

# Guidelines for applicants

## Introduction

The Global Grants for Gut Health is a competitive programme for investigator-initiated research into the human gut microbiota, supported by Yakult and Nature Research.

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The Global Grants for Gut Health will consider proposals one-year for research projects – whether laboratory investigations or clinical studies – that advance understanding of the mechanisms of action by which gut microbiota have an impact on human health.

## Applications might relate to

- The gut-associated immune system and how it is modulated by microbiota
- How the gut microbiota exercise influence in inflammatory and metabolic diseases
- The mechanisms by which the microbiota influence the gut–brain axis

In all cases the focus should be on uncovering and understanding how the microbiota exerts an influence on human health.

The fund is open to eligible researchers from across the world. The programme will make a maximum of three awards per funding cycle, each of up to US\$100,000. Research projects should be one year in duration.

## Eligibility

Applicants should be employed by a university, research institute or any other not-for-profit organisation. Applicants must hold a doctorate or medical degree (e.g., PhD, MD, PharmD) and have at least five years' postdoctoral research experience.

The awards are global, so applicants can be of any nationality and projects can be hosted at eligible organisations in any country apart from Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Syria or where otherwise prohibited or restricted by law or where otherwise prohibited or restricted by law as updated from time to time.

The programme is open to applicants from all scientific disciplines.

## Assessment process & criteria

All proposals will first be evaluated by professional scientific peer reviewers. A shortlist of proposals will then be assessed by an [independent, expert panel](#). The panel is made up of internationally renowned researchers in human microbiota from across the world. Panel members will review shortlisted proposals individually ahead of a physical meeting of the full panel to discuss the merits of proposals in detail. The panel will then decide which proposals to fund. Yakult and Nature Research employees will have no influence over funding decisions.

**Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:**

techniques.

## **2 Potential impact**

Research Proposals should set out the importance of the contribution they will make. For example, the research may directly answer key questions, develop techniques to further probe crucial aspects of the human microbiota or address unmet challenges or opportunities. The ultimate aim of the scheme is to benefit society and patients through improved knowledge, tools and techniques to understand and address gut health.

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## **3 Scientific quality**

Research Proposals must set out well-designed, robust studies using the most appropriate methodologies, equipment, data and analytical techniques to reach the stated objectives.

## **4 Quality of the applicant/team**

The applicant (and other team members) must have the necessary skills and experience to carry out the research, both in terms of the science and the leadership of a research grant. This will be judged on the track record of the applicant(s) and the appropriateness of the host universities and institutes.

## **5 Value for money**

The project budget must be clearly explained and will be judged on the appropriateness to deliver the proposed programme of research. This is not about costing the project as cheaply as possible, it is about showing why the requested resources are necessary and reassuring the panel that everything is in place to conduct the research and deliver on the objectives. The panel will also consider how the project will be managed to ensure the resources are deployed effectively.

### **Costs**

Funds can be used to cover the following eligible costs:

#### **1. Direct costs of research**

- Salaries of the principal investigator and other team members. It is expected that awards will cover a percentage of investigators' time. Awards are not intended to buy out 100% of investigators' time. Research assistants may be employed on a full-time basis.
- The costs of consumables, materials, supplies, software and small, non-capital equipment (up to US\$10,000) required to deliver the project and associated activities.
- Travel and subsistence for team members as required to deliver the project and associated dissemination activities. This is not intended to cover normal living expenses.
- Publication costs.
- Ethical approval and other licence fees.
- Consultancy and subcontracting fees.

#### **2. Indirect costs or institutional overheads**

- In addition, applicants may apply for a further amount, equivalent to 10% of the requested direct costs of research, to cover indirect costs if such a contribution is required by their institution.

The following costs are not eligible:

## How to apply

[Print this guide](#)

Proposals should be submitted through [proposalCENTRAL](#).

[Apply now](#)

To register for an account, follow the steps on the proposalCENTRAL website ensuring that you provide the relevant personal and institutional information. Note: if your institution is not already set up on proposalCENTRAL, then you will need to liaise with the relevant finance/grants office to register your institution.

## Application process

1. **"Research Proposal Title Page"** - the title of your Research Proposal must be completed and the terms and conditions accepted before you can move onto other sections of the application process. At this stage, you are also required to warrant that your institution has seen and approved the standard Funding Agreement associated with this grant programme, which is downloadable [here](#).
2. **"Lead Applicant"** - the creator of the proposal will automatically be selected as the principal investigator.
3. **"Lead Institution"** - is the host organisation. This will automatically populate based on the institution information in the Lead Applicant's profile.
4. **"Research Proposal Summary"**:
  - Research Proposal summary (4000 characters) - This should summarise your main Research Proposal, and include: the Context; Objectives; Research Design and Methodology; Project Team; and Dissemination and Impact Plan.'
  - Keywords - Add keywords that relate to your Research Proposal.
5. **"Research Proposal and Supporting Documents"** - Your research proposal will be entered directly into ProposalCentral. Supporting documents must use a clear font such as Arial, no smaller than 11pt and margins of at least 2cm on all sides. Documents should be uploaded to proposalCENTRAL as pdf files.

- **Research Proposal**

The Research Proposal is the main part of the Application and is structured using the following headings:

- **Context**

- Explain the background to the research, the challenges it seeks to address and show the originality and potential impact of the research, in both academic and non-academic contexts.

- **Objectives**

- State clearly the objectives, questions or hypotheses the research will address, referring clearly to the mechanism of action you are investigating.

- **Research Design and Methodology**

- Explain the programme of research to be undertaken to address the above objectives. Describe the methodologies, approaches, equipment and data to be employed and show that these are appropriate to the objectives of the study.

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- **Project Team**

Introduce the members of the team stating their role on the project and how their expertise and experience relates to the proposed research. The lead applicant should explain their previous leadership experience (note this will be judged as appropriate to the career stage of the lead applicant).

- **Research Environment**

Explain how the lead institution provides an appropriate setting in which to undertake and coordinate the project. This may include reference to the institution's track record in this research area, current projects and activities and access to appropriate equipment and facilities.

- **Budget Justification**

Justify each element of the project budget to show that the requested resources are necessary to conduct the research and deliver on the objectives.

- **Dissemination and Impact Plan**

Explain how the resulting knowledge, data, tools and techniques will be communicated to academic and non-academic audiences bearing in mind the ultimate aim of the scheme is to benefit society and patients through improved understanding of gut health. Where there is real potential to further develop and implement findings, be specific about who you will engage with to maximise impact.

- **References** (references are included within the six page limit).

- **A CV** (maximum three sides A4 per CV) (Your CV is not included in the page limit for your research proposal).

for the lead applicant and each other team member describing research career to date including degrees and qualifications, academic and professional posts, relevant publications, funding and other achievements and appointments. CVs should clearly show that the Principal Investigator meets the eligibility requirement for at least 5 years' postdoctoral research experience.

6. **"Budget"** – Enter the budgeted costs for your Research Proposal line-by-line in the tables below. All costs must be in US dollars. Total direct cost budgets must not exceed \$100,000 for the 12 month period of research. Applicants may include a request for indirect costs to support institutional overheads. Indirect costs must not exceed 10% of the total budgeted direct costs

7. **"Budget Summary"** - the Budget Summary sheet provides a snapshot of your budget request.

8. **"Consolidated Application for Signature"** - once you have completed Steps 1 to 7, click on the Print Signature Pages with Attachments button below to create a Consolidated Application file. This will need to be signed by the Lead Applicant and the Signing Official at the Lead Institution. Once signed, return to step 5 of the application process and upload the document as Signed Consolidated Application.

9. **"Validate"** - click the Validate button to check for any missing required information or attachments.

10. **"Submit"** - to submit your proposal, please click the Submit button below. You will be unable to Submit if you have not provided all the required information. Upon successful submission, a confirmation message will be displayed on the screen and a confirmation email will be sent to the Lead Applicant.

[Download](#)

## Funding agreement

### Download funding agreement

Applicants must submit a copy of the funding agreement to the contracts office or other authorised office of their institution for approval before submitting their application. Successful grantees will be required to sign the funding agreement prior to receiving funds.

[Download](#)

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## Key Dates

Applications for the second round of funding open at 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time on 30th June 2019 and close at 11:59 pm EST on 30th September 2019.

Second round awards will be announced in April 2020.

## Financial management

All grant winners and lead institutions will be required to enter into a separate grant agreement with the grant funder.

Awards will be paid in two instalments. The first payment of 50% will be made at the start of the project period. The remaining 50% will be paid after acceptance of a mid-term report (see Reporting below).

The institution and grant holder must use the award to deliver the proposed research. Any significant variance from the proposed research and associated activities must be approved by the funder.

At the end of the award the institution will return any unspent funds to the funder.

## Reporting and monitoring

The grant holder must submit a mid-term report by the end of month six. Mid-term reports will be submitted through ProposalCentral, be equivalent to no more than three sides of A4, and should include:

- Grant number and title.
- Summary of project progress with reference to original aims and timelines.
- Findings and outputs to date.
- Summary of any challenges.
- Work still to be done including any revised timelines.
- Planned publications and outputs.

- Grant number and title
- Details of project progress with reference to original aims and timelines.
- Details of resulting data, analysis and findings
- Details of outputs to date.
- Further planned publications and outputs.
- Details of challenges.
- Opportunities to continue the current project or for future follow-on work future work .
- A statement of expenditure.

## **Ethics and integrity**

The grant holder and the lead institution must meet all relevant ethical, legal and regulatory requirements to undertake the research, be they local, national or international. Approvals must be granted before research begins.

Where research involves the use of human participants, tissue or data the Institution and the Award Holder must comply with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Where research involves the use of animals the Institution and the Award Holder must work to the NC3Rs "Animal Research: Reporting In Vivo Experiments" (ARRIVE) guidelines.

The Institution and the Award Holder must make every effort to comply with the NC3Rs ambitions to "replace, refine and reduce" the use of live animals in research.

The grant holder and the lead institution must have in place and follow formal procedures governing good research practice. This should cover issues including fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, misrepresentation, conflicts of interest and breach of ethical guidelines or duty of care.

## **Publication**

The grant holder and lead institution should make results generated through the grant available to the broader scientific community through publication in journals, reports, at scientific meetings and through other appropriate routes.

The grant holder and lead institution must acknowledge support received from the Funder in publications and other forms of communication including media appearances and press releases.

Grant holders are free to publish results arising from the grant in the most appropriate journals. There is no expectation or requirement that research will be published in journals owned or managed by Springer Nature. Where manuscripts are submitted to Springer Nature journals, they will be subjected to the same editorial and review processes and standards as any other submission.

Applicants can request Article Processing Charges for open access publications as part of the direct costs on their research proposal.

The grant holder should follow good publication practice as set out by, for example, the Committee on Publication Ethics and the Council of Science Editors.

Yakult and Nature Research will periodically hold symposia, usually aligned with a relevant conference, to bring grant holders together and to showcase research funded under the programme. Grant holders should make every effort to attend these meetings in order to present their findings.

## Intellectual property

The grant holder and lead institution should make every reasonable effort to ensure that the results of the research contribute to academic advancement and, where possible, to the benefit of wider society and the economy. Results should be communicated to academic and non-academic audiences as required to maximise potential benefits.

The funder claims no rights to the ownership or use of results generated through the grant. Ownership of the results, and any associated intellectual property rights, rests with the organisation generating them.

Arrangements for exploitation must not hinder further academic research and dissemination.

## Contact

[gutgrants@springernature.com](mailto:gutgrants@springernature.com)

Frequently asked questions

## The Global Grants for Gut Health

Funds for research into the human gut microbiota.  
Applications close 11:59pm EST on 30th September 2019

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