

National Eczema Society PhD Studentship Grant Application 2025/2026

Section 1: Project Title and Principal Investigator/s & Co-Investigator/s*

Project Title: [Concise and informative]

Lead Investigator: [Name, position, institution]

Department: [Department name]

Email Address: [Contact email]

Phone Number: [Contact number]

**Add additional Co-/PIs as needed.*

Name of Proposed PhD Candidate (if known) *:

**If named candidate, please supply a reference letter and upload with application.*

Section 2: Lay Summary of Proposed Studentship & Graphical Abstract* (Max 300 words)

Provide a plain-English summary of the proposed PhD project. This should be written for a non-specialist audience and avoid technical jargon. Please include:

- **Background:** A short introduction to the problem and why it matters.
- **Aims:** What the project is trying to achieve.
- **Relevance to eczema:** How the research relates to eczema and why it is important.
- **Anticipated impact:** What difference the findings could make for people with eczema, their carers, or health services.

The summary should be clear, engaging, and understandable to people without a scientific background (e.g., patients, carers, members of the public).

Graphical Abstract (Optional but Encouraged):

You may also include a simple visual that communicates the core idea, study design, or potential impact of your project. This could be a diagram, infographic, or schematic. The image should be clearly labelled and uploaded at the end of the application as a separate PNG, JPEG, or PDF file (maximum two pages).

Graphs, charts, and images should be prepared in a clear and accessible format. Please ensure:

- Minimum resolution of 300 dpi (suitable for screen and print).
- All text and labels are legible at standard viewing size.
- Colours are chosen with accessibility in mind (e.g., avoid red/green combinations that may be difficult for colour-blind readers; consider using patterns, textures, or symbols in addition to colour).
- Where appropriate, provide a short descriptive caption so that visuals are understandable without specialist knowledge.

Section 3: Research Objectives and Rationale (Max 300 words)

Clearly state the overall aims of the project and explain why the topic is important for people with eczema, carers, and health services.

Please include:

- A brief summary of any existing evidence, pilot data, or preliminary findings that support the proposed work.
- A concise set of numbered or bullet-pointed objectives, written in a way that is specific, measurable, and achievable.

This section should help reviewers quickly understand the rationale for the project and the key research questions the studentship will address.

Section 4: Methods (Max 1000 words)

Please provide a clear description of the methods, including:

- **Design:** Describe the proposed study type(s) and overall structure. Outline any anticipated ethical considerations and approvals required.
- **Population and Sampling:** Specify the target group, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and sampling strategy. Please also explain how diverse eczema

populations (e.g., skin of colour, socio-economic background, age) will be represented in your study.

- **Data Collection Methods:** Provide details of the instruments, procedures, or protocols that will be used.
- **Data Analysis Plan:** Outline how data will be analyzed, including statistical or qualitative approaches.
- **Ethics and Governance**
Please outline the ethical considerations relevant to your study and the approvals required. Indicate which approvals will be necessary and provide a brief explanation of the process and expected timeline.

Approvals Required (tick all that apply):

- Research Ethics Committee (REC)
- Health Research Authority (HRA)
- Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)
- Institutional/University Research Ethics Committee
- Integrated Research Application System (IRAS)
- Other (please specify): _____

In your explanation, please also describe:

- How participant consent, confidentiality, and data protection will be addressed.
 - Any safeguarding considerations for vulnerable groups (e.g., children, young people, or adults at risk).
 - How ethical and governance standards will be upheld throughout the project.
- **Timeline:** Provide a high-level timeline or milestones over the 3–4-year studentship. A clearly labelled Gantt chart may also be attached as an appendix (not included in the word count).

Applicants may also submit one labelled graphical or visual image of their methods, data collection, or analysis plans (separate from the graphical abstract) in PNG, JPEG, or PDF format. Up to maximum of four (4) clearly labelled images for this section may be uploaded.

Section 5: Supervision, Training Environment and Career Development (Max 400 words)

Please describe the supervisory arrangements, training environment, and career development opportunities for the student. This section should include:

Supervisory Team

List supervisory team members, their relevant expertise, and roles. (CVs may be submitted, max 2 pages, double-sided – 4 pages total – for each CV.)

Research Environment and Training

Describe the research environment and the training and support available for the student at your institution. Please include details of:

- Professional skills development (e.g., communication, grant writing, leadership).
- Student networking opportunities (e.g., conferences, collaborations).

Research Culture

Explain how the supervisory team and host institution will foster a positive and inclusive research culture for the student. This may include:

- Commitment to mentorship, supervision quality, and student wellbeing.
- Promoting an environment that values openness, integrity, and reproducibility in research. NES expects compliance with the [UKRI Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#), ensuring the highest standards of rigor, transparency, and accountability.
- Ensuring the student has access to peer support networks and opportunities to engage with diverse perspectives.
- Embedding principles of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the research environment.

Career Progression and Outcomes

Explain how the studentship will support the student's long-term career development and progression beyond the PhD. This should include:

- Opportunities to develop transferable skills (e.g., leadership, teaching, communication, grant writing).
- Exposure to a range of career pathways (e.g., academia, clinical research, industry, healthcare policy, patient advocacy).
- Mentorship, networking, or placement opportunities that will enhance employability.

- How the supervisory team and host institution will track and support the student’s progression.

Applicants are encouraged to outline specific plans to prepare the student for a successful and sustainable career that contributes to eczema research or related health fields.

Section 6: Patient and Public Involvement (Max 300 words)

Describe how people with eczema, carers, and advocacy groups will be actively involved throughout the research process, including:

- **Design:** How will patients and carers help shape the research questions, study design, and recruitment approach?
- **Delivery:** What role will they play during the project (e.g., advisory panels, co-applicants, supporting recruitment, interpretation of findings)?
- **Dissemination:** How will they contribute to sharing results in accessible and meaningful ways for patient and public audiences?

Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with the National Eczema Society’s Expert by Experience (EXEC) Group, and to co-design approaches with them wherever possible.

Please also explain how Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) will be embedded in your PPIE strategy and study design. For example, how will you ensure representation of diverse populations affected by eczema (e.g., skin of colour, different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds), and ensure engagement activities are inclusive and accessible.

Section 7: Budget and Justification

Total Amount Requested: £ [amount]

Budget Table

Please complete the table below, providing a clear justification for each cost category.

Cost Category	Amount Requested (£)	Justification
Stipend (UKRI rate)		[Justify this cost]
Fees (UK Domestic Only)		[Justify this cost]
Research Costs		[Justify this cost]
Equipment/Supplies		[Justify this cost]
Lab consumables		[Justify this cost]
IT/Technical equipment		[Justify this cost]
Travel & Conferences		[Justify this cost]
Training		[Justify this cost]
PPIE*		[Justify this cost]

Other		[Justify this cost]
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Guidance on Costs

- **Stipend and Fees:** Applicants should align with UKRI minimum stipend and tuition fee rates for the relevant academic year. Institutions may supplement these rates, but NES will normally only fund at domestic [UKRI levels](#).
- **PPIE:** Costs should be budgeted in line with [NIHR's Payment Guidance for Researchers](#) (including reimbursement for time, travel, and childcare where applicable).
- **Travel, Training, and Conferences:** These should be reasonable and proportionate to the needs of the studentship. Applicants are encouraged to justify costs by reference to typical [UKRI/NIHR training allowances](#).
- **Equipment and Consumables:** NES expects modest, project-specific requests only. Large infrastructure or capital costs are not eligible.
- **Co-funding:** Applicants should indicate where institutional contributions (e.g., fee waivers, matched funding) are available, as NES will prioritise value for money across awards.

In addition to completing the table, please provide:

- **Co-funding/Institutional Contributions:** Indicate whether any additional support is being leveraged for this award.
- **Value for Money Statement (1–2 paragraphs):** Explain why this studentship represents good value for money for NES, with reference to the table above.
- **Additional Notes:** Elaborate on any non-standard costs or items not captured within the table.

Section 8: Impact, Dissemination and Knowledge Exchange (Max 500 words)

Please outline the expected pathway from research to real-world impact, including how the findings will benefit people with eczema, their carers, and health services.

Intended Beneficiaries

Identify the main groups who are expected to benefit from this research, and describe how the project will address their needs. These may include:

- **Patients and carers** (improved quality of life, information, support)
- **Clinicians and healthcare professionals** (better diagnosis, management, or treatment pathways)

- **Policy and service stakeholders** (evidence to inform health policy, commissioning, or NHS services)
- **Industry or third-sector partners** (new tools, therapies, collaborations)
- **Educational and community groups** (schools, patient networks, public engagement)

Planned Outputs

Describe the key outputs anticipated from the project, such as:

- Journal publications
- Conference presentations
- Policy briefings
- Patient-facing materials (e.g., podcasts, webinars, infographics)
- Reports or toolkits

Explain how success will be measured, using metrics beyond publications (e.g., policy uptake, changes in clinical practice, patient/community reach) and patient-focused metrics (e.g., patient reach, changes to care pathways)

Knowledge Exchange and Wider Engagement

Outline your strategy for sharing and translating findings with wider audiences. Explain how these activities will maximise the reach and real-world impact of the research. Applicants are encouraged to co-design engagement activities with the National Eczema Society's EXEC Group and consider creative formats such as workshops, podcasts, infographics, briefing papers, or toolkits.

Section 9: Sustainability and Strategic Fit (Max 300 words)

Explain how the proposed studentship aligns with the [National Eczema Society's mission](#) and [Research Strategy](#), and how it supports broader research or clinical priorities in eczema.

Please describe any collaborators (academic, clinical, industry, or third sector) involved in the project and outline their specific contributions. Indicate whether the project will make use of existing cohorts, datasets, infrastructure, or consortia, and how these resources will strengthen the studentship.

Finally, set out the potential for sustainability and follow-on funding, including how this award could provide a platform for future research, clinical trials, partnerships, or translational opportunities.

Section 10. Risk & Mitigation

Applicants must identify the main risks that could affect successful completion of the PhD project and describe clear mitigation strategies.

Types of Risks to Address

- **Scientific risks** – e.g. feasibility of methodology, recruitment difficulties, data quality, reliance on new or untested techniques.
- **Operational risks** – e.g. project delays, loss of access to key datasets, limited availability of specialist facilities or equipment.
- **Ethical risks** – e.g. safeguarding of vulnerable participants (children, young people, adults at risk), data protection, confidentiality, or delays in gaining approvals.
- **Financial risks** – e.g. underestimated costs, inflationary pressures, or changes to institutional support.

Mitigation Strategies

- Outline practical steps to minimise each identified risk (e.g. piloting methods, using alternative recruitment routes, pre-identifying back-up datasets or lab facilities, ensuring robust data management plans).
- Indicate how the supervisory team will monitor risks throughout the studentship.
- Describe contingency measures if critical risks materialise.

Supervision Contingency

As part of risk planning, applicants must also confirm **contingency supervision arrangements**. If a primary supervisor becomes unavailable (e.g. through career move, retirement, or extended leave), alternative supervision must be in place to ensure continuity of student training and oversight.

NES expects all applicants to show that potential risks have been realistically assessed and that proportionate plans are in place to safeguard the student, the research, and the responsible use of NES funds.

Section 11: Departmental Support

Name of Head of Department:

Email of Head of Department:

Please provide evidence of institutional commitment to the project. A short supporting statement and/or letter and/or email from the Head of Department (or equivalent) must confirm that:

- The staff has protected time within their workload to deliver the proposed award within the 36-month funding period.
- The applicant and PhD student will have access to appropriate facilities, equipment, and infrastructure required to complete the project (e.g., laboratory space, IT, data services, clinical facilities).
- The department will provide necessary administrative and financial support to manage the award.
- The project aligns with the department's research strategy and environment, and will be supported by mentorship (particularly for ECR applicants).
- Any relevant collaborators or institutional resources will be available as described in the application.
- Contingency Supervision: The Head of Department confirms that appropriate contingency arrangements are in place in the event that a supervisor is unable to continue during the studentship (e.g., due to career move, retirement, or extended leave). This should include identification of alternative supervisory support within the department or faculty to ensure continuity of training and academic oversight.

Letters of support can be concise on headed letterhead or email format, and attached as an appendix to this application.1993

Optional Appendices:

Applicants may attach supporting documents to strengthen their application. These may include:

- Reference letter for named candidate
- A Gantt chart or project timeline
- Graphical abstract
- Schematic or diagrams of methodology/data collection/analysis – max 4 documents.
- Letter/s of support
- Short CVs for named researchers or staff (maximum 2 pages, double-sided – 4 pages total – per person)

Accepted formats: **PDF** or **DOCX** for documents; **PNG, TIFF, JPEG, PDF** for images. All appendices should be clearly labelled and directly relevant to the application.

Monitoring and Reporting Expectations

Successful applicants will be required to provide:

- **Quarterly updates** short written reports (with oral updates optional) submitted to NES Research Engagement Lead. These updates should highlight progress, challenges, and next steps, and will help NES track the project in real time and share timely updates with patients, carers, or supporters.
- **Annual progress reports** summarising research progress, student training and development, PPIE activities, and dissemination.
- **Financial statements** confirming expenditure against the approved budget.
- A **final report** at the end of the studentship, outlining outputs, outcomes, and impact.
- A **short lay summary (≤500 words)** at the end of the project, written in plain English for patients, carers, and NES supporters. This will be used for NES communications (e.g., website, newsletters, webinars).

Interim Dissemination

- NES encourages applicants to consider how emerging findings (even if preliminary) can be shared with people with eczema, carers, and the wider public during the project.
- These updates are intended to be light-touch and accessible, not additional formal reports.
- Examples include: a short blog or newsletter piece (200–300 words), a simple infographic, a brief talk at an NES webinar, or a slide shared via the EXEC group.
- Formats should be co-developed with NES where appropriate, to ensure they are meaningful and accessible to patient audiences.

Supervisors are expected to ensure that the student receives regular monitoring and mentoring in line with their host institution's doctoral training requirements. NES reserves the right to review progress and, if necessary, adjust or withdraw funding where satisfactory progress is not demonstrated.