**DEFENCE MEDICAL SERVICES RESEARCH STEERING GROUP & HIGHER DEGREE BOARD**

**CALLING NOTICE**

Defence Medical Services Research Steering Group (DMSRSG) is the primary mechanism through which the DMS endorses and funds research activity. The research project must be of military relevance, scientifically robust, and offer value for money.

DMSRSG sits in conjunction with the Higher Degree Board (HDB). Service personnel seeking endorsement for time out of programme for research and funding support for a higher degree should apply to DMSRSG / HDB.

**What we support**

DMSRSG supports military-relevant medical research. Projects are not restricted to a particular methodological approach or technology readiness level (TRL). We will support foundational science through to applied research. Where foundational science / early TRL activity is proposed there must be a feasible pathway to impact on clinical delivery or operational capability. RCI Implementation can offer advice to applicants on how their proposal can be shaped for future impact. Research must be predominantly medical or healthcare focused. Human performance research is within remit only where there is a clear implication for human health, for example where increased performance leads directly to reduced rates of injury and illness.

We welcome qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research.

We encourage proposals across all cadres including Nursing and allied health professions.

There is no limit on the amount of funding that can be requested per application. However, the overall commitment budget at any one DMSRSG meeting is approximately £500k and we support multiple proposals at each round. Funding requests should always be commensurate with the activity proposed.

DMSRSG also reviews applications for service evaluations and clinical audits that incur a significant cost (i.e. >£10,000).

Higher degree proposals should be submitted via the Deanery. These include PhD, MD, and Professional Doctorate degrees. Masters-level qualifications are supported at single Service level not via DMSRSG / HDB.

**Highlight notices**

**Priority Areas**

DMSRSG particularly welcomes research proposals that address priorities highlighted in the DMS Research Strategy and FLC Problem Books:

* Understanding mechanisms of injury associated with the use of novel weapons, including directed energy weapons.
* The prevention of musculoskeletal injury, particularly lower limb, via effective prehabilitation programmes tailored for, and targeted at, specific high-risk groups (e.g. those undertaking initial training).
* Development of tools to aid Defence ability to manage mass casualty scenarios where medical resource is overmatched.
* Increased understanding of the burden of physical and mental comorbidity and novel management / treatment approaches.
* Improved ability to recognise and diagnose biothreat agents within a deployed medical facility through enhanced surveillance and field deployed diagnostic capability.
* Better understanding of the psychological burden of operating in a high-CBRN-threat environment and how best to reduce it.
* Treatment of enduring sequalae of traumatic brain injury to enable return to deployability.
* Better understanding of the effects of extreme temperatures (both low and high) and extended shelf-life on the safety and efficacy of medicinal products commonly used in deployed settings.

In addition to these specific topics DMS have overarching priority research themes. Applications falling within the following themes are also encouraged:

* Optimising mental health
* Preventing and treating musculoskeletal injury
* Delivering a workforce that is ‘ready and able’
* Tackling endemic, epidemic, and environmental threats
* Closing the sophistication gap between hospital-based and far forward care
* Combat Casualty Care – pushing the envelope of care far forward

**Oven-ready higher degree projects**

The following projects are ‘oven-ready’. This means the demand signal is established, an overarching project plan is in place, and a Defence supervisor is willing to support it (contact details listed below). As required for a PhD, there is scope for the higher degree candidate to shape the research proposal and make a substantial intellectual contribution.

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| **Research Project** | **Military Supervisor / Contact** |
| POCUS T3 (Point of Care Ultrasound Top to Toe in Traumatic Injury): developing and validating a protocol for ultrasound in traumatic injury in settings where the standard of care (CT) is unavailable | Surg Capt Sam Hutchings, Defence Professor Anaesthesia & Critical Care |
| Development of a Non Invasive Monitoring Model for the recognition and treatment of brain hypo perfusion in Traumatic Brain Injury | Surg Capt Sam Hutchings, Defence Professor Anaesthesia & Critical Care |

If you are interested in pursuing any of these higher-degree opportunities please contact the supervisor listed above. It is likely that more projects will be added prior to the next submission deadline.

**Who can apply**

DMSRSG is open to applications from researchers within Defence and researchers based at universities. If the proposal is led by a Principal Investigator (PI) at a university, it must be conducted in collaboration with a member of service personnel who is named as a Co-Investigator on the application.

Industry collaborators can be named on proposals, but PIs are strongly encouraged to contact DMS Research in advance of submitting a proposal if this is the case. This will allow early communication with Intellectual Property and Commercial colleagues to pre-empt any issues that may arise should the project receive DMSRSG endorsement.

DMSRSG also considers applications for higher degrees working alongside the Defence Deanery. Applications from those that are eligible for Deanery funding (i.e. those from full-time service personnel who are pre-CCT) should be submitted to the Deanery in the first instance using the DMSRSG application form. DMSRSG will also consider higher degree applications from individuals that are not pre-CCT, not in full-time service, or are based entirely in the civilian sector for funding from the non-Deanery budget. Additional documentation required depends on whether the higher degree applicant is in active service, a reservist, or is a civilian candidate. If there are queries concerning required documentation, please contact UKStratCom-DMS-RCI-DMSRSG@mod.gov.uk well in advance of the deadline date.

Service personnel seeking to undertake research activity, especially where time out of programme is required, must secure chain of command approval prior to submission.

University costs should be calculated using the Transparent Approach to Research Costing (TRAC) methodology. They will be supported at 80% FEC and must be approved by the university’s research office prior to submission.

**How to apply**

Detail on how to apply and application deadlines can be found on the [RCI Research Portal](https://modgovuk.sharepoint.com/teams/6127/SitePages/DMS-Research-Steering-Group.aspx) (MODNET required). If you are unable to access the latest version of the application form or guidance for applicants please email UKStratCom-DMS-RCI-DMSRSG@mod.gov.uk.

All applications must be signed off by the relevant Defence Professor prior to submission. Early engagement with the Defence Professor is key to shape its Defence relevance and ensure its scientific rigour. Do not expect a Defence Professor to sign off a proposal they are seeing for the first time.