# Research grants in open competition

**APPLICATION GUIDE**

**2024**

Let's pave the way for curing skin diseases

**LEO FOUNDATION**

# Contents

LEO FOUNDATION

# 2024 calls

**Research grants in open competition**

**Call 1:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Opens: | 20 November 2023 |
| Deadline: | 08 January 2024 (16:00 CET) |
| Earliest grant start date: | 01 June 2024 |

**Call 2:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Opens: | 19 February 2024 |
| Deadline: | 02 April 2024 (16:00 CET) |
| Earliest grant start date: | 01 September 2024 |

**Call 3:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Opens: | 01 August 2024 |
| Deadline: | 12 September 2024 (16:00 CET) |
| Earliest grant start date: | 01 February 2025 |

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**Further information**:
www.leo-foundation.org/en/grants-and-awards/research-grants/

# 1. Research grants in open competition 2024

This guide is meant to assist applicants in addressing the essential steps when applying for Research grants in open competition at the LEO Foundation.

Section one describes the overall aspects, e.g., supported research areas, eligibility, and funding. Section two describes requirement for the content of the application and the application process. Section three describes the evaluation process.

## Supported areas of research

LEO Foundation research grants are open competition grants given to support the best dermatology research projects worldwide.

> We welcome applications for research projects that improve the understanding of skin biology as well as the underlying medicinal, biological, chemical, or pharmacological mechanisms of dermatological diseases and their symptoms.
>
> We also welcome applications for projects that address clinical issues among people who are at risk of developing, or have developed, a skin disease, including how it impacts their quality of life and the societal costs involved.

The Foundation does not support:
- Projects on skin cancer (e.g., melanoma, CTCL, BCC and SCC), at present. However, research on skin cancer models may be permitted if used as tools to investigate other aspects of skin or skin diseases.
- Research projects involving commercial companies.
- Research projects involving commercial drug testing.
- Clinical trials and register-based studies testing medical compounds.

## Eligibility - who can apply?

Any researcher who has obtained at least a PhD degree or equivalent academic qualifications may apply.

The applicant must be affiliated with a university, hospital, or other non-profit organization.

The LEO Foundation welcomes applicants from anywhere in the world.

> **IMPORTANT NOTES:**
>
> - Only one application per call may be submitted from any applicant. If more are submitted only the first may be accepted for evaluation. The rest will be administratively rejected.
>
> - An application can only have one main applicant and one host organization to which all funding will be paid out. If an application involves collaboration(s) which require redistribution of funds such redistribution is the responsibility of the main applicant along with his or her host organization.
>
> - A grantee can only hold one active grant from the LEO Foundation at any given time. Additional funding for other projects or continuations may be submitted within the last year of the grant period of the active grant but cannot be initiated before the existing grant has ended.
>
> - Please note that you are only allowed one resubmission of any application previously reviewed. If your application has been previously submitted (partly or in full) to the LEO Foundation, you should describe all relevant changes made from the previous version in a cover letter uploaded along with the mandatory attachments.

We recommend that you **read the <u>Grant Terms</u> carefully** to ensure that you and your host organization can comply with the conditions set forth herein.

## Funding

The typical amount approved for funding of a research grant is DKK 2-4 million. The following types of expenses are covered:

- Salary and mandatory benefits for employees including main applicant (see note below on salary justification)
- Running costs / operating expenses incl bench fees
- Equipment
- Publication costs
- Travel and conference expenses
- Tuition fees for PhD students
- Administrative costs up to 5%

Costs NOT covered include: Salary for student workers, graduates and undergraduates (i.e., below PhD student level).

*NOTE ON SALARIES:* The LEO Foundation will not support "double salary" – i.e., salary that is already covered by existing base salary or any other funding. In particular, if salary is requested for an existing full-time employee this will need to be accompanied by an explanation as to why this is necessary and what exactly it covers (e.g., "Host organization requests that 30% of base salary plus mandatory fringe benefits for main applicant must be covered by external funding"). Please use the "Salary for existing full-time employee(s) justification" field for such purpose (See also Section 5, page 9 - under "Detailed budget").

PLEASE NOTE (relevant for applicants affiliated with a DANISH university):
For call 1 2024, all applicants can apply for up to 5% administrative costs.

From call 2 2024: The LEO Foundation is one of six foundations that recently entered into an agreement with Universities Denmark concerning co- funding of the universities' indirect costs associated with external grants. The agreement is set to be implemented in 2024, pending ongoing collaborations between the universities and foundations on guidelines and implementation details. Applicants affiliated with a Danish university are expected to be able to include the agreed supplement of DKK 250,000 ('wet' research)/DKK 200,000('dry' research) per eligible scientific employee in their budget from call 2 in 2024. Should this be the case, the relevant section of the Application Guide will be updated before the call for round 2 opens on 19 February 2024. Applicants not affiliated with a Danish university will still be able to apply for up to 5% administrative costs.

# 2. How to apply

### User registration
The LEO Foundation's online application and grant management system, LEOnora, can be accessed here: https://leo-foundation.smartsimple.ie/s_Login.jsp

If you access the system for the first time you will need to create a user account. Upon initial registration you will receive an email with an activation link which must be activated within two hours to confirm your account. In case you exceed this limit, you may request a new from the "Forgot password"-link. If you are a returning user, simply log in with your existing credentials. Your password will need renewal every 90 days.

### Completing your profile
Once logged in you will need to complete all mandatory fields of your user account profile before you can create applications for any open calls. In addition to the mandatory fields, we recommend that you add your academic or business title under "Job title". Your profile can be accessed by clicking the circle with your Initials in the top right corner of the dashboard.

### Creating an application
First, you will need to identify the correct call. Current calls (recently closed, active and coming) can be found in the list at the bottom of your dashboard when logged in but only the active can be accessed. Some calls may include a very short eligibility quiz. You create a draft application for an active call by pressing "Apply Now" for that call. Once created, you can edit your application and save changes at any time until the submission deadline for the related call.

NOTE: Remember to press "Save draft" to save any changes.

### Language
Your application including all attachments must be in English.

## Application form and required content

The application form consists of several sub-sections (tabs) which are explained in detail below. For most fields there are guidance and/or tooltips available within the system. If you experience any problems, feel free to contact the LEO Foundation at applications@leo-foundation.org

Please note that the text fields only accept plain text formatting. Any rich text formatting being copied will be lost.

### 1. Applicant details
This tab is partly auto-populated from the user account profile. Optionally, you can indicate your nationality.

### 2. Project information
This tab includes information on project title, proposed start and end dates of the project and categorization of the project.

- Project title: A short, concise title for the proposed work.

- Proposed start and end dates: A grant cannot start before "Earliest grant start date" indicated on Page 2 of this guide for the relevant call. It is recommended that this is at least four (4) months after the application deadline to ensure enough time for processing. The actual start and end dates will be agreed upon if the application is approved for funding.

- Project type: This is the overall type of project. Please select the most appropriate category as you can only select one. If "Other" is chosen, please specify in the accompanying field, which will appear if selected.

- Primary and Secondary Research Area: The first field will select the primary research area which will trigger the available options for the secondary research area. Thus, if you cannot find a relevant secondary research area it may be available under another primary research area. If not available, please select "Other" and specify in the accompanying field. These selection lists may vary from call to call. The current list of categories and subdivisions can be found on the following page.

### Project types:

1. Basic research
2. Translational research
3. Clinical research
4. Epidemiological research
5. Technology development
6. Other

## Primary and secondary research areas:

### 1. Autoimmune skin diseases and connective tissue diseases

**a.** Autoimmune bullous diseases
**b.** Alopecia areata
**c.** Vitiligo
**d.** Connective tissue diseases incl. lupus erythomatosus and scleroderma
**e.** Wounds
**f.** Fibrosis, Keloids, and hypertrophic scars
**g.** Other

### 2. Eczemas and urticaria

**a.** Atopic dermatitis
**b.** Contact dermatitis
**c.** Urticaria and angioedema
**d.** Other

### 3. Psoriasis and related diseases

**a.** Psoriasis Vulgaris
**b.** Psoriasis (other forms)
**c.** Erythodermia
**d.** Lichen planus and Lichenoid reactions
**e.** Other

### 4. Skin infections and infestations

**a.** Bacterial infections
**b.** Viral infection
**c.** Fungal infections
**d.** Diseases caused by arthropods and other noxious animals
**e.** Other

### 5. Genetic skin diseases

**a.** Genetic blistering diseases
**b.** Ichthyoses
**c.** Darier's Disease (Keratosis follicularis)
**d.** Other

### 6. Diseases of skin appendages (or specific cutaneous structures)

**a.** Acne
**b.** Rosacea and peroral dermatitis
**c.** Hidradenitis Suppurativa
**d.** Pigmentation
**e.** Hair
**f.** Nails
**g.** Other

### 7. Rare diseases

**a.** Epidermolysis bullosa
**b.** Other

### 8. Other skin diseases

**a.** Stevens-Johnson Syndrome/Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis
**b.** Other

### 9. Basic dermatological research

**a.** Skin genetics
**b.** Skin immunology
**c.** Skin molecular biology
**d.** Skin Pharmacology
**e.** Skin microbiome
**f.** Skin epidemiology
**g.** Technology development
**h.** Other

**3. Project details**
- Abstract (max 1,500 characters): Please provide an easy-to-read synopsis (layman's terms) of the project suitable for publication on, e.g., the LEO Foundation home page, LinkedIn or other social media. It should not contain any confidential or IP-related information.

- Background (max 2,500 characters): Please provide relevant background information, e.g., previous work done in the field and how the current proposal adds to this, hypothesis, aims etc.

- This tab is partly auto-populated from the user account profile. Optionally, you can indicate your nationality.

- Project Strategy and Approach (max 12,000 characters): This is the main section of the application where you outline your project plan, e.g., experiments to be performed, analyses to be made, methodology to be used, statistics, deliverables etc.

- Project References (max 5,000 characters): Please list all publications referenced in the proposal. Preferably with direct links to, e.g., PubMed or another online resource.

- Project Team Environment and Resources (max 1,500 characters): Please describe the competencies of the project group and the research environment in form of accessibility to essential infrastructure, relevant host organization support etc.

- Project Significance and Impact (max 1,500 characters): Please provide your vision on how the project may make a significant contribution to the field of research, how it may be used for developing better treatments or other relevant impact measures.

**3A. Appendices**
Please only include the attachments listed below:

**Mandatory attachments (use PDF format):**
- **Short CV** (max two pages) for main applicant incl. educational and career information as well as total number of scientific peer-reviewed publications. Preferably also including an h-index and total number of citations (Scopus).

- **One-page specification of the main applicant's 10 most important publications** (with direct links and relevant author(s) underlined). If less than 10 then list all.

- **A high-level overview of current external funding** for the main applicant incl. funder, title, and amount.

- **If your application is a resubmission**: Please upload a cover letter describing all relevant changes compared to the first application, for the benefit of our Scientific Evaluation Committee.

**Other attachments (use PDF or JPG/PNG format)**:
- Project illustrations: You may upload up to 4 illustrations to support your project description. Use the upload field for PDF files or the Image Upload Field for JPG or PNG formats. Please check the PDF of your application afterwards to ensure sufficiently high resolution for proper evaluation. Please add figure number and legend or caption to each figure.

Uploaded material other than the above documents will be disregarded in the evaluation.

**4. Project participants (other than the main applicant)**

- Co-applicants: All active participants, other than the main applicant, who will be benefiting directly from the funding must be listed. A one-page mandatory CV must be uploadedas a PDF file under"Co-applicant CV" for everyone listed. NB: the main applicant's CV is uploaded in the Project Details tab, cf. section 3A above.

- Project affiliations: Should include all contributing project partners not benefiting directly from the grant. Not mandatory and should only be included if relevant for the application.

**5. Requested budget**

***Detailed budget***: Here, you specify details of the budget for the proposed work including budget year, type (e.g., salary, equipment, travel, publication etc.), requested amount (in DKK), actual or potential funding source (e.g., LEO Foundation, host organization, other funder etc.) and a brief, high level description (max 1,000 characters including spaces) of the individual budget posts. Once you close the pop-up form remember to press "Save Draft" to ensure that the main budget page is updated. Remember to add only direct costs as the selected percentage for administration costs (up to 5%) is added automatically.

*Note on salaries:* The Foundation will not support salary posts that are already covered by existing base salary or any other funding. In particular, if salary for PIs or co-applicants at the level of Assistant Professor or higher are requested these will need to be accompanied by an explanation as to why these posts are necessary and what exactly they cover (e.g., simply stating "fringe" or "benefits" is not acceptable). Please use the "Salary for existing full-time employee(s) justification" field for such purpose.

***Additional information:*** Here, you specify if you would like to request overhead (up to 5%), add information on the total number of people to receive salary from the LEO Foundation during the project and add an estimate of the average annual full-time equivalents (FTE) for the project – e.g., if a postdoc works 100% and a technician works 50% on the project you should add 1.5 in this field. Remember to press "Save draft" again after specifying overhead to update the budget calculations. The "Salary for existing full-time employees" should be used to explain why salary is requested for this group as they are assumed to be paid already by funding from elsewhere.

**6. Host approval and grant terms**

Here, you acknowledge that your host organization approves that the project can be performed there and that you have read and understood the current Grant Terms.

## Submitting the application

Once you have completed your application you can submit it by pressing "Submit". We strongly encourage you to check the generated PDF before submitting to ensure that all sections are readable and that all mandatory elements are included.

Please note that if any mandatory elements are missing you will not be able to submit and you will be presented with a list of outstanding points to address.

Remember that correcting the missing elements may take time so we recommend that you initiate and complete your application well in advance of the application deadline. You will be notified by email if there are changes requested to your application or any decision has been made.
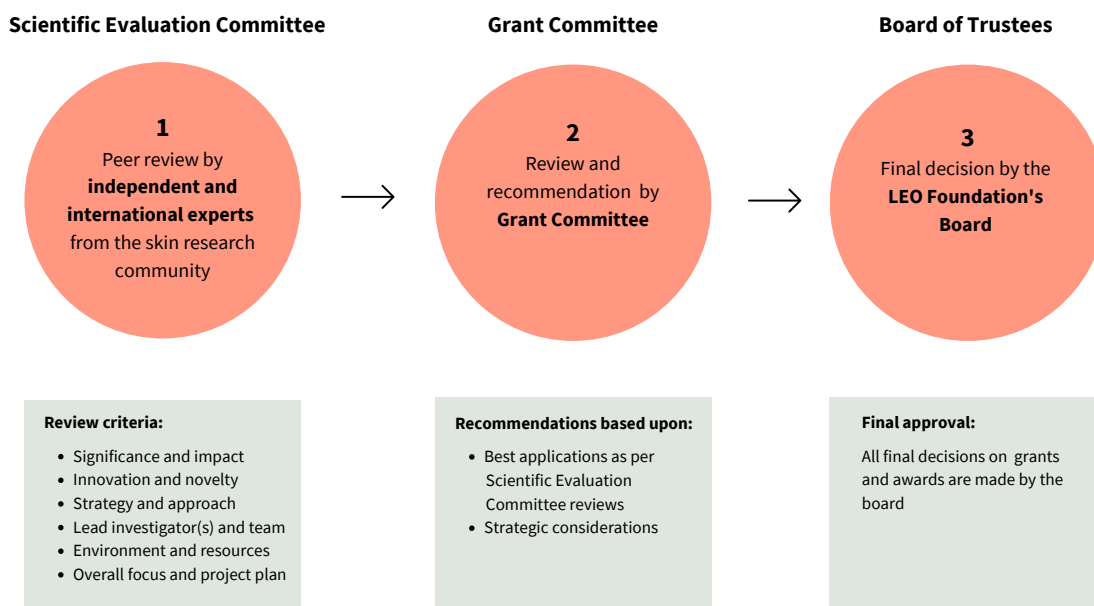
# 3. Evaluation criteria and process

After the call deadline, the LEO Foundation screens your application for formal requirements and, if approved, sends it to an independent expert committee for scientific peer review.

The LEO Foundation Scientific Evaluation Committee  reviews your application according to the following criteria:
- Significance and impact
- Innovation and novelty
- Strategy and approach
- Lead investigator(s) and team
- Environment and resources
- Overall focus and project plan

The result of the external review is evaluated by the LEO Foundation Grant Committee. Their recommendation is presented to the LEO Foundation's Board of Trustees who makes the final funding decision, cf. below.

**Scientific Evaluation Committee**          **Grant Committee**          **Board of Trustees**

**1**
Peer review by **independent and international experts** from the skin research community

→

**2**
Review and recommendation  by **Grant Committee**

→

**3**
Final decision by the **LEO Foundation's Board**

**Review criteria:**
- Significance and impact
- Innovation and novelty
- Strategy and approach
- Lead investigator(s) and team
- Environment and resources
- Overall focus and project plan

**Recommendations based upon:**
- Best applications as per Scientific Evaluation Committee reviews
- Strategic considerations

**Final approval:**
All final decisions on  grants and awards are made by the board

All applicants are informed of the Board's decision through the online application and grant management portal, approximately three months after the application deadline. No additional feedback is provided for non-funded projects.

**The LEO Foundation** is one of the largest private funders globally of independent skin research. The Foundation provides philanthropic grants with the aim to support the best international research in skin diseases and make Denmark a global beacon for skin research.

Over the past decade, the LEO Foundation has supported independent skin research with more than EUR 155 million.

www.leo-foundation.org

**LEO FOUNDATION**

Let's pave the way for curing skin diseases