



Essential Grant Writing Skills Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

The goal of the AREF Essential Grant-Writing Skills Programmes (a.k.a. AREF Grant Writing Skills Programme or GWP) is to transform the opportunities of talented health researchers based in Africa, enabling them to contribute to reducing the burden of disease through leading research that is responsive to its African settings. It aims to develop emerging African scientists by equipping them with the skill of writing competitive, compelling and effective research-grant proposals.

The Programme is designed to enable participants to develop the essential skills required to successfully write and submit compelling proposals to any national, regional, or international funder.

Time-based eligibility

- **I have submitted my thesis but have not been able to defend my work; am I eligible to apply?**

Researchers who have not yet received their PhD by the application deadline are not eligible to apply. However, if you can provide evidence that

1. You have submitted your thesis and;
2. The University has held over a scheduled examination (due to be held before the application deadline),

Please reach out to us using the “Contact Us” section in the portal explaining your circumstance and we will assess your eligibility on a case-by-case basis given the above evidence. It is important that any newly qualified PhD-graduate can demonstrate additional research experience and that they are ready to start applying for their own grants. We appreciate that in some settings, individuals have been able to acquire valuable research experience on their (extended) academic journey.

- **I am due to finish my PhD after the application deadline; am I eligible to apply?**

No, non-clinical researchers who will not have received their PhD/DPh by the application deadline will not be eligible to apply. However, please be aware that this Programme will run again in subsequent years, and we encourage you start making the arrangements necessary to apply next year.

Career-based eligibility

- **I have already won a grant; am I eligible to apply?**

The AREF Essential Grant Writing Skills Programme is aimed at early-career health researchers who have not yet been awarded a combined research-grant portfolio of 250,000GBP or more. If you have a grant portfolio of this amount, we encourage you to apply for the [AREF Towards Leadership Programme](#).

- **I am a medical professional, but I do not hold a PhD; am I eligible to apply?**

Yes, the AREF Essential Grant Writing Skills Programme is open to applicants without a doctorate who have a clinical qualification **and** research relevant master’s degree **one of which** was awarded in the last 6 years. Applicants need to have at least two but not more than seven years of active research experience. Clinically qualified applicants can include doctors, nurses or veterinarians. If you have any questions about your clinical background, please reach out to us using the “Contact Us” section in the portal and we will assess your eligibility on a case-by-case basis.

Process

- **When will I find out if my application has been successful?**

Applicants will be notified of the final decision during up to one month after the application deadline. However, depending on the applications received, there may be a delay and we kindly ask your patience with us as we deal with the large of number of applications received.

- **Does my application need to be submitted in English?**

Yes, all applications must be written in comprehensible, good English but complete fluency is not required.

- **Will I receive feedback?**

No. AREF is unable to provide feedback for applications to our Grant Writing Programme.

- **Can the dates for the Programme be changed?**

No, the dates for any Grant Writing Programme cannot be changed and applicants must ensure that they are able to attend all 8 sessions of the Programme before applying. They must also indicate their intention and ability (barring unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances) to attend all sessions in the application form. Full attendance is required to receive the certificate of completion at the end of the programme.

- **Can I submit a paper application?**

No. We only accept electronic applications completed using the link that published with the launch of any Grant Writing Programme. In a case where an applicant is completely unable to access this platform, the applicant must contact AREF at gtprogrammes@africaresearchexcellencefund.org.uk to explain their situation and a solution will be sought.

- **What do I do if I have additional questions?**

If you have any enquiries, contact AREF via the "Contact Us" section on the portal which can be found on the lefthand panel on your homepage with your enquiry and you will receive a response within 5 working days.

If your enquiry is related to registering on the portal, please email us at gtprogrammes@africaresearchexcellencefund.org.uk with the title "**Portal Registration**" in your email.

Emails sent to the any other AREF email related to your application will not receive a timely response.

- **When will the application portal close?**

The deadline for all applications is 8th January 2025 at 13:00 GMT. Please note that your signatory must accept participation when you invite them into your application and sign off on it before you can submit your application; this must happen before the deadline. Late applications will **not** be accepted. If you have a challenge with submission, please reach out to AREF using the Contact Us form explaining your challenge.

Programme

- **How long is the Programme?**

All AREF Grant Writing Programmes comprise of eight 3hr sessions, divided by a break of six weeks or more, into two parts, with five sessions in the first part and three in the second. Attendance to all sessions is mandatory

- **Is there a cost to the Programme?**

There is no cost for applicants who are selected to participate in any GWP.