

JOB DESCRIPTION: Director of Research

Why the role is important to us

The Medical Research Foundation's mission is to drive the life-changing advances of tomorrow, by laying the foundations for ground-breaking new discoveries today. We know that many health conditions are overlooked and underfunded, that new health threats will continue to arise, and that there will always be a need for high-quality, high impact medical research. In order to change medicine and change lives, we need to fund the very best research and the very best researchers whose work will have an impact on understanding about diseases and health conditions and has the potential to change prevention, diagnosis, treatment or interventions. You will ensure that we support the best science and that the researchers that we support are given every opportunity to excel.

What you will do

You will lead the development and implementation of our research strategy, the delivery of at least £5m funding for new awards per annum, the management of c. £30m grant portfolio, research policy development and monitoring and evaluation of our research funding.

You will play a leadership role in the charity through the Executive Leadership Team and management of the Research Team, as well as representing the charity externally by developing funding and other partnerships.

Your main responsibilities are to lead and manage the Research Department and:

Research funding

- carry out horizon scanning and landscape reviews to deliver our research strategy and ensure its continued relevance.
- review our existing funding schemes and develop proposals for new schemes, reviewing the landscape and identifying the need for new research, including benchmarking our research funding against other funders.
- have oversight of all research funding competitions to deliver at least £5m new research per annum.
- have oversight of ongoing grant management (c. £30m grant portfolio).
- establish expert review committees.
- discuss funding proposals with applicants and have oversight of developmental feedback.
- safeguard high professional standards and the integrity in our research funding decision-making.
- develop, commission, deliver and evaluate a programme of career development support for our fellows.
- oversee and deliver showcases and other events for researchers and prize winners.
- provide briefings and materials for committees, trustees and senior staff on areas of health research.
- develop and pursue opportunities for joint funding calls with other research funders.
- make the case to support our research to potential donors and other supporters.
- develop new processes and ensure existing processes are fit to support research funding competitions, grant management and impact reporting.
- review existing and develop new policies relevant to research funding e.g. grant terms and conditions, due diligence.
- have oversight of research funding-related projects.
- act as budget holder for the research and research support budgets.

- prepare annual delivery plans for the research department.
- identify and manage risks associated with research funding and, if appropriate, specific awards.
- represent the Foundation externally at meetings and events.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- have oversight of, and regularly review, our framework for impact evaluation.
- have oversight of our monitoring and evaluation activities and reporting on research outcomes and impact.
- develop new processes to measure impact and outputs (e.g., IP) in conjunction with our Senior Research Impact Manager.
- oversee processes that allow other teams to tell stories of the research we fund.

Leadership

- be a member of our Executive Leadership Team.
- oversee or contribute to cross-organisational projects, such as environmental sustainability, intellectual property or improvement of grant financial reporting.
- be an advocate of our values and demonstrate our organisational behaviours in all that you do.

In addition, you will also:

- carry out any other reasonable duties.
- identify opportunities to continually improve our activities and impact.

Who you will work with

You will report to our CEO and will directly manage our Senior Research Impact Manager, Senior Research Manager and our Research Operations and Policy Manager and you will have oversight of a team of nine people. You will manage external service providers and you will cultivate and manage our relationship with the MRC's Research Management staff. They will provide you with expert advice in specific areas of health research.

About you

Who you are

You are inspired to help us deliver our vision of a world where medical research improves health for everyone. Our vision is so important that we need the very best people to help us achieve it. Our team is proud to work for the Medical Research Foundation. We are ambitious for the Medical Research Foundation and for ourselves. We are approachable – providing advice to everyone and explaining our work. We are dedicated and committed to achieving the most for our donors and our researchers. And we are involved – constantly looking for new ways to engage and improve. We love our work and we will be looking for this in you too.

What you will bring to the role

You will have significant experience of:

- working in a biomedical sciences research/funding environment (e.g. charity, university, public sector).
- landscape reviews in the biomedical sciences.
- funding competitions, peer review, and grant management.
- evaluation of research outputs and impact.
- managing a team.
- acting as an organisation's representative.

You will be able to:

- lead, motivate and manage a team of experts in research management, evaluation and impact reporting.
- demonstrate exemplary written skills and verbal communications skills and an ability to communicate complex matters with clarity, structure and passion, to colleagues, scientists and potential supporters.
- demonstrate credibility and an ability to develop relationships with senior stakeholders.
- identify the heart of an issue, analyse information, find solutions to problems by reviewing best practice elsewhere, identify and mitigate risk, and make recommendations or take decisions.
- negotiate, influence and persuade, and build strong relationships.
- demonstrate high level of IT skills.
- contribute to the wider leadership and development of the charity through debate, discussion, idea generation and ensuring compliance with policies, practice and values.

Attractive extras – you may also have:

- experience of working with M&E tools.
- budget management experience.
- formal training in people or project management.
- experience with grant management tools e.g. Flexigrant.

Education

You will:

- have a PhD in biomedical sciences or a degree in biological sciences (or equivalent experience) with extensive experience working in a biomedical sciences funding environment.

Personal attributes

You will be:

- passionate about medical research.
- ambitious – for the organisation, yourself and for human health.
- approachable – ready to engage, talk and explain to anyone.
- dedicated – willing to go the extra mile.
- involved – constantly looking for ways to engage and improve.
- committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in all areas including human health.