

AKU Society – Funding peer-review process

When applying to the AKU Society for funding, your application will be taken through a peer review assessment process. This process will be conducted by a panel of subject-matter experts as well as AKU Society staff and trustees.

As associate members of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) we are committed to following the AMRC's high standards and recommended principles of peer review:

- Accountability
- Balance
- Independent decision making
- Rotation of scientific advisors
- Impartiality

Our peer-review panels consist of AKU Society trustees, leading experts on AKU, and patient representatives. We ask all reviewers to declare any potential conflicts of interest before carrying out a peer review, so that funding decisions are not influenced (or are perceived to be) by factors other than scientific merit.

Our peer-review process is designed to ensure that we fund high quality competitive science and the best researchers, judged through a fair, robust, and transparent process. The review process for our funding depends on the duration, cost, and priority of our grant. Funding applications are assessed by the steps described below:

Proposal Submission: Researchers interested in receiving funding for research into AKU will submit a proposal to the AKU Society. The proposal should clearly state the research question, hypothesis, objectives, methodology, expected outcomes, and relevance of the research to the field of AKU.

Initial Screening: The AKU Society will conduct an initial screening to determine whether the proposal meets the eligibility criteria and aligns with the funding priorities. Proposals that do not meet the eligibility criteria or are not relevant to our research aims will be rejected.

Peer Review: The AKU Society will then send the eligible proposals to a panel of subject-matter experts or peer reviewers in the field of AKU. The peer reviewers will be selected based on their expertise, research experience, and academic credentials.

Review Criteria: The peer reviewers will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria:

a. **Scientific merit:** The proposal should be scientifically sound and have a clear hypothesis, methodology, and expected outcomes.

b. Relevance: The proposal should be relevant to the field of AKU and contribute to advancing knowledge in the field.

c. Feasibility: The proposal should have a realistic timeline, budget, and feasibility of implementation.

d. Originality: The proposal should have originality and innovation in the research approach.

e. Excellent team and research environment: Ability of applicants to carry out the proposed researching considering team skills, expertise, and access to the facilities required for the study.

f. Sharing of outputs: the proposal includes a clear process(es) for making the outputs (including knowledge and expertise) accessible to the AKU Society, the scientific community, and the public.

Review Report: The peer reviewers will provide a review report to the AKU Society, summarising their evaluation of the proposal based on the review criteria. The review report should provide a clear and concise summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, including any suggestions for improvement.

Funding Decision: The AKU Society will make a funding decision based on the review report and the availability of funds. The AKU Society may choose to fund the proposal as is, with modifications, or reject the proposal.

Feedback: The AKU Society would provide feedback to the researchers, regardless of the funding decision, on how to improve their proposals for future funding opportunities.

By following this peer-review process, the AKU Society can ensure that the research into AKU is scientifically sound, relevant, innovative, feasible, and contributes to advancing knowledge in the field.