

Platelet Society Research Strategy

Why the Platelet Society funds research

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

We promote 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 enable this mission to be achieved, provide a framework to bring platelet researchers together and support 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 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 funding calls to address particularly pressing or emerging areas of importance.

The Platelet Society is in parallel defining its priorities for engagement with patients. A key aspect of these activities will be to gather input from patients on research area priorities and these 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, and to seed new research ideas and activities. In 2023 we will offer 3-5 studentships, dependent on quality of applications received, and we would aim to continue to award at least 3 studentships in future years. We may identify specific theme areas around which researchers can focus, which we anticipate will also encourage new research collaborations between institutions. In 2023 the Summer Studentship Awards call will be an open call, accepting applications

investigating any area of platelet biology. 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, or may apply for membership at the time of application) with a named student who will be in the second or third year of an undergraduate programme or integrated Master's degree and have yet to complete their studies.

Applications will be assessed by the Platelet Society Research Awards Committee. These will be scored by each committee member and brief written feedback provided and discussed at a Committee meeting where studies will be ranked and award decisions recommended. Funding will be approved first by the charity treasurer, and secondly by the Board of Trustees, prior to issuance of award letters.

New Research Innovation Award

We aim to invite applications annually to seed-fund new projects, develop new ideas, and pave the way for collaborative research between members. A project budget of up to £3000 will be considered. Applications will be submitted by members of the Society, and with applications from postdoctoral researchers (with written support from their supervisor) and independent fellows encouraged.

Applications will be assessed by the Platelet Society Research Awards Committee. These will be scored by each committee member and brief written feedback provided and discussed at a Committee meeting where studies will be ranked and award decisions recommended. Funding will be approved first by the charity treasurer, and secondly by the Board of Trustees, prior to issuance of award letters.

Future awards (subject to available resources)

It is our intention to develop resources to allow 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. Our intention will be to make awards that support as many members as possible, given our modest resources – thus the initial focus on small awards.

A working group is currently developing an outreach strategy for the Platelet Society, and it is possible that awards may therefore be suggested for public and patient-facing activities, engagement and education.

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

Membership of the Research Awards Committee:

Our initial awards are of relatively low value, and therefore extensive external evaluation of applications will not be required. The Research Awards Committee will therefore initially include 1 Executive Committee members, 1 member of the Board of

Trustees, 1 Platelet Society member not on the committee, a scientifically qualified non-member of the Society and a lay member. At least one of the Research Awards Committee members will be an Early Career Researcher, and one a clinical specialist. As the size and number of awards made increases no members of the Board of Trustees (all decisions will be approved by the Board of Trustees separately), and two additional non-Platelet Society members committee members will be recruited.

The scaled development of the Research Awards Committee will be compatible with future application for membership of the AMRC, for which the independence of the committee is an important consideration.

Who may be funded by the Platelet Society?

From 2023 onwards funding for research projects will be restricted to members of the Society who have been members for at least 6 months. 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 support from 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 be performed in the location of the applicant, 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 in 2023 will open in April with a submission deadline in late May. The committee will be given 3-4 weeks to review the applications. This will require brief notes to be made to aid discussions at the awards committee. Applications will be divided to enable two members of the committee to present each application and lead discussions. Notes will be retained as evidence of a successful award process. The Research Awards Committee will be held as soon as possible to allow applicants to be informed of outcomes by mid-late June. Research Awards Committee meetings will be minuted.

New Research Innovation Award

To be confirmed when resources allow

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.