

Research Proposals Review Process

Our vision and mission

Duchenne UK has one clear aim: to end Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), a devastating muscle-wasting disease. Started by families affected by the disease, we have grown to become the largest funder of DMD research in the UK. We work with researchers in academia and in industry, and with the NHS and families to accelerate DMD research and development, improve DMD clinical care and ensure timely access to treatments and interventions for all people living with DMD in the UK.

Together, we will end DMD.

How we fund research

Duchenne UK is changing the research landscape in DMD through targeted and intelligent funding.

We believe strongly in partnerships, with researchers in academia and industry, and we fund both clinical and preclinical research.

Preclinically, we are focussed on translational projects, using our funds to help get promising therapies out of the laboratory and into the clinic where they can help patients as soon as possible.

We support the development of treatments throughout the development pathway, providing access to the insights of people with lived experience of DMD, advice, research infrastructure and funding, to help the design and delivery of research with impact for people with DMD.

We are open to applications for research proposals throughout the year from applicants in academia, industry and other research organisation.

Please email research@duchenneuk.org if your project falls within the scope of [our research priorities](#), or is related to DMD in other ways.

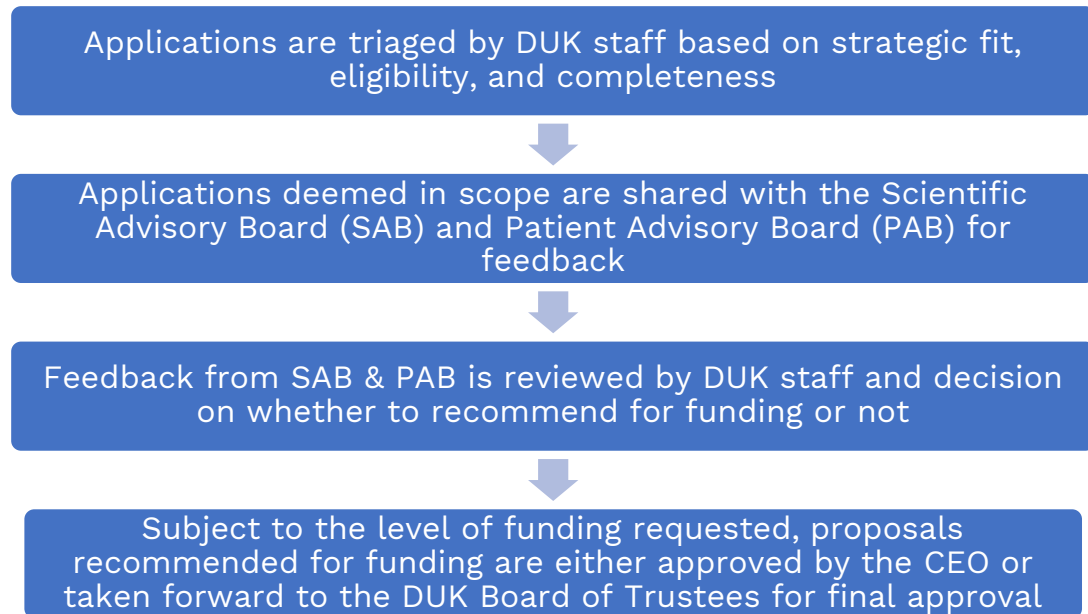
As a member of the AMRC, we follow their recommended principles of peer review:

- Accountability – publishing our peer review processes and the members of our research review committees, as well as ensuring reviewers are aware of [the 3Rs](#) in research using animal models.
- Independence – seeking written review for applications and ensuring the advice provided by our reviewers is independent of DUK staff
- Balance – ensuring the reviews reflect both scientific and patient views in the field of DMD



- Rotation – having a fixed term of office for members of the review committee
- Impartiality – ensuring reviewers with a conflict of interest do not influence funding decisions.

Our review process is as follows:



Proposals will be assessed against:

- Alignment to our research priorities
- Potential for having a transformative, positive impact the treatment, management, and outcomes of all people living with DMD
- Scientific excellence
- Relevance and impact on the field
- Research team and environment
- Resources requested – please note that Duchenne UK does not fund indirect costs.

For applications aligned to specific open calls for proposals, additional requirements on scope, eligibility, and project selection criteria may apply. These will be published on our website.

Throughout the process above, applicants will receive feedback from the Director of Research and Development about their proposal, as well as anonymised feedback from the SAB and PAB reviewers.

To find out more about our reviewers, please visit [Our advisory boards website pages](#).

A recommendation for funding requires that at least 75% of the SAB. A minimum of 3 responses is required from the SAB.

For proposals which requires a substantial amount of funding or lie outside the scope of experience and expertise of our SAB, we will recruit relevant external peer reviewers.

For any clinical trial applications, we may refer to the TACT committee ([the TREAT-NMD Advisory Committee for Therapeutics](#)) for review. TACT is a group of academic and industry drug development specialists who review and provide guidance on the translation and development path of therapeutics programs in rare neuromuscular diseases.

Conflict of Interest

Duchenne UK makes every effort to ensure that decisions are fair, objective and transparent.

Details of proposals and related correspondence, as well as the identity of external referees are treated as strictly confidential, kept secure and not shared with anyone outside of the review process.

When a reviewer, either external or internal, is connected with an application, they must declare any conflict of interest immediately and withdraw from any consideration of the application, including retiring from any meeting where the application is discussed. Such conflicts of interest might include previous collaboration with one of the applicants or co-applicants, being related to the applicant or co-applicants, or financial interests, such as shares, relevant to the application.

If reviewers fail to alert Duchenne UK of a conflict of interest, then they may be asked to step down as a reviewer. If they are unsure as to whether a conflict of interest exists, they should discuss any potential conflict of interest with the Director of Research and Development.

Applicants should not directly approach the reviewers in connection with their research application to Duchenne UK, and reviewers should refuse any requests for information or feedback from applicants on how a particular judgement was reached. All communication with the applicant will be led by the Director of Research and Development.



Use of Animals in Research

Duchenne UK is committed to the 3Rs relating to the use of animals in research – Refine, Reduce, Replace, and support the [AMRC's statement on the use of animals in research](#).

If you intend to use animals in the proposal you are submitting, you should make reference to how you have taken into account the 3Rs principles. Research funded outside of the UK must be carried out in the spirit of UK legislation as well as being compliant with all local legislation and ethical review processes.

Supporting Research in Universities

We also support the [AMRC's position statement on supporting research in universities](#).

