

1 Introduction

The British Society for Antimicrobial Chemotherapy is a registered charity, founded in 1971. Its aim is to facilitate the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in the field of antimicrobial chemotherapy.

The purpose of this booklet is to explain to all interested parties about the grants programme operated by the Society, the types of awards available, the application process and how applications are assessed and scored. The information is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with the BSAC's Standard Terms and Conditions of Award.

2 Grants Programme

In 1998 the Society established a designated fund from which it can fund annual research in antimicrobial chemotherapy and travel grants for various activities within the field of antimicrobial chemotherapy. The fund is contributed to each year by the Society. The level of funding is decided by Council, and may vary from year to year.

From time to time the Society may accept funds from external sources in the form of educational grants, and may manage grants on behalf of external trust funds and industry. All such grants are clearly named and identified.

The availability of research and travel grants is advertised via the Society website www.bsac.org.uk

Since 1998 the Society has awarded over £2.8 million in research and travel grants.

3 Grants Committee

The Grants Programme is overseen by the Grants Committee, which reports directly to Council. The Committee is chaired by the President of the Society, and the day-to-day operation of the grants programme is overseen by the Secretary of the Grants Committee who is an elected Officer of the Society. There are 5 other members of the committee elected by Council. The Members are experts in various aspects of antimicrobial chemotherapy.

4 Award Categories

The categories of awards offered by the Society are detailed at appendix 1. The type of awards offered may vary from year to year. Current available awards are listed on the BSAC website www.bsac.org.uk

5 Application & Award Process

Applications must be submitted using the official application form relevant to the award. Application forms are available on the BSAC website www.bsac.org.uk

BSAC does not currently offer co-funding of grants. When applying for any BSAC grant, all applicants must declare if they have sought, or if they intend to seek, any financial support outside of BSAC for the same grant. BSAC must be informed of any grants awarded outside of BSAC funding and the application withdrawn immediately.

Applications are received by the Grants Committee Secretary and assigned a grant reference. Applications are acknowledged and assigned a grant reference number; all applicants are informed of this reference number via email. Due to the high number of Project and Research Grant applications received, all applications for these grants are initially evaluated by expert members of the BSAC Grants Committee, via a so-called triage process. This triage process is to assess the likelihood of a project securing funding based on a variety of BSAC indicators i.e. a project's originality, design, resources and cost effectiveness, value within the field etc. (please refer to the BSAC web site for a full list of indicators at: About the BSAC Funding Programme; and Table 1). Project Grant Applications are subject to a two-step review process by expert members of the BSAC Grants Committee as follows: 1) an initial triage process and 2) a final review.

Research Grant applications are subject to a three-step process as follows: 1) an initial triage process by expert members of the BSAC Grants Committee, 2) an external peer review process; and 3) a final review by the BSAC Grants Committee. Research Grant Applications which score highly in the initial triage process are further evaluated by at least two; and usually 3 independent referees (using all BSAC indicators referred to above).

Applications for Education Grants and PhD Studentships follow the same process as for Research Grants.

Applications for Overseas Scholarships & Vacation Scholarships are reviewed & scored by expert members of the BSAC Grants Committee only.

Grant applications with low scores in the initial triage process are not considered suitable for BSAC funding and thus will not proceed further through the process i.e. in the case of Research Grants these are not put forward for external peer review.

BSAC aims to inform all applicants of the result of the triage process as soon as it is possible i.e. whether or not the project will proceed further through the process.

All grant applications put forward for external peer review are scored according to the same triage criteria. Once the external review process is complete the BSAC Grants Committee meets and finally considers all externally reviewed applications and makes the awards (based on all scores i.e. external referees and BSAC Grants Committee members’).

Similarly the BSAC Grants Committee meets to finally consider and make awards for all Project Grant, Overseas Scholarship & Vacation Scholarship applications.

Deadlines for grant applications and the date on which awards will be considered, awarded and notified are detailed on the BSAC website www.bsac.org.uk

6 Scoring Systems

The BSAC has adopted scoring systems employed by the Medical Research Council (see Table 1). These scoring systems apply to all grants with the exception of travel grants.

There are two scoring systems, one used by referees and the other used by the Grants Committee. Applicants should read the application and assessment procedure for the particular type of grant they are submitting in order to understand the relevance of each score.

Referee Scoring - The referee scoring system asks for a score from 1 – 10 and referees should initially decide whether the application is excellent, good or potentially useful, then use the score descriptions within that band to choose a score that reflects their overall summary. Referees should use only whole numbers when scoring.

Referees will assign the score that summarises their assessment of the application. This score will be fed back to applicants on request.

TABLE 1. Referee Score Indicator

Excellent quality research

10 Exceptional

9 Excellent quality research, which is (or will be) at the forefront internationally. Addresses very important questions that are likely to advance knowledge and have high impact in the field of antimicrobial chemotherapy

8 Intermediate (between 7 and 9)

Good quality research

7 Good quality research which is (or will be) internationally competitive, and at the forefront of UK work. Important work that is likely to have a significant impact on the field.

6 Intermediate (between 5 and 7)

5 Good quality research that is at least nationally competitive. Addresses reasonably important questions, and will be productive. Good prospects for having an impact on the field. Any significant concerns about the research can be easily corrected.

Potentially useful study

4 Research plans which contain some good ideas or opportunities but which are unlikely to be very productive or successful. Improvements would be needed to make the proposal competitive.

3 Intermediate (between 2 and 4)

2 Research plans which contain weak ideas, which are unlikely to be productive or successful. Major improvements would be needed to make the proposal competitive.

Not fundable

1 Serious scientific or ethical concerns – should not be funded.

Grants Committee Scoring - The Committee scoring system asks for a score from 1-10 and provides some indicators to help aid scoring. The Committee will reach a score, taking into account referee reports, the applicant’s response if requested and their own judgement. This score will be used to help rank applications.

Relative emphasis on quality, importance and productivity/impact will vary according to type of application, and the area of research. Grants to develop facilities, capacity etc, can be placed anywhere from 1-10, no separate indicators are offered for these.

7 Terms & Conditions / Policies

The following shall form the terms and conditions for the award of BSAC grants. A copy of the signed terms and conditions will accompany all completed application forms and submission thereof will signify acceptance of the terms and conditions.

- A BSAC reserves the right to change the Terms and Conditions of Award from time to time, at which point any amendments to the award will be agreed in writing by both parties and institutions will be issued with a revised copy of the 'Terms and Conditions'. The Council of the Society reserves the right to consult independent referees about grant applications and will always do so for those requesting sums in excess of £1,000.
- B Once a grant has been awarded, BSAC undertakes to provide financial support for the stated period, subject to the availability of funds. Whilst it is BSAC's intention to provide funding for the total duration of the award, lack of funds could in exceptional circumstances result in the premature termination of the project.
- C It is a condition of the award that the grant be administered without the addition of any levies (overheads) by the university or hospital authority named in the application.
- D Claims against the grant should be made to BSAC, without delay, quarterly in arrears, stating the reference number allocated, the name of the grant-holder and the title of the project, and giving full particulars of all salary payments. An award must be taken up within 9 months of the offer of funding. Any unexpended balances will automatically revert to the Society's charity fund for redistribution one year from the inception date of the grant.
- E It is the responsibility of the host institution to ensure that the funding made available by BSAC, is applied exclusively and appropriately in support of the research project for which it has been awarded, and that all contractual requirements relating to the research are met, and that there is appropriate supervision of the researchers.
- F Any modification to the original protocol submitted and approved, must be authorised by BSAC prior to any changes taking place. Such modifications which can be requested include:

No-Cost Extension

An extension to the period of the grant can be requested if the recipient does not expend his/her award funding in the allotted grant period.

A no-cost extension provides the award recipient an extended award term, typically twelve months, in which to complete their research project and expend grant funds. The award recipient must submit a request in writing to the Secretary of the Grants Committee. The written request must be accompanied by a financial and research progress report for the project for the current award year – a one page financial report and a two page progress report. The financial report should indicate expended funds to date. The research progress report should provide a brief overview of scientific accomplishments to date and a brief explanation of the investigator's plans towards completing the project during the extension period. A not-cost extension may not be exercised merely for the purpose of using the unliquidated balances.

Transfers

All transfer requests should be emailed to: grants@bsac.org.uk.

If the award recipient transfers to a different institution during the period of the award, a transfer request must be submitted to BSAC.

Should a research award recipient transfer to a different institution, a request to transfer the award must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Grants Committee.

The following information must accompany any transfer request:

- A Research Facilities Statement that details laboratory, support staff and clinical facilities of the different Institution.
- A letter from the Head of Department (at the different host institution) stating that they are aware and supportive of the funded project and that adequate facilities will be available to the recipient to enable completion of the project.
- A statement to describe any changes to the research project, technical approach and anticipated results, if different from that stated in the original grant application.

If the award recipient transfers to a different supervisor (but within the same institution) during the period of the award, a transfer request must be submitted to BSAC.

Should a research award recipient transfer to a different supervisor but within the same institution, a request to transfer the award must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Grants Committee.

The following information must accompany any transfer request:

- A letter from the new Supervisor, including a signed statement of support for both the project and for providing adequate supervision to enable completion of the project.
- A letter from the Head of Department stating that they are aware of, and supportive of, the transfer of supervision to enable completion of the project.
- A statement from the new Supervisor describing any changes to the research project, technical approach and anticipated results, if different from that stated in the original grant application.

Grant Equipment

Should an award recipient transfer to a new institution, the original institution must determine whether the equipment purchased with grant monies will remain at the original institution.

Recipients of BSAC awards should reserve the right to retain laboratory supplies and equipment purchased with grant funds should they transfer to another institution. However, it is the prerogative of the initial institution to determine whether equipment purchased with grant funds will remain at the original institution.

Budget Revisions

Any change in the budget originally submitted must be approved by the Secretary of the Grants Committee

Recipients must seek written approval from the Grants Committee Secretary to make any changes to the original budget as stated in the grant application. For grants up to £50,000, the Grants Committee Secretary has delegated authority to approve the transfer of up to 20% of total funds between cost centre headings within the grant. Requests to transfer funds greater than 20% or for grants over £50,000, the decision shall be taken in consultation with the Chair of the Grants Committee. If deemed appropriate, advice and approval will be sought from the BSAC Council.

- G BSAC must be informed of the actual date of commencement of the project and the name, salary, salary scale and incremental date of all staff employed against the grant.
- H No increases in salary (other than annual increments already built into the original application or nationally negotiated salary awards) will be paid by BSAC.
- I For grants paid in any currency other than GBP, exchange rate fluctuations must be anticipated and included in the original grant application. The Society will not meet additional costs incurred due to fluctuations in the exchange rate.
- J Publications arising from the research will normally be offered to the Journal of Antimicrobial Chemotherapy in the first instance. To enable BSAC funded work to be readily identified, it is essential that our support is acknowledged and our grant reference number quoted in all publications arising as a result of a project. A copy of all such publications MUST be sent to BSAC.
- K The host institution is required to advise BSAC at least 7 days beforehand of any publicity releases which it proposes to make based on BSAC funded research.

Wherever possible, contact with the media should be in consultation with BSAC and where this is not possible, should be brought to our attention without delay.
- L An interim report, giving an update on the progress of the project, must be submitted to BSAC within one month of the completion of each year of the grant. A final report, giving a brief summary of the work undertaken, and including copies of any publications resulting from the work, must be sent to BSAC within three months of the end of the grant. Please note that failure to submit these reports may result in payment of subsequent invoices being withheld until a satisfactory report is received. Final reports will also be taken into account when assessing any future grant application on which the grant holder is named. A layman's version of these reports must also be submitted at this time to assist BSAC in disseminating research results to the general public.
- M It is a condition of the grant that, if the occasion arises, you would make yourself available for not less than one day a year during the period of the grant to address meetings of BSAC supporters and members of the public about your work. BSAC will contact you in advance to arrange this with you. BSAC will support travel costs to attend this meeting.
- N BSAC does not act as an employer, and therefore, in all cases where support is provided for the employment of staff, the host institution must undertake to issue a contract of employment in accordance with current legislation relating to the conditions of employment.

O The tenure of appointment of staff recruited for work under a grant must be confined strictly to the period of the grant, unless the host institution wishes to retain the staff beyond this period for its own purpose at its own expense.

P INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

BSAC agrees to negotiate the rights to any intellectual property arising from the research in good faith, and agrees that any income arising from its exploitation would be subject to a revenue sharing arrangement, taking into account the respective contributions of BSAC, the host institution and other associated parties.

Q SCIENTIFIC FRAUD

In the event of suspected scientific fraud, BSAC wishes to make it clear that it is the responsibility of the employing authority to investigate this. A condition of BSAC funding is that the employing authority has a mechanism for investigating and dealing with scientific fraud.

In a case of suspected scientific fraud involving BSAC supported research, BSAC should be notified in confidence and kept informed of further developments. At the initial stages of the enquiry, BSAC would not normally suspend the grant. However, if adequate and timely steps are not taken to proceed with the investigation, then BSAC will suspend the grant. If fraud is proven, BSAC will terminate the grant immediately.

R Travel grants are awarded for particular conferences and only for the presentation of data within the topic of antimicrobial chemotherapy. Only members of the society are eligible to apply for travel grants. Travel grants may not be substituted for a different conference. If a conference is cancelled or the applicant cannot attend, the award is cancelled and BSAC should be informed. It is open to grant holders to make a fresh submission to attend an alternative conference.

Appendix 1

Grants and Awards

Details of the following awards, application process and deadlines for submission are posted on the BSAC website.

Project & Research Grants

The Society offers a number of Project and Research Grants each year.

Project Grants have a maximum value of £15,000.

Research Grants have a maximum value of £50,000.

Travel Grants

BSAC awards a number of travel grants to individuals to attend the annual meetings of ECCMID and ASM Microbe (formerly ICAAC). Only members of the society are eligible to apply for travel grants.

Travel grants are awarded to individuals who have abstracts accepted for oral or poster presentation.

The maximum value of the awards is:

- £1,000 for ECCMID
- £1,500 for ASM Microbe

The awards are intended to cover meeting registration fees, travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses.

Grants are awarded in open competition by the BSAC Grants Committee. BSAC will reimburse expenses, on return from the meeting, and upon submission of original receipts to the Honorary Treasurer.

Overseas Scholarships

Overseas Scholarships are to enable workers from other countries the opportunity to work in UK Departments for up to six months. Successful candidates receive a grant of £1,250 per calendar month for up to 6 months and the host Department receives a consumables grant of £600 per calendar month for the duration of the scholarship. The Society will reimburse the cost of return air fares and travel via the most economical route. Candidates will be asked to seek approval of travel costs in advance.

Terry Hennessey Microbiology Fellowship

The Terry Hennessey Microbiology Fellowship offers a young investigator (normally under the age of 35) working in the field of infectious diseases.

This travel grant is awarded to individuals who have an abstract accepted for oral or poster presentation at the ASM Microbe meeting (formerly ICAAC). The award for this travel grant is up to £1,500.

Vacation Grants

Vacation Grants are designed to enable undergraduates to gain research experience over the summer vacation before entering the final year of their course. The grant awards £180 per week to the student for up to ten weeks, plus a sum of £500 is paid to the host Department for consumables.