- Word limit 2,500 (approx. 5 A4 pages)
- no more than two additional sheets for references
- should be typed in font Arial 11.
- Small, legible diagrams may be included.
- In line references should be provided, using the Harvard or Vancouver system.
- The authors and affiliations of any unpublished results that are cited should also be included in the reference list.
- Applications which fail to comply with these requirements will not be accepted.
- To give your application the best possible chance of being accepted – design it well.
- There are no prescribed headings, and whilst detailed descriptions of routine methods or procedures are not required, this section should show:
 - A well-defined research question
 - A clear understanding of current knowledge (and gaps) in your domain of interest e.g. a review of the current literature or similar
 - Evidence justifying the need for your study and that the study is novel.
 - Clearly defined aims, objectives and a demonstration of how your hypotheses are appropriate for meeting these objectives.
 - Clearly describe your research design, including timeframes and contingencies. Ensure design is appropriate to the type of question asked.
 - It is vital to add as much detail as possible on design and methodology, including justification of sample size, power calculations and sample selection and exclusion criteria where applicable.
 - Provide a clear statement of justification for sampling decisions. Where sampling calculations have been made, please provide enough information to allow the sample size calculation to be independently verified.
 - Demonstrate that the research team are suitably experienced with access to resources and facilities.
- Applicants are encouraged to seek professional research design and statistical advice before submission. The Scientific Research Committee pays particular attention to this requirement and has very high standards and expertise in this field. An application is likely to be viewed unfavourably where statistical and/or design advice / input has been deemed necessary by the Committee, but not demonstrated in the application.
- * Please note do not include registries/databases or researcher tools (e.g. dashboards or data repositories).

10.3

- Please indicate whether your proposed study has been informed by a review of the current literature / related.
- Please provide further detail in section 10.3, e.g. citation and link, and clearly state how your proposed study stems from / addresses gaps.
- If you have not referred to any reviews / related work, please clearly state why you did not, and how you determined the need for your study.

10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please indicate whether you have a statistician on your team, or whether you took advice from one in developing your application. Please provide additional detail. If you have not taken advice from / employed a statistician, please clearly state why you did not, and justify your decision.
10.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please indicate whether you took advice on design & methodology in developing your application. Please provide additional detail, including the source of this advice. If you have not taken advice, please clearly state why you did not, and justify your decision.
10.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please outline how your proposed research project relates to the current NICHs research strategy. Specifically, how will it help us meet our strategic goals, improve services, and help those living with / at risk of Chest, Heart, and stroke conditions.
10.7-10.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please clearly describe short to medium, and longer terms impacts / outcomes (with predicted timescales). Describe who will benefit and how. What are the benefits, in real terms, for people living with or at risk of Chest, Heart and Stroke illnesses, and their families and carers?

Section 11 Plain English summary of your study

We strongly recommend that PPI members of your team write or review the content for this section of the application form. Please note this section will be reflected in the overall scoring for selection of studies.

11.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please provide a Plain English glossary of key scientific / technical terms in your application Do not underestimate the importance of this section – this helps PPI, SLT, Comms, and other non-research readers understand your study, and as such, helps “sell” your study to those who have a say in deciding whether it is worth funding.
11.1-11.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to Strategy and workshop materials for additional guidance Additional Plain English information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.access2understanding.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Access-to-Understanding-writing-guidance_v1.pdf NIHR Plain English guidance: https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/plain-english-summaries/27363 Plain English campaign: http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/ Make it Clear campaign: https://www.invo.org.uk/makeitclear-2/?print=print Readability calculator: https://readable.com 11.5 refers to the overall (population across NI) size affected. 11.7 description of the intended outcome/potential impact
11.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please refer to Strategy and workshop materials for additional guidance Why is your study needed? What makes it valuable? Why should we fund it with public donations? Would members of the public “buy into” your study? Would they see the need? Would the anticipated outcomes be of any interest to the wider public?

Section 12 related applications

12.1; 12.1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate whether your application has been submitted previously to NICHHS• Give details in section 12.1a – with emphasis on whether you have reworked the application to account for previous feedback from SRC / peer reviewers.
12.2; 12.2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate whether your application is continuation / follow-on funding for a study previously funded by NICHHS• Give details in section 12.2a of previous study, citing NICHHS code; study end date; and key outputs & outcomes.
12.3; 12.3a 12.4; 12.4a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give details in section 12.3a and 12.4a - if this application or a related application is currently being submitted elsewhere and/or has previously been submitted elsewhere.• If so, please indicate to which organisation, the amount applied for, and the date when a decision expected/what the outcome of the decision was.
12.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of the five priorities of research strategy is partnership working to maximise impact. We therefore welcome working with other organisations, co-funding from other sources, but we require that this is your application shows that this is planned, coherent, and that any funding is secured. Provide details in 12.5a

Section 13 PPI

Involving patients, stakeholders, and the public in research is critically important. NICHHS strongly encourages applicants to involve these in the design and delivery of studies, and across the lifespan of a research project. We acknowledge that this may not always be possible – in such instances, applicants must clearly justify why PPI has not been included.

13.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate whether you've involved patients, carers, members of the public in designing the study. Give details in section 13.1a
13.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate whether you've involved patients, carers, members of the public in putting together the application Give details in section 13.2a
13.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate whether you've involved patients, carers, members of the public will be involved as researchers. Give details in section 13.3a
13.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How will patients, carers, members of the public participating in this study will directly benefit? Give details in section 13.4a
13.5- 13.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please indicate whether you require people who use NICHHS services to participate / be involved in your study; and whether you anticipate NICHHS / NICHHS staff facilitating this process. Give details.

Section 14 Project Management

14.1	<p>Please outline the key roles and responsibilities of the members of the project team across the project and describe any contingency plans.</p> <p>Your application should have</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A clear, logical management plan to demonstrate how you will efficiently deploy all resources including staff
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clearly defined milestones, realistic deliverables, and realistic timeframes clearly outline key roles and responsibilities. clear contingency planning <p>Management plan. It is essential that the research is well managed, and appropriate plans are in place to cover contingencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the departure of the Principal Applicant from the host institution, or the loss of other applicants. Outline key roles and responsibilities of the members of the project team throughout the project, and describe contingency plans.
14.2	<p>Please include a Gantt chart describing project milestones, activities, and key deliverables.</p> <p>Project milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milestones should be dated by month of the project. These are used to monitor progress. Please provide an anticipated time scale for the project. This should include the proposed start and end date for different stages of the project, e.g. sample selection, data collection, data analysis. Please indicate the date by which these will likely to be achieved and the person responsible for ensuring this. <p>project deliverables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliverables are the outcomes of the project and may include the production of publicity material and the dissemination of results by various means.

Section 15 Dissemination

15.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how you plan to assist NICHHS in any publicity aimed at raising the profile of the project and outline your plans for dissemination of results within Northern Ireland and further afield. Please quantify outputs as far as possible, and provide appropriate timelines. Outline plans for the dissemination of results within Northern Ireland and further afield (Please quantify outputs and provide timelines.) Outline plans to actively promote NICHHS role in funding your work, and how you plan to assist NICHHS in any publicity aimed at raising the profile of the project
15.2-15.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please outline steps for sharing of anticipated publications in open access Registration on a publicly available database is very desirable. Please indicate if the study will be registered and name the database, and give the Registration Number.

Section 16 Peer reviewers

16.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominate at least three, preferably five, individuals who have the expertise to review this project. Outline their areas of expertise and any relationships they may have with the applicants that may lead to conflict of interest. NICHHS does not undertake to use these reviewers. Where possible, we will secure a reviewer from your nominated list, and identify a suitably qualified “independent” reviewer Please include any potential conflicts of interest that you may be aware of. Please note, reviewers will be asked to complete an COI form. If you are unsure or there are no COI you are aware of, leave blank.
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	<p>Reviewers must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be familiar with the field of research • reside outside Northern Ireland and • should not be current or recent collaborators with the PI, Alt PI, or co-applicants.
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Section 17 Institution/Authority

17.1 & 17.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide details of the institution or authority who employs the Principal Applicant, and which will administer any approved award.
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Section 18 & 19 declaration

18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This application should be submitted by /through the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Head of Department and b) The Chief Financial Officer of the Health Trust, University or other organisation who will be responsible for administering any grant that may be awarded. • Please ensure that this is fully completed and signed as required.
19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PI to sign (Alt PI can sign in lieu)

Additional useful resources:

www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-implementation-plan-clinical-research-recovery-resilience-and-growth

research.hscni.net/hsc-statistical-and-methodological-support

research.hscni.net/personal-and-public-involvement-ppi-research