

# WALTHAM™ Human-Animal Interaction Research Programme

## Call for Applications

### 2018 Collaborative Research Awards

In 2018, WALTHAM plans to fund up to three awards for a maximum of £240,000 (please check current exchange rates for other currencies) each to support high quality, innovative research collaborations in Human-Animal Interaction.

#### **Application Deadline: 23 July 2018**

## 1. Background

For over 40 years WALTHAM has investigated the special relationship between humans and companion animals. WALTHAM scientists work in partnership with research institutions and experts from around the world to understand, advance and share knowledge on the topic of Human-Animal Interaction (HAI). WALTHAM funded research has explored the role of pets in child development, society, educational settings, human aging and many different clinical applications (e.g., obesity, autism). Please see our website for a description of the types of HAI research we have funded in previous calls: [www.waltham.com](http://www.waltham.com)

Our commitment to advancing the study of HAI is evident in our partnerships (e.g., *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development) and our long-standing support of the dissemination of research findings through sponsorship of key conferences such as the International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ) and the International Association of HAI Organizations (IAHAIO). Together, WALTHAM and our partners have invested over \$10 million in original HAI research to help build the field and deliver credible peer-reviewed studies.

The purpose of this call is to continue the WALTHAM tradition of supporting high quality science in partnership with leading NGOs, professional associations and funding bodies, that provides the evidence base critical to fully understanding the mutually beneficial relationship between people and companion animals.

## 2. Required elements of submitted applications:

- The animals involved in the research must be companion animals that are considered domestic species and are routinely kept as pets (e.g., cats, dogs) and should not include wild animals (e.g., dolphins, tigers, bears) or farm animals (e.g., cattle, sheep).
- The application may not involve invasive surgical techniques or procedures, euthanasia or other harmful or aversive techniques performed on animal or human participants.

## 2.1 Preferred Topic Areas

For research eligible for funding under this call the application must focus on HAI (specifically companion animal ownership or interaction) as it relates to one or more of the following preferred topic areas. Please note, preference will be given to projects that examine these issues across the lifespan and consider the importance of animal attachment and/or degree of interaction in the outcomes.

- The impact of pets on human physical and socio-emotional health (includes the concepts of physical activity, wellness, engagement, social support, usefulness, purpose and connectedness)
- Maintenance of healthy body weight in people and pets (includes how the behaviours of both species impact the other)

## 2.2 Criteria for research design

### 2.2.1 Essential criteria

- The research design implementation must be clearly delineated and of high quality
- The study must have an adequate sample size to be appropriately statistically powered; evidence of statistical powering must be included
- The project must be guided by a theory or conceptual framework, which should be briefly and clearly explained in the application

### 2.2.2 Preferred criteria

- Randomized controlled trial or experimental manipulation
- Longitudinal trial – data collection over three years
- Blind scoring of dependent variables
- Use of standardized/validated measures (applicant must provide a strong rationale for using measures that do not have published validity and reliability)
- Multi-disciplinary research teams with relevant expertise for navigating the complexities of HAI research (e.g., developmental or lifespan psychologist, statistician, nutritionist, animal behaviourist, veterinarian), and where applicable, inclusion of clinicians/practitioners as part of the planning/advisory team
- Consideration given to the effect of relationship quality (between human and animal) and cumulative lifetime experience with animals (of the human participant) on outcomes
- Consideration is given to the communication of research outcomes to appropriate audiences.

### 3. Funding details

- The award amount is up to £240,000 (check exchange rates for amount in other currencies) to be paid over a four-year period for each funded project
- Data collection is expected to be completed over a three-year period. This allows for six-month preparatory period and a final six-month period for final data analysis and write up
- The principle investigator must be employed by a university or academic institution, but there is no geographic restriction on the location of that university.
- The approved project must receive university human and animal ethics approval prior to funding

#### 3.1 Award Requirements

Written institutional acceptance of the following requirements must be included with the application:

- Funding to cover institutional overheads is limited to 10% of the total award value, within the overall award limit
- The selected research project will be conducted in collaboration with the WALTHAM HAI Research Manager. This role in the project will include the following:
  - Lending expertise to study design considerations, providing input and advice, receiving updates from the project team and/or attending routine team meetings throughout the project period and direct involvement in writing manuscripts
  - Will not participate in data collection or statistical analysis, therefore the application and corresponding budget should provide the personnel and expertise to accomplish both

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#### 3.2 Review Process:

- Applications will be subject to a three-step review process:
  - Step 1. WALTHAM internal review of best fit to preferred topics and methodologies as stated in this call (see 2.1 above). A subset of the total application pool will proceed to step 2.
  - Step 2. External peer review of application for scientific merit and impact. The top-ranking applications will proceed to step 3.

- Step 3.WALTHAM consideration of the result of external peer review, plus internal review of application scientific merit and impact. Final funding decision is contingent on successful completion of the WALTHAM™ scientific governance process which includes a review of proposed methodology, plan for statistical analysis, and animal ethics.
- Unfortunately, we are unable to provide unsuccessful applicants with feedback, input or reviews.
- All applicants will be notified of the status of their application via email once a funding decision has been made. This is estimated to be on or around 1 November 2018. Status enquiries before this point will not be responded to.

#### 4. Recommended reading in advance of application submission:

- Chur-Hansen, A., Stern, C., & Winefield, H. (2010). Gaps in the evidence about companion animals and human health: Some suggestions for progress. *Int J Evid Based Health*, 8(3), 140-146. doi:10.1111/j.1744-1609.2010.00176.x
- Gee, N. R., Hurley, K. J., & Rawlings, J. M. (2016). From the Dog's Perspective: Welfare Implications of HAI Research and Practice. In L. S. Freund, S. McCune, L. Esposito, N. R. Gee, & P. McCardle (Eds.), *The Social Neuroscience of Human-Animal Interaction*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Herzog, H. (2011). The impact of pets on human health and psychological well-being: Fact, fiction, or hypothesis? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20(4), 236-239.
- Institute of Medicine. (2001). *Crossing the quality chasm: A new health system for the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences.
- Kazdin, A. E. (2015). Methodological standards and strategies for establishing the evidence base of animal-assisted therapies. In A. H. Fine (Ed.), *Handbook on animal assisted therapy: Theoretical foundations and guidelines for practice* (4th ed., pp. 377-390). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- **Other** selected resources:

These resources are provided as potentially helpful information only, and their inclusion/exclusion in submitted applications will have no direct impact on the outcome of the application review process.

- NIH PROMIS: <http://www.nihpromis.org/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>
  - Dynamic tools to measure health outcomes from the patient perspective.
- NIH Toolbox: <http://www.nihtoolbox.org/Pages/default.aspx>
  - NIH Toolbox is a multidimensional set of brief measures assessing cognitive, emotional, motor and sensory function from ages 3 to 85, meeting the need for a standard set of measures that can be used as a “common currency” across diverse study designs and settings.