



**SAMANTHA DICKSON  
BRAIN TUMOUR TRUST**

Head to head with brain tumours

## **SDBTT Research Strategy for Project Grant Round 2012**

We are the largest dedicated funder of brain tumour research in the UK, funding research projects, clinical trials and a Centre of Excellence at UCL. To date we have funded over 50 research projects throughout the country, investing a total of £7 million. Through our 2012 grant round, we will boost this further. Funding is awarded to applications for both childhood and adult research areas through an open competitive process of comprehensive external and internal peer review.

### ***Grant eligibility***

The criteria for eligibility and selection during the 2012 grant round will be as follows.

- Duration of 1-3 years, but preference for 3 year projects.
- Funding amount of £40,000-£215,000 in total and a maximum of £75,000 in any one year.
- Applications welcome across all types of primary brain tumour, including pituitary tumours. During this grant round, secondary/metastatic brain tumour research applications will not be accepted.
- Any research relevant to primary brain tumours will be eligible, except clinical trials which are covered by an alternative grant round. This research could include:
  - Basic science
  - Translational
  - Epidemiological
  - Psycho-social and quality of life
  - Health services research
- Principal applicants must hold an established NHS, academic or research post in the UK and be in receipt of a salary for the duration of the award, and have their institution's support for their application. They could be from any discipline.
- Collaborators both within the UK and overseas are encouraged.
- Equipment-only grants not accepted.
- Grant applications should not include indirect costs, and should request to fund travel only where this is specifically required for the project's execution.
- Applicants are allowed to apply for funding to attend one conference towards the end of their grant and only if they are presenting research funded by the grant, up to a maximum amount of £500 in the UK or £1000 overseas.
- Maximum of two applications from any individual Principal Investigator in this grant round.
- Matched funding from Host institutions is encouraged, in order that we can increase the total levels of funding for brain tumour research.

- Past SDBTT grant holders are expected to have published at least one peer-reviewed paper in a scientific journal from any previous SDBTT grants which finished more than two years ago.

Although funding decisions will be based primarily on the individual merit of the application, adjustments may be made to ensure that the research programme contains a balance of research on different tumour types. Preference may also be given to applications for continuing successful research previously funded by SDBTT, where high-quality follow-on grant applications are received.

### ***Application and peer review process***

The Samantha Dickson Brain Tumour Trust undertakes a rigorous peer review selection process to award its grants, to ensure that only those of the highest standard are funded. We are a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), and have been awarded its certificate of best practice in peer review in 2009 and 2011.

The following outline explains the planned peer review process for this grant round. More detailed information can be found on our website at [link to be added.] Please note that the process may be subject to minor changes.

[AMRC 2011 logo to be added].

#### *Call for applications*

- Publicised on charity website, all research contacts emailed, journal web advertising, funding database listings
- Stage 1 application form available for download, along with terms and conditions of grant award and research strategy

#### *Stage 1 application - triage*

- Validation step to check eligibility of applications
- All eligible applications reviewed by 3 academic GRAM members focusing on
  - suitability of team and environment
  - adherence to the SDBTT strategic objectives
  - scientific/clinical content, originality and methodology
  - relevance to and potential impact for brain tumours
  - overall rating
- Triage subcommittee consisting of Chair (Professor Dame Ingrid Allen) and Vice-Chair (Professor Roy Rampling) together with SDBTT Head of Research (Julia Trusler) to decide which applications to invite for full submission.
- Applicants contacted to invite or decline application for stage 2.

#### *Stage 2 - Full application*

- All applications peer reviewed by minimum of 3 external peer reviewers selected for the relevance of their area of expertise and checking for conflicts of interest
- All applications peer reviewed by 3 academic GRAM members
- All applications sent to lay GRAM reviewers for one to comment on each.

#### *Response to reviewers*

Applicants are given opportunity to provide feedback to external peer reviewers' comments.

*GRAM meeting*

- Full applications, peer review comments and response to comments circulated to GRAM ahead of meeting (except where conflicts of interest arise)
- Full day meeting held to discuss all applications and submit recommendations for funding to the Board of Trustees.

*Funding decisions and awards*

- SDBTT trustees to approve grant expenditure based on:
  - GRAM recommendations
  - research strategy
  - restricted funding
  - matched funding from the host institution
- The quality of the grant proposal as judged by GRAM is considered paramount, as SDBTT will only fund top-quality projects. Merit on the basis of strategic factors, matched funding from the institution or restricted funding at SDBTT are secondary to this.
- Applicants informed of the outcome of their application by email.