

Frequently Asked Questions



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*Please check the FAQs in the first instance for an answer to your query.
If you cannot find the answer to your question in this document or in the useful documents
below, please contact catalyst@zinc.vc
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Useful Documents

- [Awards Overview](#) - This document offers a short overview of the Awards, including key dates.
- [Programme of Support Overview](#) - This document provides more detail about the benefits of the proven support programme offered by Zinc to Awardees.

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Information about the Awards

1. What are the Catalyst Awards?

The Catalyst Awards are part of the UKRI Healthy Ageing Challenge and the Healthy Longevity Global Grand Challenge, founded by the U.S. National Academy of Medicine. This is a worldwide movement to improve physical, mental, and social well-being for people as they age.

UKRI and Zinc are searching for entrepreneurial academics who want to translate their research into impactful and scalable products, services and interventions that are high-risk, high-reward and innovative.

2. How do the Catalyst Awards define 'later life'?

We use a working definition of 50+ to describe the age range that may be considered in scope for these Awards. However, this is not fixed and proposals will be judged on their individual merit. We encourage applicants to take a life-course approach, recognising that there may be influences throughout life that determine health and wellbeing in later life. Applications that describe work with people earlier in life may be in scope if the purpose is to improve health or wellbeing in later life.

3. How much funding is available?

The funding available is £62,500 (at 100% fEC). UKRI will provide £50,000 (80% fEC), with the remainder coming from your institution. Up to 27 Awards will be made.

4. What should the duration of the proposed project be?

The duration of the grant should not exceed 12 months. However, applicants should aim for projects to become sustainable and scalable beyond the Awards.

5. What output is expected after 12 months?

The end goal of the programme is not to produce traditional research outputs, such as papers, events or datasets (we consider these 'by-products' of your research activity, not end goals). The end goal is to progress the translation of your research into impactful products, services or interventions. This means exploring the best models to sustain your work beyond the funding period (e.g. a commercial venture, licensing the IP, creating a not-for-profit, etc.), running a pilot with end-users, creating or further developing a prototype, etc - with the aim of getting 'closer to market' (in a broad sense) by the end of the programme. You can read more about this in our blog.

6. Are there further rounds of the Awards?

No, this is intended to be the final funding round of the Healthy Ageing Catalyst Awards.

7. Can we apply for other funding within the Healthy Ageing Challenge?

Yes. Healthy Ageing Catalyst Award grant holders will be permitted to apply for funding within the Healthy Ageing Challenge portfolio.

Information about Zinc

8. Who is Zinc?

Zinc is a mission-led company created in 2017 out of initial funding from [LSE](#) and [Aspect](#), with the aim to generate social impact across our four missions - one of which is **improving the quality of later life**. We do this by supporting talented individuals to build commercial businesses that are inspired and underpinned by social science research.

Our team seeks to support ambitious, entrepreneurial people with ideas that can scale and change society for the better. We're energised by novel ideas and different solutions, and value the strength that comes from involving people with a diversity of viewpoints and backgrounds. This is why we're delighted to partner with UKRI, to reach the brightest and most innovative academic minds and help researchers to maximise their impact beyond academia.

9. Why did UKRI choose Zinc as their partner?

UKRI initially chose Zinc to deliver a programme of support that helps Catalyst Awardees to grow and sustain the impact of their work. This quickly developed into a deeper collaboration, producing an application process that aims to give every applicant knowledge and insight into being an entrepreneurial researcher.

10. How does Zinc support researchers?

Zinc offers a 9-month, tailored support program to all Award winners. Current Catalyst Awardees take part in weekly structured sessions that offer inspiration with education, and benefit both their personal development and the development of their idea. This includes (but is not limited to) exploring inclusive design best practices, developing their marketing strategy to appeal to older adults, accessing pitching training and gaining clarity on pathways to impact and funding options. They are also connected with our unique ecosystem of experts from across academia, the public sector, charities, creative industries, technology and entrepreneurship.

You can read more about this in our [Programme of Support information document](#).

11. Do you have testimonials from Awardees?

Yes - some are available on our website and [you can see more testimonials here](#).

12. Who owns the IP?

Zinc's role during the Award is to provide a programme of support. We will not take ownership of IP generated by Award holders. Researchers will be expected to work closely with their individual TTOs and/or other relevant university teams to establish any relevant IP agreements. It is likely that specific agreements will vary across institutions, and depending on the stage of the researcher.

People and Project Eligibility

13. Are the Awards right for me?

To progress past the expression of interest stage, applicants must fulfil the following criteria.

- Have a transformative new (not an existing research project or existing company) idea that can be applied to healthy ageing.
- Be based at an [eligible UK research organisation](#), with a [letter of support](#) from the institution that intends to host you for up to 12 months from September 2021.
- Hold a PhD or have equivalent professional experience.

Applications that have a stronger fit within other public funding streams (particularly clinical trials and drug development eligible for MRC or NIHR funding), or that would require substantial ethical and regulatory approval (e.g. Class II Medical Devices) will not be eligible for the Catalyst Awards. Projects that have a clinical application are eligible for the Catalyst Awards.

14. Can the application include co-investigators?

Yes. Co-Investigators can be included in applications. Funding from the programme will go to the research institution in the first instance, then to any partners. All co-investigators, including UK businesses, third party and government co-investigators, can only receive a maximum of 30% of the grant for combined costs.

Please [read the UKRI funding guidelines](#) and [inclusion of co-investigator guidelines](#) for more information.

15. I am a researcher who is currently based outside of the UK - am I eligible?

Yes, however you'll need to be affiliated with a UK based university that will support your application.

16. I have previously applied to the Awards - can I apply again?

Yes! We welcome applications from previous applicants, provided that the proposed project is substantively different to the previous proposal. This could mean entering the call with the same problem to solve as last year, but being open to finding a new, improved, way of addressing the problem, finding a solution or sustaining your impact.

17. I'm a current holder of an Award - can I apply?

No.

18. Where can I allocate grant money?

This funding can be used for costs such as salaries (including for the principal investigator), travel, consultancy, communications/public engagement and equipment. For details on how UKRI grant money can be allocated see page 24 onwards of the [ESRC research funding guide](#).

19. Are there examples of previously funded projects?

You can view details of the 22 projects funded in the second year of the Awards at the [Healthy Longevity Challenge website](#).

20. Will the recipient of the Award be expected to work on the project full-time?

Award winners will be expected to ensure that at least 30% of the core team's overall time (e.g. an early career researcher and a senior academic) is dedicated to the Catalyst Awards.

21. Can I apply as the PI for two different projects?

No. You should choose a single project to submit as your expression of interest.

22. Can the applicant/PI be an Early Career Researcher?

Yes. Researchers working at any career level are encouraged to apply. We are particularly keen to hear from early career researchers, those from an arts, humanities and social science background, and those whose discipline areas are underrepresented in current healthy ageing scholarship.

23. Do I need to have a PhD to apply?

No, you must hold a PhD or have equivalent professional expertise. For discipline areas where PhDs are less common, we will accept applications from those without a PhD, where they can demonstrate they are active academics and/or practitioners and have the support of their institution to apply for this grant.

24. I'm currently completing my PhD, can I apply?

Yes, as long as you have completed your PhD by the time the grant starts in September, you can apply. However, if you're coming close to the end of your PhD, it may be best to apply for the next round of Awards in 2022 instead. If your PhD is funded by UKRI, you need to carefully check the guidelines. Please see the [UKRI funding guidelines](#) for more details.

25. What support do I need from my host institution?

You will need to be hosted by a UK university or an [eligible research organisation](#) for the duration of the award. The institution will receive the funding on behalf of the applicant. Please note your position at your supporting organisation does not need to last beyond the Catalyst Award (up to 12 months, starting from September 2022).

When you submit your expression of interest in February, you will need to submit a letter of support from your Head of Department (or similar role) confirming that they support your application, that you will be hosted in their department for the duration of the Award, and that the institution will make the 20% fEC institution contribution.

We strongly recommend that you discuss this with your Head of Department by the time you attend one of the Prototyping Problems workshops in December and January.

26. Is my University or Research Organisation eligible?

Please see the UKRI website for a list of eligible organisations [here](#).

27. I'm an entrepreneur with links to a university or eligible organisation. Can I apply?

Yes, if you are affiliated with a UK based university or [eligible research institution](#) that will support your application, and will be hosted by that institution for the duration of the Award (up to 12 months, starting in September 2021). Unfortunately, we cannot match prospective applicants to institutions.

Those based in business, third sector or government organisations can only be involved as co-investigators. Combined costs for international co-investigators, and UK business, third sector and government body co-investigators must not exceed 30% of the total fEC of the grant application. Please see the [UKRI funding guidelines](#) for more details.

Additional Information: Guidance on journal-based metrics

As part of UKRI's commitment to support the recommendations and principles set out by the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), UKRI reviewers and panel members are advised not to use journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors, as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an investigator's contributions, or to make funding decisions.

The content of a paper is more important than publication metrics, or the identity of the journal, in which it was published, especially for early-stage researchers. Reviewers and panel members are encouraged to consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets, software, inventions, patents, preprints, other commercial activities, etc.) in addition to research publications. UKRI advise peer reviewers and panel members to consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.