

# Frequently Answered Questions: Discovery Research Cycle 2 Grants

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## Changes to Cycle 2

**Q** What are the major changes from last year's RFA?

**A** While the overall goals and policies of the Cycle 2 RFA remains the same, below are a few notable changes:

- We will be implementing a Letter of Intent (LOI) stage. Applicants with LOIs that are within scope of the work will be asked to submit a full proposal.
- Our minimum percent effort for all lead and co-PIs have been reduced from 25% to 15%.

## Open Science

**Q** How will you enforce your open science policies?

**A** Open science is a cornerstone of this initiative, and it is imperative that all applicants, as well as funded institutions, understand that BD<sup>2</sup> will enforce all open science policies listed in our document. Funding may be withheld or removed if teams actively refuse to participate in open science practices. Project Managers within the Discovery Research teams will keep track of research outputs and datasets to be placed into appropriate repositories, and ensure other open science practices as needed. Open science policies will be enforced similarly to efforts within Aligning Science Against Parkinson's (ASAP). You can find the [open science policy here](#).

**Q** Are there already preferred databases that would be used for data?

**A** There are no specific preferred databases as of yet. We will work with the funded teams to make any decisions on whether specific databases should be used for certain data types. All data repositories must:

- Enable immediate open access to data upon preprint posting and manuscript submission;
- allow reuse with licensing;
- assign a unique and persistent identifier to the dataset, such as a digital object identifier or accession number that allows linking and citation;
- ensure that data are deidentified health information are adequately protected; and
- provide long-term preservation and storage of data, which meet the ISO's trustworthy digital repository standards.

See more in our [Open Science Policy](#).

## Lead and Co-PIs

**Q** Can I be on multiple applications as a co-PI?

**A** Yes, you can be on multiple applications as a co-PI. If you are a Lead PI for one grant, you can be a co-PI for another grant. However, keep in mind that you must dedicate at least 15% of your time to each application, if awarded, regardless of whether you are co-PI or Lead PI.

**Q** Can I be a Lead PI for more than one application?

**A** No, you can only be a Lead PI for one application.

**Q** Can the Lead PI be located outside of the US as well as the whole team?

**A** Yes.

**Q** Can the whole team all be from the same institution in one application?

**A** Yes. However, interdisciplinarity among team members is prioritized, especially collaborations between disparate and traditionally non-collaborative fields.

## Collaborations

**Q** How do you prioritize existing versus new collaborations?

**A** While collaboration history is important, we will also honor new collaborations in this application. Regardless of collaboration history, the collaboration plan will be taken under consideration.

**Q** How do I find new collaborators?

**A** We highly encourage you use this opportunity to reach out to researchers to engage in new collaborations or connect with current and past collaborators that have yielded fruitful results. For those new to bipolar disorder research, Pubmed is a vital resource to understand the field and identify potential research teams that may be complementary of your work. Biobanks and other resources may also be found via Pubmed or Google search.

**Q** Can collaborations be from institutions outside of those of the Lead or Co-PIs?

**A** Yes, collaborations can be with other organizations. They must be disclosed in the Team Description.

## Early Career Investigators

**Q** Are there separate grants for early career investigators?

**A** There is no funding mechanism separate for early career investigators and assistant professors. Assistant professors and other early career PIs are encouraged to be Lead and co-PIs and are eligible for funding from the Discovery Research and other grants from BD<sup>2</sup>.

**Q** Is maternity leave or other career breaks taken into account in terms of the post-terminal degree time limit for the early career co-PI?

**A** If extenuating circumstances have played a major role in disrupting an individual's career timeline, please include it in the Team Description document for consideration.

**Q** Can you please clarify the eligibility criteria regarding early career investigators?

- A**
- Early career scientists for PhDs are individuals who have earned their PhD or relevant degree in the last 10 years. This does not start at postdoctoral training.
  - Early career scientists for MDs are within 10 years of the completion of their residency training. This does not start at the end of a fellowship.

## Funding

**Q** How will my team receive funds?

**A** All funding will be provided to the Lead Institution, which will be responsible for sub-granting to the institutions of the co-PIs. The Lead Institution may not provide sub-grants to other entities outside of those mentioned in the grant without explicit written instructions by BD<sup>2</sup>.

**Q** Will you fund all aims within a grant?

**A** BD<sup>2</sup> has the discretion to fund discreet aims of a proposal. If a co-PI is not listed on an aim that BD<sup>2</sup> intends to fund, that co-PI may not receive these funds.

**Q** Can Year 2 funding be used to offset higher-than-estimated startup costs of Year 1?

**A** If the annual proposed budget is different from \$1.5 million, please provide some justification as to why this is required on the budget template.

**Q** Does the PM position need to be budgeted up front? How should it be budgeted in the budget sheet?

**A** Yes, the PM position must be budgeted up front. Each team must dedicate at least 50% of one individual's time, who must be in the lead PI's lab and preferably with research experience. The PM position can be split between the three aims as needed. However, if an application is partially funded, the entirety of the budget requested for the PM will likely be supported. Regardless of how the PM's cost is split between the aims, that person will most likely be fully supported even if certain aims are funded.

- Q How should sites break down funding across aims if a data source such as MRI is used across multiple aims? Will the cost be automatically recalculated across the funded aims?**
- A** Research budgets will likely change throughout the three years of funding. The Program Team will work with the PIs and Program Managers to handle any recalculations or changes needed in the budget.
- Q How do collaboration grants work?**
- A** Teams who are funded by BD<sup>2</sup> will be given the opportunity to apply for up to \$150,000 collaboration grants on an annual basis. The first application window will open about 10 months into the application process, and again at 22 months. Applications must only include teams funded by BD<sup>2</sup>. Applications can include as few as two individual research labs, who must be on separate teams.
- Q Are there any salary caps for PI salary similar to the NIH cap?**
- A** Please use the NIH PI salary cap to budget PI salaries. The 15% effort would be based on this NIH cap. Each PI, including Lead and Co-PI, must give at least 15% effort.
- Q What are your indirect cost rates?**
- A** Our indirect cost rates are set at a maximum of 15%. This rate is set across all BD<sup>2</sup> programs and is inflexible.

## Application

- Q Can pharma or biotech apply?**
- A** Pharmaceutical or biotech companies, as well as other for-profit organizations, can be collaborators with the applications, but cannot be co-PIs or lead PIs of any proposal. All organizations must adhere to the open science and IP policies.
- Q What should I prioritize in my LOI, given that it's only two pages long?**
- A** It is up to you how to prioritize the different sections of the LOI. They must include the following:
- Description of an overarching hypothesis
  - Description of study aims that include scientific goals, strategies, and methodologies
  - PI roster with a brief description of expertise, noting the lead PI and Early Career Researcher
  - Unique role of the project in existing BD<sup>2</sup> initiatives
- Q Are there templates for the scientific rationale portion of the proposal?**
- A** There are no templates for the scientific rationale section, but please use 11-point font and 1-inch margins to improve legibility for the reviewers.

## Review

**Q Who will be reviewing the LOIs?**

**A** The Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) and the BD<sup>2</sup> Program Team will be reviewing the LOIs and selecting applications to move forward to the full proposal stage.

**Q How involved will the SSC be in coordinating efforts between proposals?**

**A** The SSC will be hands-on in selecting and coordinating potentially new collaborations between proposals and funded teams. They will also potentially select certain aims from a full proposal to be funded and may link the teams with funded aims to collaborate. These teams will be eligible for \$150,000 one-year collaboration grants to facilitate these partnerships.

**Q How will the review process be different from the NIH study section?**

**A** Projects funded by this program will be distinct from what NIH already funds, as to remove any redundancy of funding. Discovery Research grants have the capacity to fund higher risk proposals with high impact. All peer reviewers will be onboarded by the program staff to ensure that they understand the different lenses in which these proposals should be reviewed.

**Q Who makes the final decision?**

**A** Final decisions are made by the managing director of BD<sup>2</sup>. The Scientific Steering Committee and Program Board, comprised of the philanthropic funders, will advise all funding decisions.

## Scientific Scope

**Q Will clinical trials be funded?**

**A** Discovery Research grants will not fund the development of new clinical trials or recruitment into current clinical trials. However, Discovery Research grants will fund the testing of potential mechanisms on existing clinical trial cohorts.

**Q Will human trials be funded?**

**A** Applications that include humans will be funded. Note that, however, we will not fund applications that could be done by the Integrated Network, a prospective longitudinal cohort study embedded in a Learning Health Network. [Learn more here.](#)

**Q How connected or independent should the three aims be?**

**A** It is up to the applicants on making their aims connected or independent, though all three aims should address a central hypothesis or question.

**Q Will there be future RFAs?**

**A** We intend to host one additional cycle for Discovery Research grants, for a total of three cycles.