

2011 Criteria

BAP In vivo short-term training project funds

Addressing the in vivo skills shortage in UK – focus on Psychopharmacology

The British Association for Psychopharmacology (BAP) is committed to promoting and encouraging research in both preclinical and clinical psychopharmacology. Following the investigation led by the ABPI and the BSF highlighting the shortage of in vivo skills in the UK, it was discussed on BAP council and by the in vivo preclinical working group to identify schemes to facilitate the training of in vivo skills in UK institutions. Given the benefits to the stakeholders, mainly the Pharmaceutical sector, this proposal seeks to invest BAP reserve funds to train young psychopharmacologists to conduct *in vivo* psychopharmacological research in the UK.

The funding will be directed at undergraduate students to support mainly the animal purchase and maintenance costs towards their projects and home office licence fees. BAP are particularly keen to support summer vacation project students. Following the review by the BAP in vivo preclinical working group on existing training and funding for *in vivo* projects by learned societies, this expenditure was considered to impact on supervisors offering *in vivo* projects in the field of psychopharmacology. The other cost is the license fee; supervisors having to pay additional costs to cover a 3-6 month project student.

Proposal

To support the training of in vivo research projects at a pre-doctoral level to encourage more students to gain experience and facilitate their progression into *in vivo*-based PhDs or into industry. A limited number of project awards will be offered to the project supervisor to cover the majority of running costs; up to £500 towards animal maintenance fees in addition to subsidised animal purchase costs.

Nature of funding

For the second year of this scheme, the BAP will provide up to £8,000 in 2010 towards this initiative, supporting up to eight students in summer vacation projects. In this way BAP is not “replacing” government funding but is adding to it to produce a better-resourced in-vivo training project. BAP would look most favourably on applications from institutions that guarantee a commitment to match the level of BAP funding for project students.

The in vivo preclinical working group have negotiated with a major animal supplier, Harlan UK, supplying rodents at a reduced/subsidised cost. Harlan have agreed in writing to supply rodents (rats and mice) for these projects at a much reduced cost of 50% reduction. The reduced animal purchase costs will be in addition to the £500 from the BAP which will be used for home office licence fees and animal housing costs.

Application criteria

1. Potential supervisors will be invited to submit their research proposal (400 word abstract) with full title and estimated costs of project expenditure, and total number of rodents required. The supervisors will also be asked to submit their CV with 5 most recent publications.
2. Supervisors should have a named project student.
3. Supervisors must have a good track record of supervising undergraduate and postgraduates within a recognised degree at a UK Institution and must be BAP members.
4. Supervisors should ensure their students have attended the necessary training modules to hold a personal licence and acquire this using the BAP funds.
5. Priority will be given to applicants who demonstrate a strong commitment to presenting the undergraduate work at the BAP summer meeting and have a track record of this.
6. Priority will be given to applicants who demonstrate access to other supporting funds in the form of a summer vacation scholarship and/or commitment of matched funding from the host institution.
7. Application deadline will be 1st May 2011. Applicants will be informed about the outcome of their application by 1st June 2011.

Project criteria

1. The project must be one that involves whole animals (in vivo) and fits within the remit of the BAP - to advance research in the science of psychopharmacology. Applicants must be in the UK or ROI.
2. Projects should have a psychopharmacology theme and include a strong component of in vivo training.
3. Projects on neurological disorders (e.g Huntington's & Parkinson's disease) and pain systems will also be considered as long as in vivo approaches are utilised.
4. Projects on animal welfare issues will also be welcome.

Project funds

Projects will be funded up to a total of £500. The funds on offer are to be specifically used for animal maintenance costs, consumables and Home office personal licence fees. Payment of the funds will be made directly to the University or Institution.

Selection criteria

Submissions will be assessed competitively by a BAP in-vivo training panel. The Panel will be convened by the Pre-clinical External Affairs Secretary and comprise a minimum of 4 members taken from the Pre-clinical Working Group and Council, excluding any with a conflict of interest (i.e. applicants/supervisors or coming from the same institution as the applicant). If necessary, further panel members could be invited from the non-clinical BAP membership. Assessment will be made

according to the scientific quality of the proposal, the in vivo training element of the project and commitment to presenting the findings at BAP, with priority given to proposals as outlined above. Successful projects, students and supervisors will be listed in the BAP Newsletter.

Recipients of the BAP project funds will be expected to submit their findings in the form of an abstract to present a poster or oral communication at the BAP annual summer meeting. A final report (approx 500 words) will be required from the funded supervisor to provide feedback to the BAP to evaluate the success of this initiative.

*The selection process will be monitored retrospectively by the President (or non-clinical President-Elect) and the Executive Officer of BAP to ensure good practice.

(Mohammed Shoaib, Jo Neill, Katie Hewitt, amended 2011)