

Platelet Society Research Strategy

Why the Platelet Society funds research

Blood platelets play a key role in blood clotting and maintaining the health of our blood vessels. However, these small cells have also been implicated in a range of diseases and disorders, including excess bleeding, thrombosis, cancer and autoimmune diseases.

The Platelet Society promotes excellence in research, education and public awareness of platelet biology in human health and disease.

Our mission is

- to promote and assist research in all matters associated with platelets in disease
- to advance the education of the public and patients

We fund research to achieve this mission by providing a framework that brings together platelet researchers and supporting the career development of our members to enable the establishment of future generations of researchers who will work to discover new ways to treat and prevent platelet-related diseases.

Research and scientific priority issues that have been identified

The actions of platelets on different biological processes and diseases are wide-ranging. We support research to understand how the functions of blood platelets are controlled and how this may go wrong in disease, including (but not restricted to) thrombosis, bleeding problems, inflammation and immune dysfunction, diabetes, dementia and cognitive decline, bacterial and viral infection and cancer.

Specific donations or grants to the Platelet Society charity are sometimes given with a request that this supports research in a particular area, and when identified as a priority by the Platelet Society Executive Committee, we will design specific funding calls to address these pressing or emerging areas of importance.

The Platelet Society is simultaneously defining its priorities for patient engagement and public engagement. A key aspect of these activities will be gathering input from patients on research area priorities which will feed into specific calls and research priorities as appropriate.

How the Platelet Society plans to fund research

Summer Studentship Awards

Applications will be invited annually for undergraduate studentships to support a period of research experience (internship), and to seed new research ideas and activities. Each year we will offer 2-3 competitive studentships; dependent on the quality of applications received and funds available. We may also identify specific key areas around which researchers can focus to foster new research collaborations between institutions. The studentships will support 6 – 8 weeks of laboratory-based

work, and a £500 contribution towards consumable costs. Application forms will be submitted by the prospective supervisor (who must be a Society member) with a named student in their second or third year of an undergraduate programme or integrated Master's degree and have yet to complete their studies.

Skills Transfer Awards

Applications to fund Skills transfer projects are invited on a rolling basis, to promote exchange, training and/or transfer of skills and technologies from one group to another. The aim of these awards is to support collaborative research between members and professional skills development for our members. These run as a rolling call, with applications accepted year-round. Funds of up to £300 are available. Application forms will be submitted by the principal investigator (who must be a Society member).

Clinical Audits

We welcome applications for funding to support the running of clinical audits with a focus on identifying areas of clinical/patient need to improve diagnosis and treatment strategies for patients with platelet-related diseases. In 2025, applications focusing on women's health inequalities will be particularly encouraged. Funds of up to 4500 are available with awards of up to £2000 anticipated. Application forms will be submitted by the principal investigator (who must be a Society member with a clinical background).

Outreach and Education Grants

In addition to supporting research, the Society supports education to raise public awareness of platelet biology in human health and disease. To support this, our Outreach and Education grants scheme provides members with support to create and run innovative public/patient outreach and education sessions. These run as a rolling call, with applications accepted year-round. Funds of up to £300 per application are available. Applications are open to society members only.

Future awards (subject to available resources)

It is our intention to develop resources to allow the expansion of our support for research activities. This will include small-scale awards to allow free participation in our conferences and other high-profile meetings to support the career development of our members. We aim to increase the participation of members with caring responsibilities and therefore we will also invite applications for financial support to help with caring costs incurred due to attendance of Platelet Society events. We intend to make awards that support as many members as possible. Given our current modest resources, we are initially focusing on small awards.

Moving forward, we aim to seed-fund new projects (research innovation awards), develop new ideas, and pave the way for collaborative research between members. Initially only a budget of up to £3000 will be considered. Applications will be submitted by members of the Society, with applications from postdoctoral researchers (with written support from their supervisor) and independent fellows encouraged.

In the longer-term, we hope to offer larger personal fellowship-scale awards to members, although considerably increased fundraising activities (including commercial sponsorship and potentially partnering with larger organisations' events) will be required in order to develop the levels of Society reserves for this level of ambition.

Membership of the Research Awards Committee:

All applications for the grants and awards listed above will be assessed by the Platelet Society Research Awards Committee (<https://plateletsociety.co.uk/funding/>). All funding opportunities will be via a formal application process, with peer review administered by a Platelet Society Awards Committee. Each Award committee will include an executive committee member, reviewers from our Awards Review panel, and a lay member. At least one of the Research Awards Committee members will be an Early Career Researcher, and where necessary for example with clinical-based projects, at least one will be a clinical specialist.

Applications will be scored by each committee member and brief written feedback provided. Applications will be discussed by the reviewing panel, where studies will be ranked, and award decisions recommended. Prior to the issuance of award letters, funding will be approved first the charity treasurer, the charity Executive Chair and by the Board of Trustees.

Who may be funded by the Platelet Society?

Funding will be restricted to members of the Society. In the future, a minimum membership of 6 months will be required. Applications will be considered from researchers at any career stage and priority will be given to early career researchers (such as undergraduate students, postdoctoral researchers, independent fellows, PhD students, and newly appointed lecturers). PhD students and postdoctoral researchers will apply with the support of their current academic supervisor or mentor, who will be asked to provide a letter of support confirming available time, space, and where appropriate resources, to enable the project to be developed successfully.

Where may Platelet Society funded research be performed?

The research will be performed in the location of the applicant(s), which will normally be an academic institution, a research institute or hospital. The Society has members based in a number of countries, and therefore work may be conducted outside of the UK, provided that the host institution agrees to the terms and conditions of the award.

Grant award timetable

Summer Studentship Awards

Applications open in April each year with a submission deadline in late May. The research awards committee will be given 3-4 weeks to review the applications. Funding decisions will be made as soon as possible to allow applicants to be informed of outcomes by mid-late June.

Skills Transfer Awards

Applications are invited on a rolling basis and reviewed monthly. The research awards committee will be given 3-4 weeks to review the applications. Funding decisions will be made as soon as possible to allow applicants to be informed of outcomes within 3 months of submission.

Clinical Audits

Applications will open in early 2025, with submission required by late Spring (dates tbc) The research awards committee will be given 4-6 weeks to review the applications, prior to panel review. Decisions will be made as soon as possible, and applicants informed of the outcomes over the summer.

Outreach and Education Grants

Applications are invited on a rolling basis and reviewed monthly. The research awards committee will be given 3-4 weeks to review the applications. Funding decisions will be made as soon as possible to allow applicants to be informed of outcomes within 3 months of submission.

Future awards

To be confirmed when resources allow

Research Strategy Review

The Platelet Society Executive Committee will review the research strategy annually to ensure relevance and to enable it to be developed in response to changes in funding levels and research priorities.