

European Centre for Chiropractic Research Excellence (ECCRE)

Research Policy and Priorities

General Information

In order to develop evidence-based chiropractic practice and to maximize our contribution to the European health care system, we need more knowledge about chiropractors and patients with musculoskeletal disorders. Inherent in this system is the need for high quality chiropractic researchers and research.

The research fund is administered by the Board of ECCRE, which is advised by the Academic Advisory Committee.

Mission

ECCRE exists to promote and facilitate research of relevance to the chiropractic profession and chiropractic patients in Europe. All research funded by ECCRE should benefit the public in general, and patients in particular, with emphasis on musculoskeletal conditions.

Strategic priorities:

The efforts of the ECCRE are specifically focused on addressing issues related to the on-going promotion of high quality research projects which will:

- 1) Increase the research capacity of the profession through the advancement of PhD and post-doctorate studies;
- 2) Consolidate and support the existing research capacity within the European chiropractic profession; and
- 3) Improve the knowledge-base to result in evidence-based decisions in chiropractic practice.

Critical success factors:

By 2021, the goal will be that two candidates have obtained their PhD through funding provided by ECCRE and that an additional two PhD projects will have been initiated.

Relevant research subjects and criteria

1. Research focus of the ECCRE

The areas of interest that this policy addresses are those that are related to the practice of chiropractic. These include but are not limited to basic, clinical and population-based research.

1.1. Basic Sciences Research

Research in this field deals primarily with biomechanics and neurophysiology.

It includes the study of:

- spinal and articular biomechanics and their control;
- the relationship between the spine and bodily functions;
- the neurological control of bodily function;
- the effects of manipulation

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1.2. Clinical and Population-based Sciences Research

Research in this field is primarily aimed at evaluation of the role of chiropractic in health care.

It includes:

- the evaluation of the validity of diagnostic procedures used in chiropractic practice;
- the evaluation of the outcomes of chiropractic therapy;
- epidemiological and sociological studies;
- the role of chiropractic in preventive care;
- economic evaluations/cost-effectiveness.

1.3. Chiropractic-related research

Research in fields, which do not belong to chiropractic itself, will also be considered if it appears that they can foster the knowledge, the understanding and the practice of chiropractic.

2. *Priorities*

ECCRE is funded by the chiropractic profession; therefore, projects designed to result in a PhD or projects designed to enhance the effectiveness or the recognition of chiropractic will receive first priority. Multi-discipline projects involving chiropractors will be welcome. Proposals submitted by other qualified professionals will also be considered provided they are consistent with the bylaws of ECCRE. ECCRE encourages cooperation between chiropractic institutions and universities.

2.1 Assessment Criteria

In judging the applications, the Academic Advisory Committee will consider the following points and these should be addressed by the applicant.

a. Originality

- What is new in the project?
- Will the project provide new insights in the subject area?
- Will the project be valuable in testing the results of existing studies?

b. Importance of the work

- Is the subject area already receiving much attention, i.e. is further support warranted?
- Will the project significantly contribute to furthering knowledge in this field?
- How will the project ultimately benefit patients?

c. Scientific reliability

- Is the project well designed?
- Are the methods outlined appropriate to achieve the objective?
- Is the sample size appropriate, i.e. not too small to answer the question nor too large to avoid wasting valuable resources?
- Is the use of controls appropriate
- Are supporting references up to date and relevant?

d. Experience of applicant, facilities and support

- Is the applicant sufficiently experienced and qualified to carry out the study?
- Is the applicant's department, work-setting or level of supervision of a high enough calibre to support the project adequately?
- Is the support claimed from universities/research bodies validated?

e. Appropriate use of funds

- Is the funding requested appropriate for the activities detailed?
- Has the applicant sourced funding from other sources, or considered co-funding?
- Is completion of the project dependent on the applicant securing funds from other sources?

2.2. Important information

Funding will be given in accordance with our research priorities, which are detailed in the 'research agenda' Rubinstein et al. *Chiropractic & Manual Therapies 2014*.

The top three items which are thought to be most important include: 1) economic evaluations, 2) identification of subgroups likely to respond to treatment, and 3) initiation and promotion of collaborative research activities.

3. *Research Proposals*

Grant Application procedure. ECCRE will consider protocols and grant applications from qualified personnel and/or institutions wishing to undertake research in a definite area of interest to the profession. Use the grant application form for funding which is available from ECCRE.org.

4. *Financial Policy*

Funding will normally only be given if the lead applicant is an individual member or member of an organizational body within the ECU or the project is administered by an educational/research institution in a ECU member country. At least one chiropractor must be a member of the research team. Proposals which do not include a chiropractor on the team will be considered only if the proposed research is of particularly high quality and importance and meets the criteria described above.

Grants are not available for the funding of undergraduate education. The fund will consider salary, travel and conference costs as well as administration and publication costs. ECCRE looks favourably on those projects which seek co-funding, and encourages applicants to include this in their budget. Financial accountability must be submitted at the end of the project.

5. *Handling of Applications and Review Process for Research Proposals*

5.1. Basic outline and required features

Applicants must use the application form available on the website. Details of the lead applicant and collaborators; curriculum vitae from all applicants; and full research proposal (max. 5 pages, Times New Roman, font size 11) as well as a detailed budget must be included. The budget must be submitted as an appendix. Appendices may also include, but should be limited to, for example, forms and outcomes instruments to be used.

5.1.1. Summary: To include full title of the project and a structured abstract (max. 250 words) with:

Background;

- Principal research question;
- Study design and methodology, including a brief description of the expected data analysis.

5.1.2. Project Outline including details of the proposed investigation:

- Title;
- Background;
- Research objectives/principal aim;
- Concise description of the study design and methodology, including a power calculation if deemed appropriate for the study design, expected data analysis, as well as knowledge transfer of the results;
- Value of the research to patients;
- Project milestones (use bar graph/grant chart, but restrict it to the execution of the project).

Not limited to the page restriction: Detailed budget, including salaries, resources, detailed account statement and disclosure from the applicant institution; and declarations and appendices.

5.2. Evaluation and approval of a project

5.2.1. General considerations

All proposals shall be submitted electronically to: ECCRE@NIKKB.DK. All proposals will first be reviewed by the Academic Advisory Committee (AAC). If the proposal meets minimum standards and the criteria as outlined above, the proposal will be evaluated internally. Should the application extend beyond the scope of the AAC's expertise (which will be determined by consensus) then the application will be sent to external independent content expert(s) appointed by the AAC. These reviewers will be chosen based upon their expertise, and should not be involved in the project nor have financial interests relating to the proposed project. The criteria that will be used by the committee and external experts are outlined above under the heading 'operating principles'. The AAC will evaluate the proposals and give their assessment to the Board of ECCRE who will make a decision, and it will be the Board who will notify the main investigator and/or institution as to its decision.

Funding will be given under the condition that the institute that is granted funding must find a suitable candidate to conduct the study within 6 months following the funding decision. This will need to be approved by the Board upon recommendation by the Academic Advisory Committee. The institute must provide a CV of the candidate and letter of recommendation.

5.2.2. Procedural deadlines and payment calendar (2016)

PROCEDURES	DEADLINEs
1. Deadline applications	Aug. 5 th
Processing: Decision Academic Advisory Committee sent to ECCRE Board ECCRE Board meeting	Sep. 5 th Sep. 14 th
2. Applicant to be notified by the Board of ECCRE The notification letter binds both ECCRE and the applicant to completion of the project, providing progress reports and final report are approved.	Sep. 28 st
3. Payment: The fund will be administered by NIKKB and payment will be made according to the agreed upon payment plan between the applicant and Board of ECCRE. Instalments may be withheld depending upon progress of the study. In addition, ECCRE may withhold the last instalment depending upon the stipulation of the contract.	Instalments to be paid as agreed with the applicant

5.3. Reporting Requirement and Payment Calendar

5.3.1. Progress report

Progress reports are to be submitted to the AAC once a year (either on March 1st or October 1st) and applicants must use the progress report form on the website. The AAC may request a progress report twice a year at its discretion.

The reports must contain the following information:

- Progress report against research plan
- The finances and schedule of the project as compared with those described in the research plan;
- Unexpected difficulties including solutions to overcome them;
- Work to be performed in the subsequent 12 months if not identical with the plan in the research proposal.

5.3.2. Evaluation of report

The evaluation of reports will be performed by the AAC who will report to the Board. If appropriate, ECCRE reserves the right to postpone payments as outlined in the contracts with applicant. The Board of ECCRE reserves the right to terminate payment to a project when the project does not progress according to the approved protocol as determined by the progress reports and/or other communication with the applicant.

5.4. Publication

Applicants must submit at least one original article in a peer-reviewed journal listed in the major indexing systems. Any publication should make due acknowledgement of ECCRE as the funding body.