

AST Research Network: Directed Research Grants

Overview

The AST Research Network seeks to increase the availability of funded research opportunities in transplantation and immunology research. In addition to pursuing funding to support our annual career development research grants and other investigator-initiated research, the AST Research Network is also interested in partnering with industry, academia, or non-profit entities that wish to support research in a specific area. Through such arrangements, the AST Research Network can help its partners meet their scientific goals while increasing funding available for researchers. To guide these efforts, the AST Research Network has developed a set of procedures surrounding the initiation, promotion, review, and administration of directed research grants. These procedures are an origination point for discussion, and it should be noted that the AST Research Network has a degree of flexibility on many matters herein.

The AST Research Network carries out its mission through the following:

- 1) Striving for Excellence – We aim for the highest standards of performance, integrity, and service in all dimensions of our work.
- 2) Investment in Leaders – We support effective, visionary, and collaborative leaders who motivate others, inspire change, and produce results.
- 3) Adoption of a Long-Term Perspective – We take the long view, considering the implications of today's decisions for future generations.
- 4) Demonstrated Curiosity – We actively solicit new perspectives to inform our work and are committed to collaboration and partnership.

Research Grant Requirements

A grantor may approach the AST Research Network at any time with a proposal to seek applications for research funding in a specific area/set of areas. If the area of research fits with the AST's and its Research Network's mission and vision, the AST Research Network will work with the grantor to develop the grant requirements, request for application (RFA), marketing plan, etc. This includes the amount and term of the grant, eligibility criteria, guidelines and conditions, allowable expenses, and performance measurement. The AST Research Network and the grantor will develop a timeline for each grant that outlines the responsibilities of each party. AST and the grantor will come to agreement on all aspects of the grant and sign a letter of agreement before the grant is announced.

Items for Consideration during Development of the Research Grant

The AST Research Network will provide standard language used for its other research grant programs. The grantor may recommend changing certain criteria to suit their needs, but some elements may not be changed.

Elements that are determined by the grantor

- The grantor may decide if the grant should be limited to North American researchers/research settings only, or if international researchers/research settings may apply.
 - This is contingent upon whether the AST Research Network or the grantor will be administering the payments (see below), to be discussed during the development of the grant.

- The grantor may decide what the grant funds can be used for and what expenses are prohibited: e.g. salary support, research team salary support, equipment, indirect expenses/institutional overhead, etc.
 - Grantors are strongly encouraged to permit an allowance of institutional overhead costs, as this widens the pool of potential applicants.
- The grantor may determine the length of the funding period (e.g. one year, two years, etc.).

Elements that cannot be changed by the grantor

- If the AST Research Network will administer the payments (see below), the grantor may only select a quarterly payment schedule (or a one-time payment for smaller grants only).
- The funding must be limited to AST members; if an applicant is not an AST member they may apply for membership as long as their application is received prior to the grant deadline.
- The grantor may not request a timeline – be it for submissions, review, or the research term itself – that is unrealistic for execution either for the AST Research Network or for the researcher.
- Grant payment(s) must be made to the institution of the recipient and not the individual.
- At a minimum, the grantee will be asked to provide a report annually during the term of the grant that summarizes progress and use of grant funds.

Review, Scoring, and Decision Process

The AST Research Network and the grantor will determine together the review criteria, scoring mechanism, ranking process, and how the ultimate decision on the grant recipient(s) will be made. It is expected that the AST Research Network reviewers will have an active role in reviewing and determining the grant recipient; any deviation from this must be discussed in advanced.

The final recipient(s) does not need to be approved by the AST Research Network committee or the AST Board of Directors. The AST Research Network will notify all applicants of their status (accept or reject) by email.

Elements that cannot be changed by the grantor

- The AST Research Network will determine how the scores are submitted and tabulated using their expertise and experience to choose the best method considering factors like timeline, complexity, and budget (e.g. via spreadsheet, via an online scoring system, etc.).
- The AST Research Network's reviewer conflict of interest policy must be in place to ensure no reviewers are in direct conflict with any submitted grants.

Administration of the Grant – Letter of Agreement, Payments & Reporting

There are two options for the administration of research grants, and the AST Research Network will assess an administrative fee for the work associated with the directed grant requested by the grantor:

Option 1: Grantor administers the grant

In this scenario, the grantor will contract directly with the researcher and be responsible for administering all payments, collecting all reporting, and managing the grant until the term of the grant expires. The AST Research Network will be available for questions, but will not maintain an active role in the administration of the grant.

- The AST Research Network will prepare a plaque for the recipient and present it to the winner at the next major AST meeting (Cutting Edge of Transplantation or the American Transplant Congress).
- Grantor will provide to the AST Research Network copies of any and all reports from the grantee during the term of the grant.

Option 2: AST Research Network administers the grant

In this scenario, the AST Research Network will provide a letter of agreement to the researcher, and the agreement will exist between the individual and the AST. The AST Research Network will be responsible for administering all payments, collecting all reporting, and managing the grant until the term of the grant expires.

- The grantor will provide the full amount of the grant to the AST Research Network according to the terms of the agreement, and funding will be paid out to the grantee by the AST Research Network following verification that the recipient is still meeting agreed-upon milestones.
- The grantor will pay an administrative fee of 2.5% of the grant total (not to exceed \$5,000) to cover the AST Research Network staff costs related to administering all payments, collecting all reports and managing the grant until the term of the grant expires.
- The AST Research Network will prepare a plaque for the recipient and present it to the winner at the next major AST meeting (Cutting Edge of Transplantation or the American Transplant Congress).
- The AST Research Network will provide to grantor copies of any and all reports from the grantee during the term of the grant.