



Attachment 1

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA – GRANT APPLICATIONS

AOA Research Foundation Advisory Committee assessment of any research proposal is based on three core criteria:

- **Importance:** how important are the questions, or gaps in knowledge, that being addressed?
- **Scientific potential:** what are the prospects for good scientific progress?
- **Resources:** are the funds requested essential for the work, and do the importance and scientific potential justify funding on the scale requested?

In giving a written report on this proposal, the following questions should be considered:

1. Importance

- Is research in this area needed?
- How important are the questions, or gaps in knowledge, that are being addressed? Is there a good rationale for pursuing these? Is success likely to lead to significant new understanding?
- Does the proposal realistically set out the ultimate potential benefits with respect to improving human health?
- How important it is to do the work now?
- Is there similar or complementary research underway elsewhere? Are the proposals competitive?

2. Scientific potential

2.1 Environment and People

- The individual or group will have provided details of either recent research in their laboratory or work produced under a previous grant. Has the individual or group established a high quality track record in the field?
- Are the applicants uniquely placed to deliver the work?
- Where the proposal embarks on work in a field new to the applicants, or is a first funding application, is there a firm foundation to take the work forward?
- How well does the work fit with other relevant research pursued by the applicants?
- Has the host institution demonstrated a commitment to supporting the Guideline for Grant Assessment?
- Does this project lead to a career development in research for an orthopaedic surgeon?

2.2 Research plans

- How innovative are the proposals?
- Are the experimental plans realistic, given the aims of the research and the resources?
- Are the methods and study designs clear and of the highest standard?
- Have major scientific, technical or organisational challenges been identified, and will they be tackled well?
- In the case of grants for pilot or proof of principle work, how will the work be developed and how feasible are the subsequent proposals?



Attachment 1

3. Justification of resources requested

- Is the number of staff appropriate for the work described, and are the reasons for purchasing major items of equipment clearly set out?
- The AOARF does consider funding for a research assistant but not for the principal researcher or researchers who are salaried employees of the research institution.
- Consideration can be given for a young orthopaedic surgeon or new investigator, where involvement in the research might encourage a career in research.
- Cost of equipment and disposables necessary for the research should be based on firm quotations from suppliers. In general principle, funding will not be provided for standard equipment which should be readily available at any research institute.
- The AOARF grants do not provide for any administrative charges to an administering institution.

4. Ethical and other implications

- Is the work ethically acceptable?
- Are there any ethical issues that need separate consideration?
- Are the ethical review and research governance arrangements clear and acceptable?

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA AND SCORING

1. Scientific Merit and feasibility of the proposed study: 10 points

- Clarity of purpose (process and outcomes)
 - Near-flawless design
 - Accomplishable in reasonable time
 - No ethical issues

2. Impact: 10 points

- Relevance to musculoskeletal disease:
 - Importance of issue being addressed
 - Translation into important outcomes likely to impact on science and the practice of musculoskeletal medicine.
 - Should lead to publications in journals
 - Should be subject of invited presentations
 - Lead to further research in the specific field

3. Track record of the applicant or research team: 10 points

- Independence
- Leadership
- Grants/awards
- Invited presentations
- Publications
- Patents
- Books