MQ Data Science Programme 2018
Guidance for Applicants

Award information

The MQ Data Science Awards will support research in the realm of mental health data science. Up to £50,000 will be made available per award, and we expect each project to last between 6 and 24 months.

The MQ Data Science Award allows investigators to produce a well-defined piece of work and expand the use of data resources for mental health research, while at the same time further developing the skills base in this complex field. The programme also aims to enable researchers to obtain the pilot data or proof of concept needed in order to obtain follow-up funding from other sources.

The budget dedicated to 2018’s programme is £200,000. MQ plans to make grant awards in this programme annually, subject to funding availability.

MQ is committed to funding research that in the short or long term is likely to make a tangible difference in reducing the suffering caused by mental illness. This is reflected in our vision statement and research aims. As such, we are committed to ensuring that every project we fund has the greatest opportunity of making an impact, regardless of the research discipline and timeline to clinical benefit.

For this funding programme we are especially interested in applications that focus on the following:

- Research questions in children and young people’s mental health and mental health over the lifespan
- Proposals which include academic and non-academic partners
- Proposals which include collaborations across the four countries of the United Kingdom

The deadline for submitting applications is the 22nd of January 2018 at 17.00. Shortlisting outcomes will be announced in late-February 2018 and funding decisions are expected in late-April 2018.
Eligibility for funding

Project requirements
- The project must address a question relevant to mental health.
- The project should, directly or indirectly, improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care options, and lead to a better understanding of mental health and illness.
- The project should make use of existing UK data resources in an innovative way
  - Existing data resources could include routinely collected data (health, social, educational, or other administrative data), data from longitudinal studies, tissue banks, etc., or naturalistic data streams.
  - Projects that seek to enrich existing data e.g. through linkage, or projects that develop new tools to collect, access, or query the data are also eligible
- International collaborations are eligible, provided that UK data resources are a key component of the project.
- Applicants must explain how they will be able to access the designated data resources and/or to perform linkage studies as needed within a secure platform for analysis. They must give assurance that if a proposal is successful the dataset(s) would be accessible within a reasonable time frame. MQ reserves the right to make the release of funding contingent on data access within 9 months of the award date.

Applicant requirements
- Applicants must:
  - have a proven track record in commercial, clinical or other research and development, equivalent to 3 years full-time;
  - or have a PhD, DPhil, DClinPsy, MBBS or MD;
  - or have research experience equivalent to 3 years full-time postgraduate research.
- Applicants may come from any discipline including, but not restricted to: molecular biology, neuroscience, data science, psychology, psychiatry, education, anthropology, social sciences;
- Applications are permitted to have up to two Co-Principal Investigators, but one host institution must be nominated as the lead organisation for contracting purposes.

Host institution requirements
- Applicants can be based at an academic institution or at an independent research organisation with appropriate facilities to carry out the research, for example a government department, NHS trust or for-profit company.
Use of funds

Funds may be used flexibly, including for any of the following:

- start-up funding for a specific project, transition funding for a current project, co-funding with other funding sources
- direct research costs, e.g.
  - computing costs
  - data access costs
- salary support:
  - for the applicant themselves;
  - for research staff as appropriate.

Please note, indirect costs, such as non-specific estimated costs, including estates costs, library costs, finance and HR costs, are not eligible for funding, as per MQ’s Sponsored Research Policies.

Selection process

The MQ Data Science Awards will be made following a 1-stage selection process. Applicants are invited to submit an application outlining their research proposal. The selection process involves the following steps:

1. Eligibility will be checked by the MQ research team according to the following list. Projects scoring ‘no’ on any item, will be excluded at this stage.

2. Eligible applications will be shortlisted by the MQ research team and the Data Science Committee. A small number of applications will be selected for full review.

3. Selected applications will be allocated to committee members for review. MQ will also seek comments from at least 2 external reviewers for each proposal. Committee members will judge proposals according to the following aspects:
   a. Applicant’s publication and grant funding history – relative to their field and stage of career
b. Team’s expertise and strength of the institutional environment

c. The relevance of the project's aims and hypotheses to transforming mental illness, and the potential to reduce the disease burden

d. Are the design and methods appropriate for the research aims?

e. Is the plan for data processing and statistical analysis clearly described, fully thought through and appropriate?

f. The potential to have a positive impact on patients/society both in the short and long term

g. Any other strengths of the proposal

h. Is the project considered feasible?

4. All reviewed proposals will be discussed at the committee meeting and final funding decisions will be taken jointly by the committee members

Key Dates

22/01/2108 Deadline for submitting applications

February 2017 We will let you know if your application has been shortlisted for full review

April 2017 Announcement of funding decisions

Committee Members

Biographies for the current MQ Data Science Committee members are available on the MQ website.

The current committee members are:

- Andrew McIntosh – Chair (University of Edinburgh)
- Christina Hultman (Karolinska Intitutet, Stockholm)
- Dermot O’Reilly (Queens University Belfast)
- Robert Stewart (King’s College London)
- David Osborn (University College London)

Conflict of Interest

MQ’s Board of Trustees and members of the MQ Data Science Committee are required to abide by a Conflict of Interest policy, which is designed to protect and preserve the integrity of our Advisers and our processes.

Part of this code states that Committee members may not discuss any aspect of the deliberations of recommendations of the Committee with applicants. As
such, applicants should not contact Committee members about their application.

**Application**

- Applicants must complete and submit their application in English via MQ's [electronic application system](#)
- Applications must be submitted within the stated deadline and must be complete
- Applicants must provide their ORCID identifier. The ORCID identifier links all research and publications carried out by the applicant.
- The final section of the application needs to be completed by the Applicant’s Head of Department (or equivalent). Applicants are encouraged to access the online application form and invite their Head of Department to complete the relevant section as soon as possible.
- If applicants would prefer to draft their applications offline, we have made a Word version of our application form available online.

**Questions**

Please contact MQ directly for any queries regarding this funding opportunity or the application on grants@mqmentalhealth.org