FJL Grants

Application guidelines

Important dates:

- **December:** Announcement of the call on the website.
- **January:** Opening of the online application system. Specific date will be announced on the website.
- **February:** Deadline for submission. Specific date will be announced on the website.
- **March:** Eligibility check.
- **April:** Evaluation of applications by members of the Scientific Advisory Board.
- **May:** Selection of successful applications by the Scientific Advisory Board.
- **June:** Communication of results to the applicants.

Electronic application submission

Applications should be submitted through our online management system.

Please follow the link **APPLY NOW FOR A GRANT** on our website.

Contacts

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Aim and scope

The Fondation Jérôme Lejeune (FJL) initiates, develops and finances fundamental, translational and clinical research programs in Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities of genetic origin with early onset. The Fondation supports innovative research that will deepen our understanding of these disorders and that can advance the discovery and development of therapies and treatments. Likewise, we sponsor research on pathologies associated with Down syndrome that are also present in the general population (e.g. cardiopathies, leukaemia, sleep apnoea, Alzheimer's disease). This strategy, which we termed research on cross-pathologies/co-occurrent diseases, enables to pool efforts, cross-reference results and develop molecules for the benefit of several therapeutic targets.

Research topics supported

Research proposals must fall within the priority research areas defined by the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune strategic plan.

The **2024 Spring call for FJL Grants** is aiming at supporting fundamental, translational and clinical research programs **related to Down syndrome** and **other intellectual disabilities of genetic origin** with early onset such as Fragile-X syndrome, Rett syndrome, Smith-Magenis syndrome, Cri du chat syndrome, Williams-Beuren syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, Angelman syndrome, among others.

Autism not linked to the above diseases is excluded from this call.

Only research projects focusing on the above topic will be considered for funding.

Duration and Funding

1) Grants are awarded for 12 or 24 months to carry out the research program.

2) We offer two types of schemes:
    a. Pilot or exploratory grants for early stage research projects for a maximum amount of 50.000 €.
    b. Advanced grants for research projects that have some preliminary data for a maximum amount of 80.000 €.

3) Payments are made in two instalments to the host institution:
    a. An initial payment (50% of the grant amount) is made when the financing agreement is signed.
    b. A second payment (50% of the grant amount) is made at 12 months, following the reception of an intermediate report (see terms and conditions below) and positive review from the evaluators.
    c. Grant payment for research programs that last 12 months, are made in full when the financing agreement is signed.

4) Research programs must **start no later than six months** after the announcement of the results.

5) The Grants are intended to cover the cost of installation, consumables, equipment, scientific communication (conferences, publications) and salaries. The request to fund salaries must be less or equal to 50% of the total amount of the grant. The grant does not cover salary for the principal investigator. **Administrative costs/overheads must be ≤ to 8%** of the total amount of the grant.

Eligibility

- Principal investigators of any nationality and who hold a long-term appointment within an academic institution (e.g. university, hospital, research centre). Principal investigators cannot be on a postdoctoral contract when applying.
- Applicants must hold a PhD, MD, PsyD or equivalent degree at the moment of the application.
- Applicants should demonstrate that they have the scientific or medical expertise required to conduct the project, or else that appropriate collaborations are in place.
- Applicants must demonstrate an excellent track record and submit an outstanding proposal.
- Applicants must not have an ongoing Grant from the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. However, applicants with a Grant in its final stage (i.e. they have submitted the final report) are allowed to apply provided their previous work has received a favourable evaluation.
- Applicants are permitted only one application per call.
- Only one submission per research team is allowed.
- The request should fall within the topic of the call.
- Funded researchers must agree to the possible visit by a Fondation Jérôme Lejeune representative for observation and progress assessment.

Application process

Applications for a Grant are accepted via the FJL online management system.

The application deadlines will be announced on the website mid-December. The online application system will open mid-January. Applicants need to register for an FJL online application account. Once the registration email has been received, applicants can start an application.

Applications must be written in English and follow the formatting and structure outlined below.

Complete applications will be evaluated between April and May and results will be announced in June.

Structure of the project file

Formatting:

- Maximum 10 pages including figures. Ethical Statements and References do not count on the page limit.
- Font: Arial, 10
- Line spacing: single spaced.
- Page: A4 and all margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least 15 mm.
- Include a header with the applicant's last name.
- Format: PDF

A template is available in the online application system and on the website:

https://www.research.fondationlejeune.org/call-for-projets/

Content:

Note: All points apply to both clinical and fundamental projects.

1- **Project title.**

2- **General presentation.** Including scientific/clinical background, state of the art and rationale of proposed work.

3- **Overall aim and key objectives.**

4- **Preliminary results and/or relevant published data on which the work is based.**

Research methodology and approach. Including experimental methods, techniques and statistical analyses to be used.

- **Describe and justify the choice of animal model:** Numerous animal models are available for studying Down syndrome. Almost all of these models are partial models of trisomy 21, and do not reproduce the gene overdose of all genes homologous to those carried by chromosome 21. Even in trans-chromosomal models, the integrity of chromosome 21 is not preserved. It is therefore essential to choose the right model for the proposed study, and to be able to justify this choice scientifically in a research project, especially if the model presents other genetic abnormalities that are not relevant to trisomy 21. The use of several models should be considered to strengthen the validation of a hypothesis.

  When applicable, human cells/tissue sampling procedures and description of patient cohorts, recruitment procedures and accessibility must be included (clinical research protocol).

5- **Originality and innovative character.**

6- **Expected results, impact in the field and potential therapeutic/clinical applications.**

7- **Work plan/time schedule.** A Gantt chart should be included.

8- **Team description, collaborations and feasibility of the work.** We recommend using a table format as shown hereafter for team description and collaborations.

Last name	First name	Current position	Role & responsibilities in the project	Involvement duration (in months).
e.g. Karr	*Axel*	*technician*	*Behaviour; Management of mouse colonies*	*24*

9- **Ethical statement.** Please write a maximum ½ page indicating the ethical aspects of the proposed work (e.g. work on animal models and/or human subjects) and a statement of compliance with all applicable international, national, and/or institutional standards. *Please note that in the case your application gets funded, you might be requested to provide the corresponding documentation (e.g. legal authorizations for work with animal models, final approved protocol for work that includes human subjects).*

10- **References.** Use a full citation style for all the references. Please highlight team publications and include DOI or active PubMed links for the team publications only.

Evaluation and selection process

The most important evaluation criteria applied by the Scientific Advisory Board of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune are scientific/medical relevance of the project and excellence of the principal investigator.

Applications will initially be checked to ensure that they meet the all eligibility criteria. Applications not meeting the eligibility criteria will be rejected at this time.

The Scientific Advisory Board will evaluate, rank and select the projects to be financed. Selection will be primarily on:

- The project's scientific/medical excellence, novelty, feasibility, biological significance and potential impact on clinical or therapeutic applications.
- Applicant's CV and demonstrated capacity to lead the project.
- Preliminary results for advanced projects.

The Board of Directors of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune will take the final decision based upon the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Board.

Terms and conditions

Financing terms

- Funding duration: 12 or 24 months.
- The starting date of the grant must be no later than 6 months after the announcement of the results.

Reporting

Principal investigators commit to submit a scientific and financial report at 12 months into the grant period (intermediate report). A final report is due upon completion of the project, including all relevant outcomes (publications, patents, etc.).

Commitments

Applicants agree to the following principles:

1. That none of the research work in the above-mentioned research project uses human embryos, human embryonic stem cells, human tissues, human cells obtained as a result of human abortion or human *in vitro* fertilization, or any other biological material of embryonic or foetal origin, especially when using gene libraries.

2. That no research, within the framework of this research project:

- genetically modifies gametes or cells from the human germline;
- creates human gametes, human embryos, human embryonic development models, synthetic embryos (in particular embryoids, blastoids, perigastruloids, synthetic embryos, or any other entity created with or without fertilization and having embryonic characteristics), human embryos modified by the addition of pluripotent animal cells, animal embryos modified by the addition of human pluripotent cells whatever the technique used;
- involves human cloning techniques.

3. To use or make use in the research work of this research project, alternatives to human embryonic stem cells and alternatives to the human embryo.

4. That the results of the work carried out as part of the research project are not published in a scientific publication with the results of work outside the research project which does not comply with the provisions of the present article.

5. Not to resort to one or more co-financing sources to carry out, within the framework of this research project, work contrary to the provisions of the present article.

In the absence of an alternative of comparable efficacy and subject to the prior agreement of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune, the use of the HEK 293 cell line is permitted within the framework of the research work of this Research Project. The use of this line is however left to the discretion of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune.

- Within the statutory framework of its recognized public utility purpose, the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune defends life from conception to natural death. This is why the present clause is an essential obligation of the Agreement. Its violation will lead to the immediate termination of the Agreement and the restitution of all the sums paid by the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. Researchers must adhere to the highest standards of research practice and integrity and follow academic, national and international standards of Good Scientific Practice (GSP), Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) and/or Good Clinical Practice (GCP). Research Project must be carried out in accordance with all the legal, health and safety, ethical and regulatory requirements relevant to the field.
- For research involving human subjects and/or model organisms, all ethical approvals and licences required to carry out the research must be obtained prior to the commencement of the study and must be in place throughout the research.
  When research involves human subjects, researchers are obliged to protect the rights, interests and safety of research participants.

GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)

- In the scope of its research mission related to genetic intellectual disabilities, the Jerome Lejeune Foundation, as data controller, collects the personal data from the researchers who are applying. The data or information highlighted by an asterisk are mandatory for the processing of your application. The other data or information are optional and will be used, when provided by the applicant, for the production of our internal statistics. Other data related to the applicant and available from the public domain (for instance references of scientific publications) may be collected as well by the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune.
- The processing of personal data from researchers is performed for the legitimate purpose of supporting the evaluation of the application and the selection of the candidates, the management of the relationship with applicants and successful candidates, as well as the promotion of the research projects and of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune.
- We do not transmit the personal data from researchers to any recipient other than the members of the staff of the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune in charge of the management of the research projects, or the members of the Scientific Committee, or our partner in charge of the maintenance of the IT application and working under a GDPR compliant contract.
- The data is stored for the duration of the research project. Then, they are archived, restricted to the minimum information required for long term retention for internal statistics use, and access is restricted only to the administrator from the Fondation Jérôme Lejeune. Your account is also inactivated unless other applications are still in progress.
- Some of your personal data might be processed by international organisations. These data transfer relies on European Commission adequacy decisions (https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-topic/data-protection/international-dimension-data-protection/adequacy-decisions_en) or on adopted Standard Contractuals Clauses adopted by European Commission (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2021/914/oj?hl=en_US).
- Data processing does not involve the existence of automated decision-making, including profiling.
- If you are a researcher concerned by the processing of your data, you can at any time exercise your right to object to it, or your right to ask for its restriction. You can also exercise a right of access, a right to rectification or to erasure of your data. For any request please contact us at the email address dpo@fondationjeune.org.
- You also have the right to lodge a complaint with the data protection supervisory authority from the country where you are established. Please consult the web site https://edpb.europa.eu to find more information about your supervisory authority.