

2020 SFARI Collaboration on Sex Differences in Autism — Request for Applications

SFARI Collaborations are a new funding mechanism that will provide substantive and stable funding support to multidisciplinary teams of investigators tackling critical issues in the autism research field. Collaborations will be led by a director who oversees interdisciplinary, synergistic research efforts across multiple laboratories. Investigative groups within a Collaboration will focus on the same conceptually unified topic but will incorporate different scientific disciplines, multiple levels of analysis, and will include a robust data-sharing infrastructure.

SFARI Collaborations have a maximum budget of up to \$8,000,000, including 20 percent indirect costs, over an initial period of four years, with a possible three-year extension.

For our first Collaboration RFA, SFARI solicits applications to investigate sex differences in autism.

[Policies and Procedures](#)


Letter of Intent Deadline
April 21, 2020



[RFA](#) [How To Apply](#) [FAQ](#)

Eligibility



1. Am I eligible to be a collaboration director (CD) or principal investigator (PI) on a SFARI Collaborations Award? 

At a minimum, all prospective CDs and PIs must hold a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent degree and have a faculty position or the equivalent at a college, university, medical school or other research facility. It is expected that successful applicants will be recognized scientific leaders in their respective fields with a history of working collaboratively with other investigators of diverse talents and approaches. See the Personnel FAQ section for more information on the responsibilities of a Collaboration director and principal investigator.

Applications may be submitted by domestic and foreign nonprofit organizations; public and private institutions, such as colleges, universities, hospitals, laboratories, units of state and local government; and eligible agencies of the federal government. There are no citizenship or country requirements.

Commercial or other for-profit organizations interested in applying must obtain permission from SFARI prior to submission. Interested organizations should contact sfarigrants@sfari.org prior to application

submission to inquire about eligibility.

2. What personnel roles are required in a Collaboration? ×

A Collaboration will consist of one Collaboration director, and a minimum of two (2) additional principal investigators (PIs). Each subproject must have a designated PI. Given the complexity of activities, the Foundation strongly encourages the inclusion of a project manager/coordinator who will work closely with the CD and the PIs to facilitate activities across the Collaboration. Additional key personnel may be included, but are not limited to: co-investigators, consultants, postdoctoral research associates and others. Since inclusion of diverse viewpoints is critical for scientific advancement, the Foundation strongly encourages the inclusion of researchers who span institutions, career stages and groups historically underrepresented in science.

3. Can Collaboration PIs come from different institutions? ×

Yes. The Foundation encourages assembling the strongest scientific team to address the goals of the Collaboration, regardless of geographical location or institutional affiliation.

4. Can foreign institutions apply for a grant? ×

Yes. Foreign institutions may apply. Please see [Simons Foundation policies](#) regarding international grants.

Personnel ×

1. What is the difference between a Collaboration director (CD), principal investigator (PI) and a co-investigator (co-I)? ×

Collaboration director

In addition to meeting the minimum requirements for a PI, the Collaboration director is responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the proposed research project. The CD will oversee the scientific activities of the other members, manage the overall functioning of the Collaboration, and will be responsible for monitoring and reporting on the overall progress of the individual projects. The CD is also responsible for contractual and financial obligations, and other organizational assurances/certifications, and must ensure that Collaboration members comply with the terms and conditions of the award. The CD will be SFARI's main point of contact for the activities of the Collaboration.

Principal Investigator

An individual (or individuals) judged by the applicant organization to have the appropriate level of authority and responsibility to direct a subproject supported by the Collaboration. All PIs must hold a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent degree and have a faculty position or the equivalent at a college, university, medical school or other research facility. In addition, eligible applicants must have independent lab space at their institution. He or she is responsible and accountable to the applicant organization and SFARI for the proper conduct of the project or activity. Principal investigators (PIs) are expected to conduct research that advances the goals of the Collaboration and to provide the CD with relevant information for reporting on progress and finances, as well as organizational assurances/certifications.

Co-Investigator

An individual involved with the PI in the scientific development or execution of a subproject. The co-investigator must hold a Ph.D., M.D. or equivalent and be employed by, or affiliated with, the applicant/grantee organization or another organization participating in the project under a consortium agreement. A co-investigator is considered key personnel, but the Simons Foundation does not require a minimum effort from the co-investigator. The designation of a co-investigator, if applicable, does not affect the PI's roles and responsibilities, nor is it a role implying multiple PIs.

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2. Is there a minimum percent effort for PIs or co-investigators? ✕

We seek applications from independent investigators who can devote a substantial portion of time to this effort. There is no minimum percent effort required for any personnel, but we expect personnel, in particular the CD and PIs and co-investigators, to have efforts that reflect their substantive roles in the Collaboration.

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3. As the Collaboration director (CD), should I be listed as key personnel in the application on proposalCENTRAL (pC)? ✕

No. Please list only additional key personnel on the application (i.e., principal investigators, co-investigators, postdoctoral research associates, etc.).

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4. Where do I enter additional co-investigators and additional key personnel? ✕

You can save personnel details in the KEY PERSONNEL section on the application.

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5. Can co-investigators and additional personnel be listed on multiple applications? ✕

Yes, co-investigators and additional personnel can be listed on multiple applications.

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6. Does the Simons Foundation require letters of support or collaboration? ✕

We do not require letters of support or letters of collaboration from co-investigators. If a letter is prepared, it can be uploaded as “Appendix – In-press papers on related topics.”

LOI Submission



1. Where do I submit the LOI?



New users first need to register on proposalCENTRAL (pC). For all users, log in and select **CREATE NEW PROPOSAL** or click on the **GRANT OPPORTUNITIES** tab. The SFARI Collaboration program will be listed during the submission period. Click **APPLY NOW** to start the LOI and access all required templates. After all sections are completed and all required LOI attachments are uploaded, you will be able to hit the **SUBMIT** button to send the application.

2. How do I create a proposalCENTRAL user account?



Go to <https://proposalcentral.com/> and click **CREATE ONE NOW** under **NEED AN ACCOUNT?** Fill in the required fields, check the boxes to agree to proposalCENTRAL's “Terms of Service and Acceptable Use Policy” and then click **SAVE**.

3. Can I email or mail a LOI?



No. The Simons Foundation accepts only applications submitted online through pC.

4. What are the file format, font style and size requirements of the LOI?



Please submit a PDF of the LOI document. Type should be set in 11-point, legible font. All margins should be set at 0.5 inches.

References, figures and figure legends are not included in the four-page LOI limit. Figures, figure legends and references (formatted as in the *Journal of Neuroscience*, including full author list, title and link to PubMed) should be included at the end of the Proposal Narrative but will not count toward the page limit.

5. Do I need to submit biosketches with the LOI?



Yes. Biosketches are required for all individuals listed in the team summary (e.g., Collaboration director, principal investigator and co-investigators).

6. Can I submit a budget with the LOI? ✕

No. The estimated total annual costs should be included in the Budget Overview template. In the Budget Overview, please include a summary of major budgetary categories, including personnel, equipment and other essential resources for each proposed project site within the proposed Collaboration. A detailed budget is not requested with the LOI.

7. Can someone else (assistant, staff member, etc.) submit my LOI for me? ✕

Yes. You can add users with administrator access to the pC application so that someone other than the principal investigator (PI) can edit and submit the LOI.

8. Can I change the named Collaboration director? ✕

Yes. Linked instructions for how to change the named Collaboration director can be found in the application. The person who starts an application will be named as the Collaboration director/named PI on the Applicant/PI page. If the Applicant/PI section does not show the correct person (e.g., someone else started the online application and you are the Collaboration director/named PI, or you started the application and someone else is the PI), you must update this section before submitting.

9. Where is the SUBMIT button? ✕

The SUBMIT button is located in the last section of the application. You will be unable to submit if you have not provided all the required information. If the submission deadline has *not* passed, use the VALIDATE button to check for missing requirements. If the problem persists, please contact pcsupport@altum.com.

If the deadline has passed, the submission period has closed and you will not be able to submit.

10. I get an error message citing a missing section when I try to submit. ✕

The VALIDATE button reviews your application for missing sections. The submission instructions list the required sections and attachments. You must complete the missing sections listed. If you are still receiving error messages after completing and saving the indicated sections, please contact pcsupport@altum.com.

11. Are deadline times adjusted for time zones? ✕

No. Please be advised that application deadlines on the application are in Eastern time. We recommend registering early and submitting applications with ample time for corrections prior to the deadline hour. Site traffic can slow page-load times. The SUBMIT button will not work after the deadline time has passed.

12. Is there a confirmation email when I submit?



A confirmation email is sent upon submission of the application. Please contact pcsupport@altum.com if you submitted your application and have not received a confirmation email within 10 minutes. Make sure that spam filters allow emails from pcsupport@altum.com. The application will be in the SUBMITTED tab when you next log in.

13. Can I make changes to the LOI application once it has been submitted?



Before you can make changes to your submitted application, you must first contact the Simons Foundation. Please email sfarigrants@simonsfoundation.org or call (646) 654-0066. Applications can only be changed prior to the deadline.

14. Is validating my LOI the same as submitting it?



No. "Validating" the LOI checks for errors and omissions and will alert you to any missing requirements in your application. If the application is complete, you must then click the submit button. You will receive an email within 10 minutes and should contact pcsupport@altum.com if you do not receive confirmation and do not see your LOI in the SUBMITTED tab or with the status changed to SUBMITTED.

15. The notification date has passed and I haven't received a notification. What is the status of my LOI?



You should receive notification within 24 hours of the deadline. Please check your spam filter settings if you have not received notification by then.

Accessing Simons Collection Resources (i.e., SSC, Simons Searchlight, SPARK and AIC)



1. How can I find out more about available data and biospecimens (where applicable) from the SSC, Simons Searchlight (formerly Simons VIP), SPARK and the Autism Inpatient Collection (AIC)?



You can access and request information about the [SSC](#), [Simons Searchlight](#), [SPARK](#) and the [AIC](#) on [SFARI Base](#). If you do not have a SFARI Base account, you must create one. If you have problems with the login or have questions regarding the collections, please email collections@sfari.org.

2. How can I find out more about the data collected from SPARK participants? ✕

Please see the [SPARK webpage](#) for more information about the SPARK cohort and available data. You can access and request information about the data collected from SPARK via [SFARI Base](#). If you do not have a SFARI Base account, you must create one. If you have problems with the login or have questions regarding the collections, please email collections@sfari.org.

3. Are biospecimens available from SPARK? ✕

No, but phenotypic and genetic data are currently available to approved researchers via [SFARI Base](#).

4. How can I apply to recruit SPARK participants for my research studies? ✕

Researchers may submit an application on SFARI Base. The SPARK Participant Access Committee considers applications on a quarterly basis, but applications may be submitted at any time. Please refer to the [SPARK recruitment process document](#) for more details and email collections@sfari.org with any questions.

5. Do budget limits include the cost of purchasing SSC and Simons Searchlight biospecimens? ✕

No. SSC, Simons Searchlight and AIC biospecimen costs are not included in the budget limit. Prices can be found on the [price list](#) on our website.

6. How can I apply to access human post-mortem brain tissue from Autism BrainNet? ✕

Researchers may submit an application through the [Autism BrainNet website](#). Information on ABN tissue and data are available in the Autism BrainNet tissue [catalogue](#).

