

Research Grants in open competition



APPLICATION GUIDE 2025

Let's pave the way for curing skin diseases



LEO FOUNDATION

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2025 calls

Research Grants in open competition

Call 1:

Opens: 13 November 2024
 Deadline: 08 January 2025 (16:00 CET)
 Earliest grant start date: 01 June 2025

Call 2:

Opens: 05 February 2025
 Deadline: 02 April 2025 (16:00 CEST)
 Earliest grant start date: 01 September 2025

Call 3:

Opens: 31 July 2025
 Deadline: 11 September 2025 (16:00 CEST)
 Earliest grant start date: 01 February 2026

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Further information:

www.leo-foundation.org/en/grants-and-awards/research-grants/

1. Research Grants in open competition 2025

This guide is meant to assist applicants in addressing the essential steps when applying for Research grants in open competition at the LEO Foundation.

Section one describes the overall aspects, e.g., supported research areas, eligibility, and funding. Section two describes requirements for the content of the application and the application process. Section three describes the evaluation process.

Supported areas of research

With the Research Grants in open competition program, the LEO Foundation aims to support the best dermatology research projects worldwide.

The proposed activities can be within basic, translational, technical, epidemiological, or clinical research.

We welcome applications for research projects that improve the understanding of skin biology, as well as the underlying medicinal, biological, chemical, or pharmacological mechanisms of dermatological diseases and their symptoms.

We also welcome applications that address clinical issues among people who are at risk of developing, or have developed, a skin disease, including how it impacts their quality of life, and the societal costs involved.

The LEO Foundation only supports investigator-initiated clinical trials, i.e., the applicant has conceived the proposed research project, and will conduct and publish the involved trial or study independent of commercial interests.

The Foundation does not support:

- Projects on skin cancer (e.g., melanoma, CTCL, BCC and SCC), at present. However, research using skin cancer models may be permitted if the models are used as tools to investigate other aspects of skin biology or skin diseases.
- Research projects involving commercial companies.
- Research projects involving drug testing for commercial purposes.
- Research into aesthetic/cosmetic dermatology, i.e., the subspeciality in dermatology where the aims are to improve the appearance of the skin by attempting to correct or delay skin aging, attenuating physical defects, or to simply improve the person's appearance. Treatment of moderate to severe late sequels of dermatological disease is not considered cosmetic dermatology.

Eligibility - who can apply?

Any researcher who has obtained at least a PhD degree or equivalent academic qualifications may apply.

The applicant must be the Principal Investigator of the proposed project.

The applicant must be affiliated with a university, hospital, or other non-profit organization.

The LEO Foundation welcomes applicants from anywhere in the world.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Only one application per call may be submitted from any applicant. If more are submitted only the first may be accepted for evaluation. The rest will be administratively rejected.
- An application can only have one main applicant and one host organization to which all funding will be paid out. If an application involves collaboration(s) which require redistribution of funds such redistribution is the responsibility of the main applicant along with his or her host organization.
- A grantee can only hold one active grant from the LEO Foundation at any given time. Additional funding for other projects or continuations may be submitted within the last year of the grant period of the active grant but cannot be initiated before the existing grant has ended.
- Please note that you are only allowed one resubmission of any application previously reviewed. If your application has been previously submitted (partly or in full) to the LEO Foundation, you should describe all relevant changes made from the previous version in a cover letter uploaded along with the mandatory attachments.

We recommend that you **read the Grant Terms carefully** to ensure that you and your host organization can comply with the Foundation's standard conditions.

Funding

The budget must be submitted in Danish kroner (DKK). The typical amount applied for a research grant is DKK 2-4 million for a period of 1-3 years. The following types of expenses are covered:

- Salary and mandatory benefits for employees including main applicant (mandatory salary justification for existing full-time employees, cf. note below)
- Running costs/operating expenses incl bench fees
- Equipment
- Publication costs
- Travel and conference expenses
- Tuition fees for PhD students
- Administrative costs up to 5%

For Danish universities, administrative costs and bench fees are replaced by project supplements.

Please note:

- The LEO Foundation does not cover salary for student workers, graduates and undergraduates (i.e., below PhD student level).
- The LEO Foundation only supports fully funded PhD student projects. If you apply to the Foundation for partial support for a PhD student, please confirm in the budget that the remaining salary and expenses for the whole PhD project have been secured.
- Applicants cannot apply for funding for activities that have already been carried out or will be carried out before expected notification from the Foundation.
- The LEO Foundation will not support “double salary”, i.e., salary that is already covered by existing base salary or any other funding. In particular, if salary is requested for an existing full-time employee, it is mandatory to provide an explanation as to why this is required by the host institution and what it covers exactly (e.g., “Host organization requests that 30% of base salary plus mandatory fringe benefits for main applicant must be covered by external funding”). Please use the “Salary for existing full-time employee(s) justification” field for such purpose (See also Section 5 under “Detailed budget”).

2. How to apply

User registration

The LEO Foundation's online application and grant management system, LEO Nora, can be accessed here: https://leo-foundation.smartsimple.ie/s_Login.jsp

If you access the system for the first time you will need to create a user account. Upon initial registration you will receive an email with an activation link which must be activated within two hours to confirm your account. In case you exceed this limit, you may request a new from the "Forgot password"-link. If you are a returning user, simply log in with your existing credentials. Your password will need renewal every 90 days.

Completing your profile

Once logged in you will need to complete all mandatory fields of your user account profile before you can create applications for any open calls. In addition to the mandatory fields, we recommend that you add your academic or business title under "Job title". Your profile can be accessed by clicking the circle with your Initials in the top right corner of the dashboard.

Creating an application

First, you will need to identify the correct call. Current calls (recently closed, active and coming) can be found in the list at the bottom of your dashboard when logged in but only the active can be accessed. Some calls may include a very short eligibility quiz. You create a draft application for an active call by pressing "Apply Now" for that call. Once created, you can edit your application and save changes at any time until the submission deadline for the related call.

NOTE: Remember to press "Save draft" to save any changes.

Language

Your application including all attachments must be in English.

Application form and required content

The application form consists of several sub-sections (tabs) which are explained in detail below. For most fields there are guidance and/or tooltips available within the system. If you experience any problems, feel free to contact the LEO Foundation at applications@leo-foundation.org

Please note that the text fields only accept plain text formatting. Any rich text formatting being copied will be lost.

1. Applicant details

This tab is partly auto-populated with the data from your user account. Optionally, you can indicate your nationality.

The applicant must be the Principal Investigator of the proposed project.

If you are affiliated with more than one institution, please note:

- The organization that your user account is affiliated with will become the host institution in case you are awarded a grant. You must create your application from a user account affiliated with the relevant institution.
- For applicants in Denmark: The organization that your user account is affiliated with determines your access to either project supplements or administrative costs in the budget. If you are affiliated with both a Danish university and another research institutions, you must create your application from a user account affiliated with the relevant institution (further details on how to set up the budget in section 5).

2. Project information

This tab includes information on project title, proposed start and end dates of the project and categorization of the project.

- Project title: A short, concise title for the proposed work.
- Proposed start and end dates: A grant cannot start before “Earliest grant start date” indicated on Page 2 of this guide for the relevant call. It is recommended that this is at least four (4) months after the application deadline to ensure enough time for processing. The actual start and end dates will be agreed upon if the application is approved for funding.
- Project type: This is the overall type of project. Please select the most appropriate category as you can only select one. If “Other” is chosen, please specify in the accompanying field, which will appear if selected.
- Primary and Secondary Research Area: The first field will select the primary research area which will trigger the options available for the secondary research area. Thus, if you cannot find a relevant secondary research area it may be available under another primary research area. If not available, please select “Other” and specify in the accompanying field. These selection lists may vary from call to call. The current list of categories and subdivisions can be found on the following page.

Project types:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Basic research | 4. Epidemiological research |
| 2. Translational research | 5. Technology development |
| 3. Clinical research | 6. Other |

Primary and secondary research areas:

1. Autoimmune skin diseases and connective tissue diseases

- a. Autoimmune bullous diseases
- b. Alopecia areata
- c. Vitiligo
- d. Connective tissue diseases incl. lupus erythematosus and scleroderma
- e. Wounds
- f. Fibrosis, Keloids, and hypertrophic scars
- g. Other

2. Eczemas and urticaria

- a. Atopic dermatitis
- b. Contact dermatitis
- c. Urticaria and angioedema
- d. Other

3. Psoriasis and related diseases

- a. Psoriasis Vulgaris
- b. Psoriasis (other forms)
- c. Erythrodermia
- d. Lichen planus and Lichenoid reactions
- e. Other

4. Skin infections and infestations

- a. Bacterial infections
- b. Viral infection
- c. Fungal infections
- d. Diseases caused by arthropods and other noxious animals
- e. Other

5. Genetic skin diseases

- a. Genetic blistering diseases
- b. Ichthyoses
- c. Darier's Disease (Keratosis follicularis)
- d. Other

6. Diseases of skin appendages (or specific cutaneous structures)

- a. Acne
- b. Rosacea and peroral dermatitis
- c. Hidradenitis Suppurativa
- d. Pigmentation
- e. Hair
- f. Nails
- g. Other

7. Rare diseases

- a. Epidermolysis bullosa
- b. Other

8. Other skin diseases

- a. Stevens-Johnson Syndrome/Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis
- b. Other

9. Basic dermatological research

- a. Skin genetics
- b. Skin immunology
- c. Skin molecular biology
- d. Skin Pharmacology
- e. Skin microbiome
- f. Skin epidemiology
- g. Technology development
- h. Other

3. Project details

- Science abstract (max 1,500 characters incl. spaces): Please provide a short abstract of your proposal aimed at scientists that may work outside your field of expertise. This will be used by the LEO Foundation and its external peer reviewers in the evaluation process. Structure it according to the following headers: Vision; Plan; Impact.
- Background (max 2,500 characters incl. spaces): Please provide relevant background information, e.g., previous work done in the field and how the current proposal adds to this, hypothesis, aims etc.
- Project Strategy and Approach (max 12,000 characters incl. spaces): This is the main section of the application where you outline your project plan, e.g., experiments to be performed, analyses to be made, methodology to be used, statistics, deliverables etc.
- Project References (max 5,000 characters incl. spaces): Please list all publications referenced in the proposal. Preferably with direct links to, e.g., PubMed or another online resource.
- Project Team Environment and Resources (max 1,500 characters incl. spaces): Please describe the competencies of the project group and the research environment in terms of accessibility to essential infrastructure, relevant host organization support etc.
- Project Significance and Impact (max 1,500 characters incl. spaces): Please provide your vision on how the project may make a significant contribution to the field of research, how it may be used for developing better treatments or other relevant impact measures.
- Layman's abstract (max 1,000 characters incl. spaces): Please provide a short layman presentation of your project pinpointing which problem you aim to solve, why, and how. If you are awarded a grant, the LEO Foundation will use this text for publication, typically aimed at a science-interested public. It should not contain any confidential or IP-related information.

3A. Appendices

Please include the mandatory attachments listed below (PDF format). Other uploaded materials will be disregarded in the evaluation. NB: documents uploaded to the main applicant's profile are not automatically transferred to the application).

- **Short CV** (max two pages) for main applicant incl. educational and career information as well as total number of scientific peer-reviewed publications. Preferably also including an h-index and total number of citations (Scopus).
- **One-page specification of the main applicant's 10 most important publications** (with direct links and relevant author(s) underlined). If less than 10 then list all.
- **A high-level overview of current external funding** for the main applicant incl. funder, title, and amount.
- **If your application is a resubmission:** Please upload a cover letter describing all relevant changes compared to the first application, for the benefit of our Scientific Evaluation Committee.

Other attachments (use PDF or JPG/PNG format):

- **Project illustrations:** You may upload up to 4 illustrations to support your project description. Use the upload field for PDF files or the Image Upload Field for JPG or PNG formats. Please check the PDF of your application afterwards to ensure sufficiently high resolution for proper evaluation. Please add figure number and legend or caption to each figure.

4. Project participants (other than the main applicant)

- **Project group members:** All active participants, other than the main applicant, who will be receiving or benefiting directly from the funding must be listed. A one-page mandatory CV must be uploaded as a PDF file under "Project group member CV" for everyone listed. NB: the main applicant's CV is uploaded in the Project Details tab, cf. section 3A above.
- **Project affiliations:** Should include all contributing project partners not benefiting directly from the grant. Not mandatory and should only be included if relevant for the application.

5. Requested budget

Detailed budget (NB: must be provided in Danish kroner (DKK)): Here, you specify details of the budget for the proposed work including budget year, type (e.g., salary, equipment, travel, publication etc.), requested amount (in DKK), actual or potential funding source (e.g., LEO Foundation, host organization, other funder etc.) and a brief, high level description (max 1,000 characters including spaces) of the individual budget items. Once you close the pop-up form remember to press “Save Draft” to ensure that the main budget page is updated. Remember to add only direct costs as the selected percentage for administration costs (up to 5%) is added automatically.

Note on salaries: The Foundation will not support salary posts that are already covered by existing base salary or any other funding. In particular, if salary for PIs or co-applicants at the level of Assistant Professor or higher is requested, it is mandatory to provide an explanation as to why these posts are required by the host institution and what exactly they cover (e.g., simply stating “fringe” or “benefits” is not acceptable). Please use the “Salary for existing full-time employee(s) justification” field for such purpose.

Additional information: Here, you specify if you would like to request administrative costs (up to 5%), add information on the total number of people to receive salary from the LEO Foundation during the project and add an estimate of the average annual full-time equivalents (FTE) for the project – e.g., if a postdoc works 100% and a technician works 50% on the project you should add 1.5 in this field. Remember to press “Save draft” again after specifying overhead to update the budget calculations. The “Salary for existing full-time employees” should be used to explain why salary is requested for this group as they are assumed to be paid already by funding from elsewhere.

FOR DANISH UNIVERSITIES ONLY: PROJECT SUPPLEMENTS FOR RESEARCH GRANTS

Project supplements contribute to the coverage of indirect costs incurred at Danish universities and replace budget items such as administrative costs, bench fees, etc.

Please visit [Universities Denmark's website](#) for detailed guidelines on project supplements. Questions concerning project supplements should be directed to the research support staff at your university.

Kindly note that the organization that your user account is affiliated with determines your access to either project supplements or administrative costs in the budget. If you are affiliated with both a Danish university and another research institutions, you must create your application from a user account affiliated with the relevant institution.

If your applicant profile is associated with one of the eight Danish universities, project supplements will be calculated and included in your budget automatically:

- If you apply for salary for PhD students, postdoctoral fellows, or research/clinical assistants, select the salary budget type 'Group B/C' (cf. appendix A in Universities Denmark's guidelines)
- Fill in salary costs, associated FTE, research type, and funding source:
 - FTE: Full-time equivalent, i.e., the proportion of a full-time position that the requested funding will support per project year
 - Research type: 'Wet' covers natural, health and technical sciences; 'Dry' covers humanities and social sciences
- Fill in position type in the text box

6. Host approval and grant terms

Here, you acknowledge that your host organization approves that the project can be performed there and that you have read and understood the current [Grant Terms](#).

Submitting the application

Once you have completed your application you can submit it by pressing "Submit". We strongly encourage you to check the generated PDF before submitting to ensure that all sections are readable and that all mandatory elements are included.

Please note that if any mandatory elements are missing you will not be able to submit and you will be presented with a list of outstanding points to address.

Remember that correcting the missing elements may take time so we recommend that you initiate and complete your application well in advance of the application deadline. You will be notified by email if there are changes requested to your application or any decision has been made.

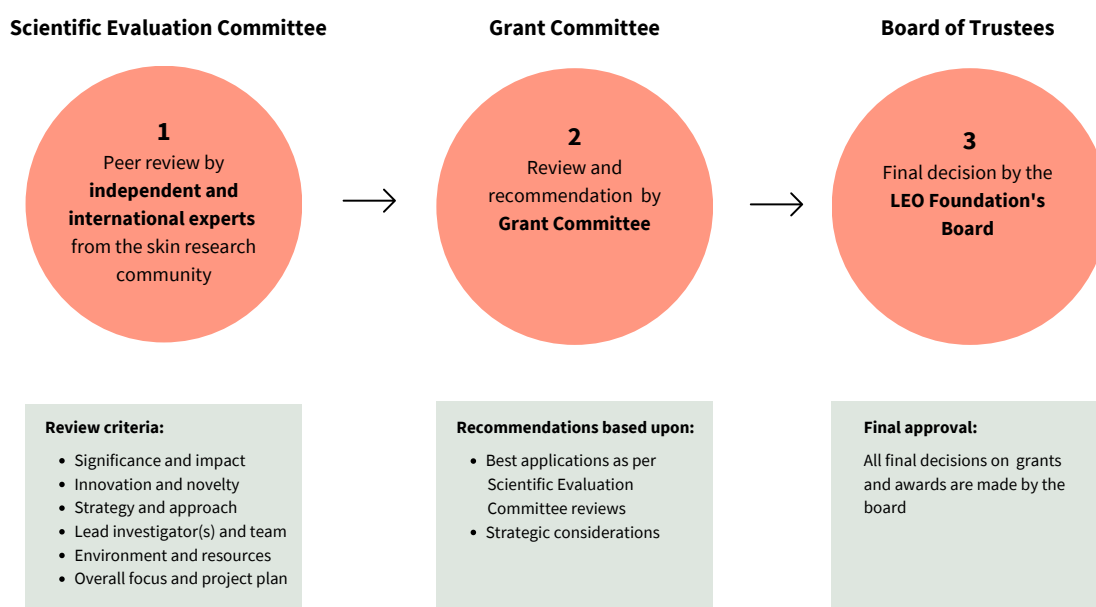
3. Evaluation criteria and process

After the call deadline, the LEO Foundation screens your application for formal requirements and, if approved, sends it to an independent expert committee for scientific peer review.

The LEO Foundation Scientific Evaluation Committee reviews your application according to the following criteria:

- Significance and impact
- Innovation and novelty
- Strategy and approach
- Lead investigator(s) and team
- Environment and resources
- Overall focus and project plan

The result of the external review is evaluated by the LEO Foundation Grant Committee. Their recommendation is presented to the LEO Foundation's Board of Trustees who makes the final funding decision, cf. below.



All applicants are informed of the Board's decision through the online application and grant management portal, approximately three months after the application deadline. No additional feedback is provided for non-funded projects.

The LEO Foundation is one of the largest private funders globally of independent skin research. The Foundation provides philanthropic grants with the aim to support the best international research in skin diseases and make Denmark a global beacon for skin research.

Over the past decade, the LEO Foundation has supported independent skin research with more than EUR 195 million.

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