

# RCN Foundation

## Grant Reviewers Pack

### 1. About the RCN Foundation

The RCN Foundation is an independent charity that supports nurses, midwives, nursing associates and health care support workers as they care for patients and improve the UK's health and wellbeing.

The Foundations grants for nursing-led research and projects, as well as for education and hardship, support professionals to innovate, develop their careers and get through tough times.

The Foundation champions the nursing team and its achievements, celebrating the difference it makes to people's lives. Everything the Foundation does is based on solid evidence and helps improve practice. The Foundation's investment in the profession helps raise its profile and inspire the best patient care.

The RCN Foundation is part of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Group. But individuals do not have to be an RCN member to receive our support.

As an independent charity, the Foundation is here for every current and former nurse, midwife and nursing support worker, as well as students and nursing associates.

### 2. Background: Grant Reviewer role

The RCN Foundation has a standing group of Grant Reviewers who are involved in the review process for education and project grant applications.

We aim to ensure that we have the best possible balance of skills, knowledge and expertise to help the Foundation deliver its programme of education grants. The standing group subsequently consists of a wide variety of individuals from different fields of nursing and with different areas of expertise.

Grant Reviewers bring their skills and knowledge to the application review process to ensure that all decisions are independent, well-informed and in line with best practice.

### **Education grants:**

The Foundation currently runs two rounds of education grants during the year at spring and autumn. Grant Reviewers will be contacted once the rounds have gone live to enquire about their availability. Grant Reviewers will be asked to review between 10 and 20 applications within a two-week timeframe and if participating in interviews, the time commitment will be one day.

### **Project grants:**

The Foundation periodically opens calls for project grant applications for specific priority themes. Grant Reviewers may be contacted and asked to review applications, within a two/three-week timeframe and if participating in interviews, the time commitment will be one day.

### **Role Description**

- To provide independent and objective specialist advice to the RCN Foundation regarding education grant applications.
- To provide independent and objective specialist advice to the RCN Foundation regarding project grant applications.
- To review grant applications against a scoring criteria.
- To make funding recommendations to the Grants Manager and the Head of Grants and Impact.
- To support the delivery of the Foundation's education grant programme.
- To support the delivery of the Foundation's project grant programme
- To enable the charity to achieve its strategic objective to 'promote the better education and training of persons providing nursing in health and social care'.

### **Person Specification**

Grant Reviewers should have the following knowledge, skills, experience and qualities:

- Knowledge of, and commitment to, the charitable objects, mission and priorities of the Foundation.
- Willingness to act in the best interests of the charity and comply with the Nolan Principles of Public Life (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership).
- An ability to commit the necessary time to be an effective Grant Reviewer.
- Sound analytical skills and good judgement.

### 3. Guidance for Grant Reviewers

The Foundation has a standing group of Grant Reviewers who can be approached to review applications for the Foundation's education and project grants.

Grant Reviewers are asked to review applications against a set of clear evaluation criteria and make recommendations to Grants Manager.

Advisors will be rotated at each round; this is to ensure that:

- Expertise of a wide range of Grant Reviewers is utilised.
- Processes remain transparent and benefit from the broad range of experience that our reviewers bring.

There is no obligation to participate and it will be down to the individual reviewer to decide on the time commitment that they are able to give.

#### Process of review for Education Grants

There are two rounds of education grants annually, the spring round and the autumn round.

Grant Reviewers will be contacted prior to the closing date to ask if they are available to take part in that round.

Applications will be sent electronically to Grant Reviewers by the Grants Manager following the closing date, along with criteria and guidance. In addition, a deadline for feedback will be given, all feedback will be received electronically.

All applications will be anonymised and Grant Reviewers are asked to delete all applications once the round has closed, a reminder will be sent to reviewers once all feedback has been received.

Applications that are over £2,500 (Into Nursing only) will require an interview, advisors reviewing these applications may be asked to sit on the interview panel. The time commitment will be one day. All interviews will be undertaken virtually, using Microsoft Teams.

#### Principles of Funding Education Grants

The maximum amount that can be awarded:

- £1,600 under the Professional Bursary Scheme/Marcia Mackie & Rae/Monica Baly and all other named schemes
- £2,500 per year under the Into Nursing scheme
- £1,000 under Needlemakers scheme

Applicants for courses that are considered to be the responsibility of the employer should not be disadvantaged in personal development due to the

employer's unwillingness to fund. The Foundation will consider funding in such instances provided that the applicant has approached their employer in the first instance and that the reason provided for the employer's refusal clarifies that the employer is unreasonably refusing to fund a course.

Payment for unpaid leave may be considered where leave is granted by the employer.

Feedback on unsuccessful applications cannot be provided due to the volume of applications received.

### Education Grant Eligibility Criteria

Each scheme run by the Foundation has specific eligibility criteria which will be distributed with the applications for review. However, there are certain principles that run through all of the Foundation's education grants:

- **Accredited courses:** The Foundation only supports accredited courses which are run by universities, higher education institutions and private providers.
- **Non-medical prescribing:** The applicant must demonstrate that their role involves a clinical need to be a non-medical prescriber.
- **Nursing/healthcare:** Activities must be linked to nursing/healthcare. The Foundation has received applications for Management and HR courses in the past, for example. These would not be funded.
- **Complementary and Alternative Medicines (CAMs):** Accredited CAM courses are eligible for funding subject to additional scrutiny being applied to ascertain how such a course would benefit/enhance the applicant's practice/working environment to improve patient care.
- **Eligible costs:** Grants can be awarded to cover course fees and associated costs including: travel costs, accommodation, child care and staff replacement costs.
- **Conferences:** Funding to attend a conference can be considered.
- **Items not eligible for funding:** Books, IT equipment or software, meals and subsistence and taxis/car mileage except where there is a medical or other compelling reason.

## Background: Project grants

The Foundation funds projects that are related to two main areas outlined below:

- Projects that invest in the nursing and midwifery professions: As health and social care become more integrated, nurses, midwives and health care support workers have to find more innovative ways to make sure they deliver joined up, effective patient care. At the same time, more people are living longer, many with long-term conditions, including learning disabilities, and mental health problems. Therefore, the Foundation's current key priorities for organisational grants are:
  - Children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing
  - Learning disability nursing
- Raising the profile of nursing and midwifery: Most patients know that nurses, midwives, and health care support workers are there to help them, but they may not fully understand the jobs they do. Raising the profile of nursing will help more people understand its contribution to improving the nation's health. The Foundation funds projects that increase the public profile of nursing.

## Process of review for Project grants

The Foundation opens calls for project grant applications for specific priority themes.

Grant Reviewers contacted at the opening of a call and asked if they are available to review applications, within a two/three-week timeframe.

Applications will be sent electronically to Grant Reviewers by the Grants Manager following the closing date, along with criteria and guidance. In addition, a deadline for feedback will be given, all feedback will be received electronically.

If participating in interviews, the time commitment will be one day. All interviews will be undertaken virtually, using Microsoft Teams.

## Project Grant Eligibility

The following organisations are eligible to apply for a grant:

- Registered charities
- NHS Trusts or equivalent
- Health and social care organisations
- Higher Education Institutions



The Foundation is able to fund organisations that are not charities as long as the funded activity furthers its purposes.

When funding non-charities the Foundation:

- will take reasonable steps to assess risks and carry out appropriate checks on the organisation to ensure that it is a suitable organisation for the Foundation to work with
- write appropriate terms and conditions to ensure that the grant can only be used in line with the Foundation's purposes, and ensure that the organisation understands and accepts them
- put appropriate monitoring arrangements in place

### Exclusions

The trustees will not normally support grant requests which are:

- for purposes for which the government has statutory responsibility
- from government departments or those national organisations working directly for or with government unless the grant will directly fund a project or programme that meets the priorities of the RCN Foundation and is delivered by an individual or organisation that meets the eligibility criteria
- from organisations whose purposes are at odds with those of the Foundation
- for general appeals, fundraising appeals or marketing appeals
- grant applications that are unable to provide five measurable objectives agreed at the beginning of the funding period as part of the grant agreement are ineligible. This is because the Foundation needs to ensure its resources are used solely to further Charitable Objects.

## 4. Our purpose

The RCN Foundation is committed to supporting and strengthening nursing to improve the health and wellbeing of the public. We achieve our purpose in three different ways:

- we **support** individual members of the nursing team by making grants for hardship and education
- we **invest** in the nursing profession to improve patient care by funding nursing-led projects in our priority areas
- we **champion** nursing through activities that raise the profile of the profession and strengthen public understanding of its contribution to improving the nation's health

## 5. Our values

- be relevant for today and ready for tomorrow
- be focused on impact
- be accountable
- be ambitious
- be collaborative