



VALIDATE Training Grant Application Guidance

Summary

The VALIDATE Network aims to accelerate vaccine research and development for complex intracellular pathogens that cause diseases significant to low and middle-income countries (LMIC), with a focus on *Mycobacteria*, *Leishmania spp*, and *Burkholderia pseudomallei*. VALIDATE also aims to facilitate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and career progression amongst its members.

To support these aims, Early Career Researcher training grants are available of up to £3,500 to help Associate VALIDATE member researchers take advantage of training opportunities that will contribute to their CPD. This can include (but is not limited to): attendance at courses or workshops, laboratory exchanges, and work shadowing. Attendance at an international conference to present a talk or poster is also eligible for LMIC members only (general travel to attend conferences is not supported in this fund; travel to the VALIDATE Network Annual Meeting is funded [elsewhere](#)). For laboratory exchanges, we encourage you to maximise the outputs of your visit to that laboratory, for example by visiting other relevant VALIDATE researchers in that country (to increase your network of contacts and discuss future collaboration opportunities), or by giving a talk to your host laboratory about your research during your visit.

The proposed training opportunity must fall within the VALIDATE scientific remit, focusing on one of VALIDATE's priority pathogens. Any aspect of research that will accelerate development of efficacious vaccines for these pathogens is eligible, including biological, physical and social sciences, and humanities.

Applicants must be an Associate member of VALIDATE. We particularly welcome applications from researchers based in LMICs.

Submitted applications will be reviewed at the next VALIDATE Network Management Board meeting (held every other month). For training opportunities with fixed dates, we ask for applications to be submitted **at least 2 to 3 months prior** to the start date of the training, in order for the NMB to have sufficient time to review the application.

All awardees will be expected to provide a short report following the completion of their training, for inclusion in VALIDATE outcomes and publicity.

Please see the further details below about this award and how to apply. Read the [VALIDATE Statement on the Use of Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#), before you begin writing your application. Please submit your application form and associated documents using the Training Grant Submission Portal found on the [VALIDATE website](#). Do contact the VALIDATE Team at VALIDATE@ndm.ox.ac.uk with any queries about the form or the application process.

Grant Call Details

Funding eligibility

Applicants

Funding is for VALIDATE Associate members only. Members based at academic institutes, governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations and in industry are all eligible.

Due to VALIDATE's funding, under UK and USA government rules we cannot fund any members based in Belarus, China, Iran, Democratic People's Republic of Korea or Russia, or any individuals/entities subject to [UK](#) or [US](#) sanctions.

LMIC/HIC

It is important to know for your application whether you count as 'HIC' (high-income country) based, or 'LMIC' (low-and-middle-income country) based, as only LMIC applicants may apply for a training grant to cover costs to attend a conference to present a poster or talk:

- If you are based for work in a country listed in any column on [this page](#), then you are LMIC, with the exception of:
 - Belarus – we cannot fund members based in Belarus
 - China – we cannot fund members based in China
 - Democratic People's Republic of Korea – we cannot fund members based in North Korea
 - India – the Indian government does not want to receive UK ODA funds, so for this call members based in India count as HIC
 - Iran – we cannot fund members based in Iran
 - Russia – we cannot fund members based in Russia
- If you are based for work in any country not on the list, or you are based in India, then you are HIC.

Activities supported

CPD within the scope of the VALIDATE Network remit. Examples include attendance at courses or workshops, laboratory exchanges, and work shadowing. Attendance at an international conference to present a talk or poster is supported for LMIC members only.

Activities not supported

Conference attendance by non-LMIC members; conference attendance where the applicant is not presenting a talk or poster; attendance at the VALIDATE annual meeting; staff time.

Please note we cannot cover any costs during your trip that are not related to your training (e.g. travel to visit friends while on a lab exchange visit; sight-seeing travel/costs; meals/drinks for friends); these must not be included in your expense claim.

Budget

Your training grant costs can be up to a maximum budget of £3,500. VALIDATE funding can be used in conjunction with other funding to cover training that is more expensive than this – if this is the case please explain where the additional funds required will come from in your application.

Costs can include course fees, consumables for training purposes, travel and accommodation costs, visas, insurance etc:

- Travel: we can cover standard travel fares only (i.e. no Business/First class), and we would obviously appreciate efforts to use the most economical route and carrier where possible for any travel. Please use public transport (rather than private taxis) wherever possible.
- Accommodation: this must be reasonably priced. We will cover costs of up to £100 per night outside capital cities; up to £150 per room per night in cities such as London and Paris.
- For laboratory exchanges, the host lab may receive bench fees of £16 per working day the Associate visits their lab (this is equivalent to UKRI rates, and can be listed as a separate cost item, or included in the consumables line; whichever is preferred by the host institute).
- We cannot give a 'per diem' subsistence rate, as your expense claim must be for actual costs. You can include cost estimates for subsistence items, such as food, Wi-Fi etc in your budget.

Please explain the costs your budget consists of, how you calculated your budget costs, and how these costs relate to your training opportunity, in the resource justification section of the application form.

Letters of Support

Applications must be supported by your Research Group Leader (who must be happy for you to take time away from your research to carry out the training grant activity). If you do not have a Research Group leader at your institute, please instead include a letter of support from your line manager (again, stating support of your application and the time away from your normal work).

CV Guidance:

The below list indicates the information we require to be detailed in your CV. Please note that any additional information supplied is optional. Please ensure you stick to page limits (2 pages for CV, 1 page for publications list of your key publications).

- Full name
- Email address
- Education history (Bachelors degree and above)
 - Dates of education
 - Course name
 - Institution name
- Employment history (10 years)
 - Dates of employment
 - Institution name
 - Job title
 - Brief summary of your role
- Grants obtained (dates, funder, project title, amount, your role on the project)

Application process

Complete the application form as directed on the form itself, sticking to the word limit where stated. Ensure you complete all sections, and make clear a) what the training opportunity is, b) how this opportunity will help your career, c) how you are maximising the outcomes of this opportunity, and d) how much the opportunity will cost (in detail). Make sure the necessary additional supporting documents (stated in section 8 of the application form) are uploaded into the correct sections of the submission portal. All documents should be in English, and extra documents/appendices will not be accepted.

Please submit your application form and associated documents using the Training Grant Submission Portal found on the [VALIDATE website](#). You will receive an automated email notification of your

submission immediately after submission, followed by acknowledge of your submission from a member of the VALIDATE team within 3 working days (Monday-Friday) of submission.

Applications will be reviewed by the VALIDATE [Network Management Board](#) (NMB) at their next meeting (these are held every other month). Assessment will be made based on the track record of the applicant, their (and the training's) fit with VALIDATE strategic priorities, the value of the training opportunity to their career, and the value-for-money of the training opportunity.

NMB members will not input into discussions about an application where they have a conflict of interest (see below for details on conflicts of interest). The VALIDATE Scientific Advisory Board ([SAB](#)) has oversight of VALIDATE's processes to ensure transparency, fairness and consistency.

You will be notified by email of the NMB's review decision.

Reporting and Payment of Awards

Successful applicants will be sent detailed documents about what costs are eligible, and how to claim your training grant costs. Please read these carefully *before* you book anything for your training grant, to ensure you are aware of our rules and processes, and to ensure that you collect the right information (such as receipts) to be able to claim your travel grant costs. We cannot reimburse costs that are not eligible under the grant, or that do not have the right documentation. Please also note the timelines for costs reimbursement, which are stated in the detailed documents sent to successful applicants.

Payment is made in arrears, and can be made in two ways:

1. **If your/your host Institution paid the costs:** a detailed invoice listing costs incurred and the Institute's bank details should be submitted, and costs will be reimbursed to the Institute.
2. **If you personally paid the costs:** a detailed expense claim of costs incurred *with receipts* should be submitted, and costs will be reimbursed to the bank account stated on the form.

In exceptional circumstances, for LMIC members where these options are not financially viable, we may be able to book travel/training on your behalf. Please contact the VALIDATE Team (VALIDATE@ndm.ox.ac.uk) ahead of submitting your application if this is likely to be the case for your application (this is for logistical reasons and will not impact the assessment of your application).

Your payment claim should be sent to the VALIDATE Team after your training grant activity. Payment will be for actual expenditure up to the value of your grant awarded (as stated in your award letter).

On completion of their training, recipients of awards are required to provide a simple report about the benefits to their career development. This report must be submitted to the VALIDATE Team within one month of the training taking place.

Publicity and Data Protection

Successful training grant awardees are listed on the VALIDATE website.

Copies of applications may be made available to the VALIDATE Management Team, NMB and SAB who will use information provided for review and post-award administration (all have signed confidentiality agreements). Observers from our funders, may sit in on the review process and see applications. VALIDATE and its funders may choose to publish non-confidential details of awards, awardees, and information of training provided.

Conflict of Interest

Examples of a conflict of interest include:

- Employed by the same department in the same institution as the applicant/host
- Close active collaboration impacting on the application being reviewed
- Holding a current position on the governing body of the applicant organisation
- Personal/family relationship with the applicant