

Navigating Doctoral Studies: Funding

Funding is a core aspect to doctoral training. Whether you are seeking fellowship opportunities, are thinking of self-funding, or just don't know where to start, this leaflet provides a handy 'Ten Top Tips' to your funding options.

Tip 1 – Be passionate

Promote your research! You will be more fundable if you are truly enthusiastic about what you want to do and achieve. What is it about your clinical area and research interest that makes it important to fund a study? Think about why you care and sell this to funders; demonstrate how your work aligns with their research priorities and makes an impact.

Tip 2 – Maximise your CV

Sell yourself! Funders want to see that you and your work are worth investment. Use your CV to demonstrate this and illustrate what you have already achieved in your career, clinically, educationally and in research activities. Think laterally, there are many clinical skills that are transferable to research. Take as many opportunities as you can to develop and increase your profile.

Tip 3 – Use your patients

Patient-public involvement (PPI) is key to funding success. Before you even think about funding streams and applications, set up a PPI group to help guide your planning and embed PPI within your research. INVOLVE (invo.org.uk) have lots of resources to help with this, including small grant options to set up groups.

Tip 4 – Searching for funding support

Be imaginative in your search. NIHR funding streams are well known and provide excellent training/preparation but there are other options. CAHPR, CLAHRC and charity funding is available. Professional bodies have information on funding streams relevant to your clinical background. Academic institutions sometimes offer doctoral opportunities with stipends. Use www.researchprofessional.com or other websites for help.

Tip 5 – Be prepared

Funding applications involve significant time and preparation. If you are applying to different organisations, tailor your application to each. Be thorough in preparing your costs – if it's not included on the form it won't be funded! Give yourself enough time to

complete the form. Submission of a hastily prepared application can be stressful and leaves you less likely to succeed.

Tip 6 – Remember the process

Funding applications will require input from different professionals within your organisation including clinical managers, potential supervisors and finance personnel. Make contact with each individual well in advance of a deadline in order to prepare them for when their input/ sign off is needed. Devise a system to remind you to contact people well in advance of deadlines.

Tip 7 – Seek advice

Ask other clinical-academics for advice, ideas and support. They may be able to provide you with previous successful applications for guidance. Contact potential mentors via social media/your professional body/CAHPR if there isn't anyone in your organisation with direct experience. Use your local/regional NIHR RDS to help steer you in the right direction.

Tip 8 – Persisting beyond failure

Every clinical-academic will have been unsuccessful in applying for funding at some point in their journey. Remember it is never personal, and the feedback you receive will make your next application more competitive. Reach out to others to hear their experiences so you don't feel so alone.

Tip 9 – Surviving success

Remember that achieving funding is only the beginning. Depending on the funder you will have to submit reports, acknowledge their input on all your outputs, and continue to build your network and future research potential as part of your funding conditions.

Tip 10 – Look to the future

Once you have been funded and are on the doctoral path don't become complacent. If you are focused on a clinical-academic career you will need to continually look for further bridging/post-doctoral funding opportunities. Don't lose momentum. Be strategic and plan ahead for your next research project!

For contact details about your local hub and for further information about **cahpr** please visit our website <https://cahpr.csp.org.uk>

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