

## **British Society for Research on Ageing Research strategy**

### **1) The aims, objectives and priorities of the charity**

A primary charitable aim of The British Society for Research on Ageing (Registered Charity number: 279932) is, “through research, to increase knowledge of the processes, causes and effects of ageing, and, as indicated, of means for counteracting these, both in human beings and in other organisms”.

To that end we provide funding for researchers interested in studying the fundamental biological mechanisms of ageing and we seek to increase the capacity of the UK science and technology base to conduct this and related research over the medium term.

Accordingly we:

- Disseminate research into the processes, causes and effects of ageing, through our annual scientific meeting and such other workshops and joint dissemination activities as are deemed by the Board of Trustees to have strategic value.
- Promote excellence and seek to build capacity of the UK science base in gerontology (e.g. through the provision of PhD studentships).
- Further the education of the general public alike through outreach and public engagement.

The BRSA holds a unique place in the world of gerontology. It is probably the oldest scientific society devoted to the study of the biology of ageing and has many prominent former members including Professor Sir Peter Medawar, Professor Sir Charles Dodds, Professor James Danielli and Dr Alex Comfort.

### **2) Scientific Priority Areas**

We aim to support scientific excellence in fundamental gerontology with a clear potential to build the capacity of the UK to conduct ageing research in the medium term (5-10 years). We encourage innovative thinking in the integrative science of ageing and are willing to support of fundamental biological research, the development of new tools and analytical techniques for ageing research, together with potential interventions based on our understanding of healthspan maintenance mechanisms.

Proposals which have a natural science focus are particularly welcome. Thus the society is supportive of projects which are basically biological, chemical or physical together with any inter or multidisciplinary combinations of these. However, social gerontology or geriatrics projects, (such as clinical audits), fall outside the scope of our activities.

There is no intention to valorise particular areas of biogerontology. However the Trustees of the BSRA, acting in conjunction with our Scientific Advisory Board, retain the option to prioritise specific **areas of research** and **modes of support** as particularly important when planning calls for research proposals.

**Areas of research** which could potentially be supported include but are not limited to:

- Fundamental bioscience of ageing, including the identification of ageing mechanisms.
- Nutrition and ageing.
- Immunosenescence.
- Neurodegeneration
- Sensory and Cognitive ageing
- Development of new model systems

**Modes of support** could include but are not limited to:

- PhD studentships
- small scale speculative research or research tool development (i.e. monoclonal antibodies, analytical method development or vector systems)
- translational research
- pre-commercial development, testing or proto-typing
- analyses of secondary data sets relevant to bioinformatics

Individual proposals will be judged for fit with our strategic priorities by the BRSA Scientific Advisory Board which operates to published standards of review. Additional external peer reviewers may be recruited as required from time to time and will be given the same guidance.

### **3) Who is eligible for funding?**

Support is available for active researchers with substantive posts at any UK institution or research institutes with are interested in the biology of ageing and who would normally be eligible for membership of the BSRA. Applicants are must a hold a PhD in a relevant subject, and be employed at their institution for the duration of the project.

### **4) Where will we fund?**

We will fund anywhere within the UK and will fund UK components of collaborative projects with researchers in other countries. Special consideration will be given during the peer review process to an appropriate and rich research environment (see our peer review policy). In the case of applications for PhD studentships, award holders must additionally demonstrate that a member of the supervisory team has relevant experience (e.g. prior supervision of doctoral students to completion).

### **5) Timing of calls for proposals and details of available funding.**

Grant rounds will open in the early part of the calendar year with decisions expected to be announced later that year. Grants are cash limited and we would normally expect successful applicants to make appointments or commence research by autumn of that year. FEC costs are expected to be met by the institution of the successful award winner. The BSRA will not contribute towards directly allocated, indirect, infrastructure or estates costs.

The BSRA, like many charities, has relatively limited reserves. Thus, once the Scientific Advisory Board has identified projects as being of a suitable scientific standard for support it will communicate its recommendations to the Trustees. Following Trustee approval should funds be unavailable to support a given project the BSRA fundraising committee and

secretariat will work with the applicant and attempt to obtain them through donations, applications to Trusts etc. There is no expectation that project work will commence during this fundraising period.

The charity will aim to support researchers post-award by offering the possibility of automatic BRSA membership, discounted registration fees at the BRSA annual conference, and eligibility for consideration for the Korenchevsky Award at the annual conference to students and early career awardees.

## **6) Timeline for review of BRSA research strategy**

BRSA research strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis. Members of both the elected BRSA Executive Committee and the Scientific Advisory Committee are appointed for a defined time period of 3 years, with staggered rotation of members of both panels for continuity purposes.