Irish Cancer Society

Research

Cancer Nursing Research Award 2023

Application Guidelines

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Application Guidelines

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The Irish Cancer Society, in collaboration with the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP), wishes to invite research teams led by eligible nursing professionals to submit an application for the Cancer Nursing Research Award 2023.

The aim of this award is to stimulate, develop, and support cancer nursing research in the Republic of Ireland. As such, this award will fund a **nurse-led** partnership-based research project between Irish nursing professionals and academic researchers. Clinical-academic partnerships encourage research that is of the highest quality and clinical relevance, while expediting the translation of research into practice.

This is intended to be a transformative investment in a nursing individual who demonstrates great potential in driving and leading clinically relevant and innovative cancer research in Ireland. This research will focus on areas which will positively impact on patient care outcomes and should be aligned to the National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026[1] and the Irish Cancer Society Strategy 2020-2025[2].

[1] https://health.gov.ie/healthy-ireland/national-cancer-strategy-2017-2026/
[2] https://www.cancer.ie/about-us/irish-cancer-society-strategy-2020-2025

1.2. Indicative Timelines

Milestone	Date
Applications open	28 June 2023
Application deadline	22 August 2023 @ 3pm
Review	August – September 2023
Interviews	Week of 2 October 2023

Please note: The above dates are provisional subject to change at the discretion of the Irish Cancer Society.

1.3. Purpose and Objectives

The Cancer Nursing Research Award 2023 will fund one applicant team to undertake a nurse-led partnership-based research project. This team should comprise of at least two joint-lead applicants who will undertake a body of research work. At a minimum, the team must have one nursing professional working in oncology in a clinical role (**Clinical Nurse Lead**) and one researcher working in an academic role (**Academic Research Lead**).

The two project leads should work collaboratively to achieve success in the project and enhance the research capacity and leadership of the Clinical Nurse Lead. Each partner will bring different expertise, allowing for reciprocal learning opportunities. While each partner may take on certain responsibilities attuned to their skill-set, it is expected that both partners will play a role in all aspects of the project.

Role of Clinical Nurse Lead:

The Nurse Lead should be the primary driver of the research project. The Nurse Lead provides clinical expertise (e.g., clinically relevant idea generation, logistics, patient recruitment, navigating the health system). It is expected that the Nurse Lead would be involved in most aspects of the research project and its governance; they should be the person who actually carries out and manages the project. Their clinical role must be backfilled (for a minimum of 1 day per week) through this award to allow them the dedicated time to drive this research forward.

In some cases, supervision of dedicated **junior** research staff (e.g., Research Assistant) may be allowed. In this instance, both lead applicants must possess a) significant practical research experience, b) significant research management experience, and c) experience of supervising research staff. If considering this option, please contact grants@irishcancer.ie before applying. The hiring of any **senior researchers** (e.g., recruiting a PhD student to conduct the research) is not allowed.

Role of Academic Research Lead:

The Academic Research Lead provides expertise in terms of good research practice, scientific excellence, research policy and governance, and navigating academic responsibilities (e.g. ethical review processes, scientific and financial reporting, data protection).

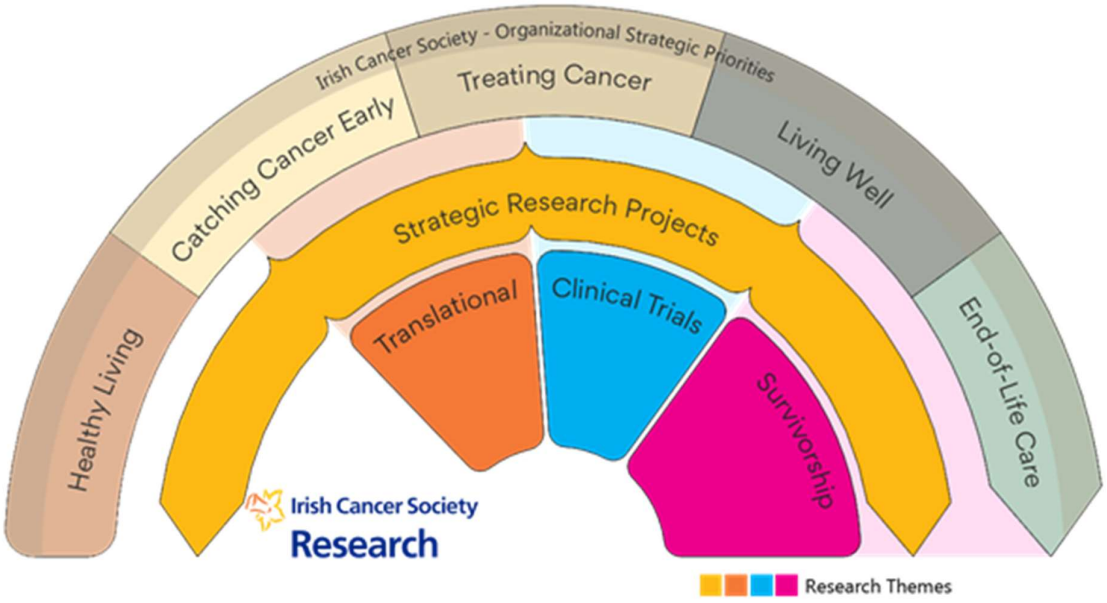
1.4. Programme Requirements

All proposals must be aligned with the Society's Strategy (2020-2025) and its Research Roadmap. Proposed projects can be in any of the following areas: a) clinical trials, b) survivorship, or c) strategic priorities. These areas are described below in greater detail.

a. **Clinical trials** are organised investigations in people to examine the benefits of new approaches to treatment and care. For example, looking to see if a new medicine can improve survival for a particular form of cancer. As well as funding these drug-based trials (so called IMP trials), the Irish Cancer Society is also interested in funding non-drug based trials (non-IMP trials) in areas such as diagnostics, technology, radiotherapy, surgery, psycho-oncology, exercise, nutrition, and combinations of these.

b. **Survivorship** covers the period from diagnosis to treatment outcome (including palliative and end-of-life care). Survivorship research seeks to improve the care and outcomes experienced by people living with and beyond cancer. it includes: prevention and early detection of recurrent cancer; long term effects of cancer and its treatment; quality and experience of treatment and care; psycho-social effects of cancer and its treatment; self-management; health information and literacy; genetic risk and counselling; physical and practical needs e.g. financial, employment, mobility; etc.

c. **Strategic priorities** is a crosscutting theme, which seeks to specifically foster and grow research into areas of high unmet need in cancer. For example, cancers which have not benefited from the huge strides in outcome seen in some malignancies (metastatic disease, rare cancers and cancers with poor response or outcomes); the unmet needs of children, adolescents, and young adults affected by cancer; tackling misinformation and disinformation in cancer; addressing the needs of under-represented groups of people (e.g. Travelling community, ethnic and language minority communities, migrant communities, communities with socio-economic or mental health challenges, or any other socially excluded group).



1.5. Funding and Duration

The maximum total funding available is €160,000. The minimum funding period is 18 months.

2. Eligibility

2.1. Applicant Eligibility

Applications must be made by at least two co-applicant partners. Applications from individuals that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be assessed.

Clinical Nurse Lead:

Minimum Eligibility Criteria

At a **minimum**, the Clinical Nurse Lead must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a professional qualification in nursing and be currently listed on the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland's register of Nurses and Midwives;
- Currently hold a nursing appointment in the Republic of Ireland during which clinical time is spent working with people affected by cancer;
- Have a track record of research experience exemplified by, for example, recruitment and data collection in research studies, conducting clinical audits, presentation at research meetings or conferences, authoring publications, completion of research training;

- Demonstrate a commitment to a career involving cancer research;
- Act as a clinical advisor to the project for the duration of the award. There must be clear evidence of this role through-out the application and for the duration of the award.

Academic Research Lead:

Minimum Eligibility Criteria

At a **minimum**, the Clinical Nurse Lead must meet the following criteria:

- Currently hold an academic appointment in a higher education institution in the Republic of Ireland for the duration of the award. This higher education institution will act as the host institution for the duration of the award;
- Possess a PhD or equivalent* in an academic field appropriate to the proposed project;
- Have a minimum of 5 first or senior authorships in peer-reviewed publications;
- Demonstrate a clear and strong level of support from their host institution;
- Have an established track record in research exemplified by, for example, a history of principal investigator roles, history or grant awards, involvement in clinical trials, research supervision, national or international research partnership development, presentation at national or international conferences, etc.;
- Demonstrate a commitment to ensuring the highest research standard of the proposed body of work;
- Act as a scientific advisor to the project and support the Clinical Nurse Lead for the duration of the award. There must be clear evidence of this active role through-out the application and for the duration of the award.

*__Please note__: PhD equivalence is defined as three or more senior (first, joint-first, or last) author publications in peer-reviewed academic journals or 4 years' full-time research experience post-primary degree. In such instances, candidates should contact grants@irishcancer.ie before applying.

Co-Applicants:

You may add up to 10 co-applicants to the project. Co-applicants must have a well-defined and substantial role in the proposed plan (e.g., significant input into study design, data collection, or analysis and interpretation). If projects are co-designed with key stakeholders (e.g., PPI Contributors), you may add them as a co-applicant to the project.

Official Collaborators:

You may include formal collaborations with individuals, groups, or organisations.

2.2. Institution Eligibility

Academic (Host) Institution

The host institution is the organisation that receives and administers grant funding and is responsible for compliance with all general and specific terms and conditions of awards. In order to be eligible to apply for funding, a proposed host institution must be a higher education institution in the Republic of Ireland and must be one of the HRB's approved host institutions: www.hrb.ie/funding/funding-schemes/before-you-apply/all-grant-policies/hrb-policy-on-approval-of-host-institutions.

Therefore, the academic institution will act as the host institution. Applicants conducting research out of non-approved sites must nominate an approved host institute and all finances must be managed by this institute.

Clinical Site

The clinical site, where the Clinical Nurse Lead is based, should be a public hospital or community healthcare service. Organisational support for the Clinical Nurse Lead is very important for this award.

The clinical site may require staffing rearrangements (e.g., to cover the protected research time, if budgeted) or the hiring of research staff. **A detailed letter of support is required from the clinical site outlining its commitment to support the Clinical Nurse Lead in all relevant activities within the proposed body of work.**

Please note that the clinical site cannot act as the host institution.

2.3. Patient and Stakeholder Involvement

The Irish Cancer Society and the NCCP are dedicated to putting patients, families, survivors, supporters, and the public at the very heart of what we do. Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in the research process ensures that research is meaningful and of benefit to those affected by cancer. PPI can be involved at any stage of a research project, from development and design to interpretation and dissemination. Ideally, PPI will feature throughout the project.

In line with this commitment, it is expected that all applicants include a detailed PPI plan (and the associated **minimum** €8,000 budget allocation) within their application**.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants read Appendix 1 'Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research' Guidelines prior to beginning work on an application.

All applicants that are shortlisted to progress to full application will be required to incorporate comments from the PPI reviewers where relevant and provide a revised PPI plan and sharing of research findings plan in their full application.

2.4. Eligible Research Area

All proposals must be aligned with the Society's Strategy (2020-2025) and its Research Roadmap and must meet the requirements set out in section 1.4.

Proposed projects can be in any area relevant to cancer nursing and focus on positively impacting cancer care and outcomes. Research projects in the area of basic or translational science are not eligible.

If considering an intervention development study, the proposed stage of development must be appropriate with all previous development phases complete. Intervention proposals should favour a single development phase rather than attempting to complete the entire development life cycle within a single project. Applicants should not attempt to develop a novel intervention where a similar intervention already exists, unless there is robust justification of need. Proposed projects must be feasible to complete within the timeframe of the award.

If considering a complex intervention, please refer to the Medical Research Guidelines or similar for guidance.

3. Application Procedure

3.1. Application Overview

There are two stages to the application process:

i. Paper application stage
ii. Interviews

The structure of the application and review process is designed to allow for an iterative development and improvement of applications to maximise their potential.

Stage	Description
Stage 1: Paper Application	The full application allows applicants to submit their application for review.

Stage	Description
	The same review panel will evaluate the full application submissions. Applications will be evaluated based on their quality. Applications that are of the highest quality will be shortlisted to the next stage, interviews. Reviewer feedback will be made available to all applicants.
Stage 2: Interviews	Interviews are conducted between shortlisted applicants and the review panel. Feedback from the full application stage should be used to further improve the application in advance of the interviews.

3.2. How to Apply

Applications must be completed and submitted through the Irish Cancer Society online grant management system. In order to submit an online application you are required to register at the following address: https://grants.cancer.ie. When registering, please fill out all the fields on the registration form.

When you enter your login details, you will be directed to the portal home page. From here, you can:

1. Update your basic information (please make sure all fields are completed)
2. Make a new grant application
3. Access previous grant applications
4. Manage any active grants

When you have entered your basic details, you will be able to create a new application from the portal home page. Alternatively, select 'New Application' from the 'My Applications' tab.

Next, click 'Apply' for the Grant Type detailed as 'Cancer Nursing Research Award 2023'.

4. Application Form

There are 10 sections outlined on the left hand side of the page:

a) Introduction
b) Project Outline
c) Research Team
d) Clinical Nurse Lead Career Development
e) Scientific Research Programme
f) PPI summary

g) Impact Plan
h) Organisational Support
i) Budget
j) Validation summary

Saving your progress regularly is strongly recommended by clicking 'Save' as you go through the application form. Alternatively, the information will be saved when you click 'Save and Close'. By clicking 'Previous' you will be brought to the previous section and by clicking 'Next' you will be brought to the next section.

Mandatory sections are marked with a red circle icon. You will not be able to submit with the application if these sections are incomplete.

a) Introduction

This section gives an overview of the Cancer Nursing Research Award 2023.

b) Application Outline

In this section, you will be asked to provide basic information about your application. Input and save the information as required under the following headings:

- Proposed title
- Proposed start date (must not be before December 2023)
- Duration (minimum 18 months)
- Lead applicant(s) details
- Proposed host institution
- Cancer type(s)
- Research type(s)
- Research area
- Discipline(s)
- Keywords

c) Research Team

Lead Applicants' Curriculum Vitae (CV)

In this section, you will be asked to complete and upload a CV for both lead applicants. The CVs should be completed using the template provided (this template is downloadable in this section on the online system or on the website) and be **no more than three pages long**.

Research Partnership

The partnership between the Clinical Nurse Lead and the Academic Research Lead is a core aspect of this award. It is expected that partners will work closely together to ensure the

success of this project and reciprocally learn from each other's expertise. In this section, you should describe the nature of the partnership, including (500 words max):

- Details on whether the co-lead applicants have previously worked together and the nature of this previous partnership;
- An overview of how the partnership will work practically over the course of the study (including information such as number and format of interactions, etc.);
- An overview of how responsibilities will be divided amongst the lead applicants;
- Details of the knowledge-sharing that will reciprocally occur between the Clinical Nurse Lead and the Academic Research Lead (i.e., what unique knowledge/experience will each partner bring to the table?).

Please note: The successful applicants will be expected to provide evidence of this research partnership throughout the award as part of the reporting process.

Co-Applicants

You may add up to 10 co-applicants to the project. Co-applicants must have a well-defined and substantial role in the proposed plan (e.g., significant input into study design, data collection, or analysis and interpretation). If projects are co-designed with key stakeholders (e.g., PPI), you may add them as a co-applicant to the project.

You will be asked to provide a brief role description for each co-applicant. Co-applicants must confirm their participation and approve the application prior to it being submitted for review.

Collaborators

Please detail any formal collaborations with individuals, groups, or organisations.

d) Clinical Nurse Lead's Career Development

The funding is intended to be a transformative investment in a nursing professional. Please describe the Clinical Nurse Lead's short- and long-term career goals and how this award will contribute to these goals (600 words max):

- The Clinical Nurse Lead's career plans and ambitions;
- How this award would be transformative to the Nurse Lead's career and establish them as a leader in research (please be as specific as possible);
- What skills will be obtained by the Nurse Lead and how this will contribute to their career plans;
- The next steps following the completion of the proposed research programme, including any funding body/bodies to which a future proposal(s) might be submitted.

e) Scientific Research Programme

Basis for Research

Please describe previously published research, which forms the basis of your research proposal. You may include any initial research carried out by the applicants' research team (400 words max).

Hypothesis and/or Aims

Please outline the hypothesis, research questions, and/or aims of your research proposal. Please ensure that the aims are realistic and achievable in the funding period (250 words max).

Methods of Research

Please describe and justify the methods, procedures, and experimental design you will use to conduct your research (1,000 words max).

For quantitative research, please provide statistical analysis plan for each section of your research proposal, including power calculations, sample sizes, details of control groups, etc. Additionally, discuss the recruitment plan, including feasibility of obtaining/accessing sufficient/required sample sizes of relevant participant groups.

For qualitative research, please describe the planned approach. You may choose to discuss sample size and rationale, data collection methodologies (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and transcription procedures), analytic framework(s), and sources of bias (if appropriate). Additionally, please discuss the methodology and feasibility of recruiting the planned sample size.

References

Please cite any literature referenced in the sections above.

Gantt Chart and Research Images

You must upload a Gantt chart for the proposed research study, which includes PPI activities. You may also upload up to five research images. All uploads must be in PDF format. Please ensure that figures are legible when uploading. Illegible figures may be difficult for the peer review panel to assess and could detract from your application.

f) PPI Summary

In this section, please provide an accessible summary of the proposed study and your plan for co-developing and integrating clearly identifiable patient involvement. An expert PPI Panel

will review this section. As such, please use plain accessible language and if technical terms are used, they must be explained. Patient involvement and partnership is a fundamental aspect of the application. Please consult Appendix 1 before completing these sections.

Project Summary:

Please provide a detailed and structured plain English abstract, detailing the following **(500 words max)**:

- Briefly outline the background of your research proposal i.e. how and why your proposal came about and the context in which your proposal will take place.
- Describe the specific problem, issue, or question that you are asking in your research proposal and describe how you are addressing it (including the variables being measured and why you have chosen these specific variables).
- Outline who will *participate* in your research, how you intend to recruit them into your study, and what they will be expected to do if they take part.
- Detail how the proposed research is relevant and important to people affected by cancer.

Involvement Plan**:** The involvement plan should detail how people affected by cancer and any other relevant stakeholder will be *involved* in the study as partners. It should be well thought out, as detailed as possible, and given as much consideration as the scientific sections in the form. Vague plans are to be avoided. When completing this section, please detail the following (**500 words max**):

- At what stage of the research programme will PPI Contributors and other stakeholders be involved (e.g., planning, design, implementation, management, evaluation, dissemination)?
- What will be expected of the PPI Contributors who become involved?
- What is the burden of involvement and how will people's time and expenses be compensated?
- Please describe any PPI Contributors or stakeholder involvement that has occurred to date in the development of the proposal.
- How will the planned involvement activities influence the research and how will you ensure that the involvement activities are not tokenistic?
- What key PPI Contributors and stakeholders will be involved, how many will be recruited, and from where will they be identified?
- Articulate the challenges that might arise from involving PPI Contributors in your research and how any issues will be prevented or overcome.
- What, if any, supports or training will be available to those involved?

- What PPI supports are available to you locally or national and how will these supports be utilised?

Please note: While patient participation and engagement activities are encouraged as part of an application and can be detailed as part of this plan, the Society will only fund applications that predominately include **involvement or partnership** activities. Please see Appendix 1 for further details and examples.

Sharing of Research Findings

As the largest voluntary funder of cancer research in Ireland, the Irish Cancer Society relies on the generous donations from the public in order to fund cancer research. A key priority is, therefore, to ensure that the public (including people affected by cancer) are kept up to date on research that is funded by the Society. In line with this, it is a requirement that all applicants produce a dissemination plan to include communication of their research to all relevant audiences, in particular the public and people affected by cancer.

Please describe your plan for sharing your findings. This may include printed or electronic articles, presentations, public engagement events, social media content, etc. (200 words max).

g) Impact Plan

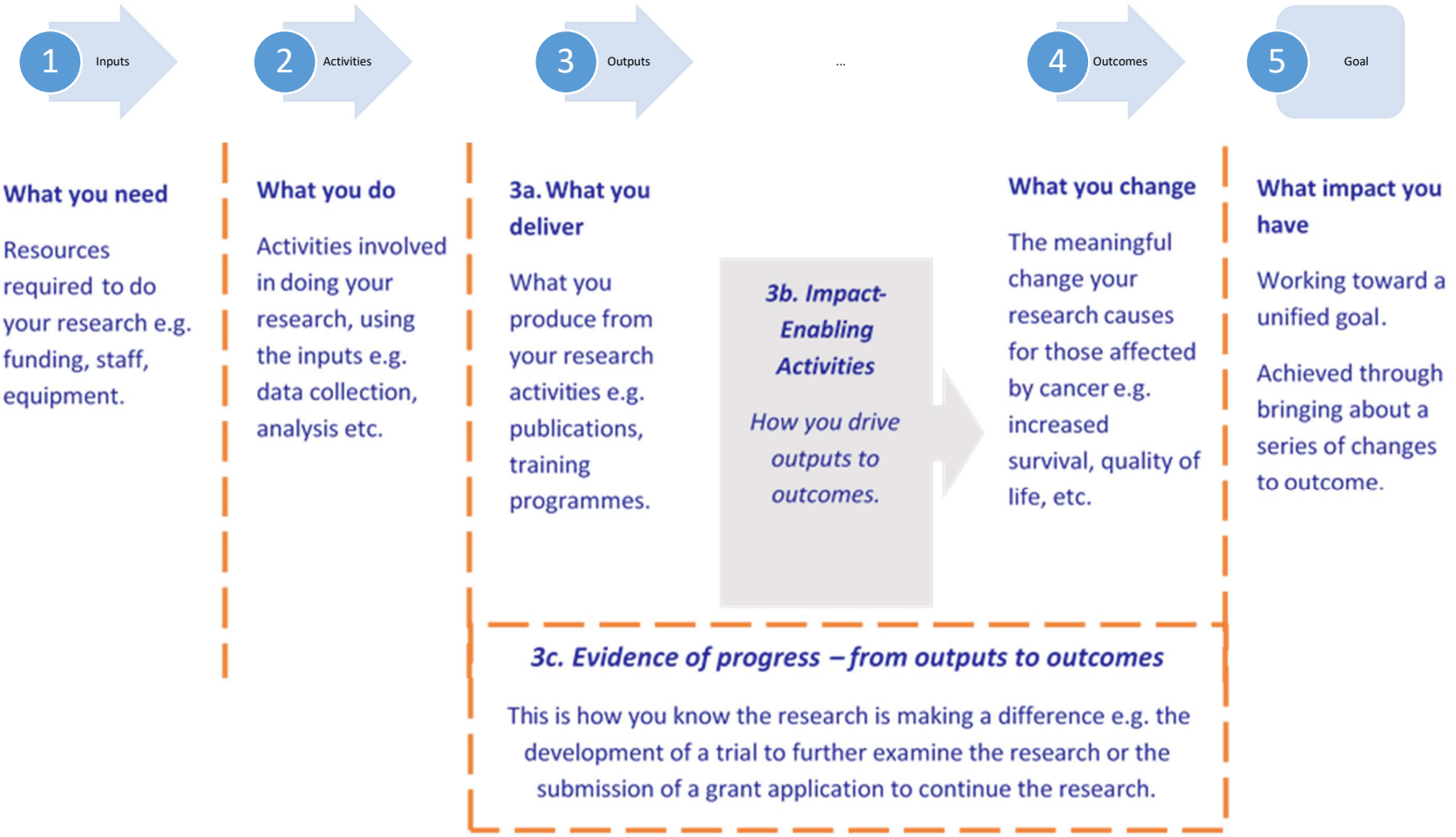
Please consult the Research Impact Framework (RIF; Appendix 2) when completing this section.

Creating impact from the research that we fund has always been of great importance to the Irish Cancer Society. The purpose of including an impact plan at the application stage is to focus all projects on working towards achieving impact from the outset in line with the Irish Cancer Society's strategic objectives 2020-2025.

The impact plan details how the input of research funding ultimately results in meaningful impact for people who are affected by cancer. Therefore, it is the impact of the research beyond academia i.e. the real life benefit of the research and how this may improve the lives of people who are affected by cancer.

It is important to start thinking about the pathway to impact from the start of the project. We are aware that the impact plan provided by researchers at the application stage may be somewhat limited as the project has not yet started, and it can be difficult to predict research results or how a research landscape may change over time.

Figure 2. Visual representation of the Irish Cancer Society Impact Process



When applying for a grant or planning a research project, you usually have a goal or question that you aim to answer by completing the project. However, it is the Society's duty to ensure that the research we fund makes a difference to the lives of those who are affected by cancer. Therefore, all research funded by the Irish Cancer Society should aim to have an impact on the lives of those who are affected by cancer and make steps towards a positive change. It is important that you are realistic; there is no need to overstate the impact of your research. Impact can be direct and indirect and it may happen slowly over time. The Irish Cancer Society is aware of this and understands every project in different.

For the Irish Cancer Society, research impact is defined as: ***'Research being used to bring about a positive change to the lives of people affected by cancer'.***

Thinking about the tangible impact of your research will provide you with a strong foundation when a grant gets underway. As such, plans should be as comprehensive and considered as possible. The recommended approach is to develop the impact plan by working backwards, from goal to inputs.

The impact plan consists of:

5. Goal

4. Outcomes

3*a*. Outputs

3*b*. Impact-enabling activities

3*c*. Evidence of progress

2. Activities

1. Inputs

Please note: Both the PPI and Scientific Review Panels will review this section. **It should be written in a manner that is accessible to both reviewer groups.** Further details on each section is included in the following table.

Section	Description & Information given to applicant	Worked Example
5. Goal	This is the goal of the Irish Cancer Society. It is pre-determined by the Strategy 2020-2025 and cannot be changed. This goal is that *'by 2025, 3 out of 4 Irish cancer patients will survive their diagnosis and everyone affected by the disease will have access to world-class treatment, care and support. In future, no one in Ireland will die from cancer.'* This is the goal that all research funded by the Irish Cancer Society should be working towards. Please note: you will not be required to add anything additional to this category of the impact section.	*This is fixed to the Irish Cancer Society set goal so will always be the same:* *By 2025, 3 out of 4 Irish cancer patients will survive their diagnosis and everyone affected by the disease will have access to world-class treatment, care and support. In future, no one in Ireland will die from cancer*
4. Outcome	To reach the above goal, a number of core changes or 'outcomes' must first be accomplished. These outcomes, identified through stakeholder consultation, will drive us toward our goal. You must select at least one outcome from the below list: — Treatments and diagnostics increase survival. — Treatments and diagnostics increase the quality of life of people affected by cancer. — Increased numbers of patients accessing clinical trials and early access programmes. — Screening increases survival.	*This project is about developing a new intervention to reduce levels of anxiety in people with cancer.* *Therefore, the first Irish Cancer Society outcome would be the most appropriate to use here:* *Outcome 6: Improved care and support increase the quality of life of people affected by cancer*

Section	Description & Information given to applicant	Worked Example
	— Improved care and support increase survival. — Improved care and support increase the quality of life of people affected by cancer. — People affected by cancer feel more empowered in their cancer journey. You may choose 'other' if you feel strongly that none of the other outcomes covers the potential outcome of your research. If 'other' is selected, then more detail will be required on the proposed outcome. By targeting a strategic outcome, every funded study funded is contributing to the Society's goal.	
3a. Outputs	Planned outputs for the project e.g. publications, newsletters, a website policy document, patents, information leaflets, reports, and training programmes etc. (**150 words max**). These are just examples and are not a comprehensive list. The appropriate outputs will vary for each type of project and what outcome has been selected.	*The publication of a peer reviewed paper on how effective the intervention was in reducing levels of anxiety.*
b. Impact-enabling activities	An output is unlikely to achieve a desired outcome on its own. Impact-enabling activities bridge the gap between ***outputs*** and ***outcomes.*** Please detail what activities need to occur for the outputs to impact the identified outcome. When will these activities take place? Information can be provided in narrative or bullet point format (**300 words max**).	*Using the above output as an example, the publication alone cannot be impactful if it is not shared with people who make decisions about that service. The impact enabling activity could be a workshop with key stakeholders (clinical*

Section	Description & Information given to applicant	Worked Example
		psychologists, people affected by cancer) to discuss the findings and how to implement them. Another activity would be the provision of a training course for the new intervention.
c. Evidence of progress	Please detail how you will measure the effectiveness of impact-enabling activities i.e. how do you know your activity made a difference? What evidence can be used to show this? Indicators may be qualitative (descriptive or non-numerical) or quantitative (numerical) (**300 words max**).	*Using the example provided in 3.b, the evidence of progress could be the development of a grant application in collaboration with key stakeholders to implement the intervention into clinical practice (this would be an example of qualitative evidence). It could also be the number of new clinical sites piloting the intervention (this would be an example of qualitative evidence).*
2. Activities	Please outline the activities that will take place as part of the research project. As a lot of this has been provided in detail as part of the methodology section of your application, a high-level summary of what will be done over the course of the funding period is sufficient. Bullet points may be used (**150 words max**).	*A Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) to compare the effectiveness of the new intervention to routine care.*
1. Inputs	Please detail the resources needed for the project. As a lot of this has been provided in detail as part of your application, a high-level summary is sufficient. Bullet points may be used (**150 words max**).	• *Funding to pay for the research project* • *Materials to undertake the experiments* • *A piece of software to conduct the data analysis*

h) Organisational Support

Organisational support is very important for this award, for both the Clinical Nurse Lead and the Academic Research Lead. Indeed, assessment of applications will favour those with the strongest letters of support.

The award must be processed through a higher host institution approved by the Health Research Board. Therefore, the academic institution of the Academic Research Lead must be aware of (and support) the application and agree to process the award.

Additionally, the organisation of the Clinical Nurse Lead may need to support research on-site. For projects which budget the part-time or full-time backfill of clinical staff, the supporting hospital is explicitly undertaking to use the award to backfill the staff time.

In this section, the Clinical Nurse Lead is required to answer the following question (max 300 words):

- Please detail the steps that would need to be taken to ensure hospital sign-off for this award (and making necessary arrangements) should you be successful.
- If you have academic commitments these must also be considered.

Also required is an unequivocal and strong **Organisational Letter of Support** (in PDF format) from both the organisation of the Clinical Nurse Lead and the higher education institute of the Academic Research Lead. **Letters must be signed by the relevant person within each organisation.**

- The Clinical Nurse Lead's organisational letter of support should be from the applicant's Director of Nursing (or equivalent). The letter must acknowledge that the Director of Nursing, and the organisation more generally, is aware of supports the application and will enable the applicant to fulfil research obligations. **This support includes the appointment of new staff, or staff to cover the Nurse Lead's buy-out time (minimum 1 day per week).** The letter should describe how this support will be accomplished in the context of providing a clinical service. In addition, the clinical site must agree to provide indemnity cover that may be required by any staff carrying out research at the clinical site.
- The Academic Research Lead's organisational letter of support should be completed by the head of department at the host institution. It must include acknowledgement that the organisation is aware of the application and will act as host institution should the applicant team be successful. This letter should also include acknowledgement that they will provide the staff of the award with research space, access to resources, and the appropriate insurance cover.

i) Budget

All applications should include a detailed budget. Indirect costs/overheads are not eligible costs for Irish Cancer Society awards. Please consult the Irish Cancer Society budget spending and expenses guidelines when developing your grant budget (see Appendix 3).

Approval of all budget items is at the discretion of the Irish Cancer Society. Any budgeted costs that do not adhere to spending guidelines risk rejection.

Direct costs that can be requested for the following budget categories:

Budget Item	Details
Personnel costs	Salary costs should be calculated using the most up-do-date HSE or IUA salary scales, as appropriate, and include employer PRSI and pension contributions. Applicable annual increments (e.g. 2.5%) per annum are allowed. Backfill for the Clinical Nurse Lead's time should be budgeted for a **minimum** of 1 day per week. Salary costs for the Academic Research Lead cannot be budgeted. A breakdown of each salary cost is required, detailing and justifying a) the point, level, and scale used, b) the employer PRSI contribution, c) the employer pension contribution, d) any annual increments, and e) the FTE (full time equivalent) of each post. **Scales:** HSE: https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/benefitsservices/pay IUA: https://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/researcher-salary-scales/ **If budgeting for a MSc/PhD** The Irish Cancer Society will fund the stipend of postgraduate students (PhD and MSc) at a **minimum** rate of €18,500 per year for up to four year's full time (in the case of a PhD scholar) or up to two years full-time (in the case of MSc students). The annual stipend may go above €18,500 at the discretion of the research supervisor. Nurses and Allied Health Professionals who are currently employed in their professional field and will be taking time out of this employment to undertake the PhD may avail of a pro-rata stipend based on IUA rates (inclusive of PRSI and employer pension contributions) commensurate with professional experience and career stage. You must state which scale is being

	used (including a hyperlink to the relevant scale), the level, and point on that scale. All salaries should be inclusive of PRSI, pension and increases, which should be detailed in the budget justification.
Registration fees	University registration fees may be budgeted up to €8,500 per annum. An annual increase may be included and it is the applicant's responsibility to budget accordingly.
Running costs	Running costs are costs associated with conducting the principal research activities (e.g. materials and consumables, survey costs, travel for participants, transcription costs).
Training & education costs	Education and training for members of the research team may be budgeted. This may include attending courses, workshops, professional development training, etc. Include any training-related travel and accommodation costs here.
Travel and Dissemination costs	Costs associated with research dissemination may be budgeted e.g., poster printing, open-access publication costs, engagement events, conference attendance, etc. Include any dissemination-related travel and accommodation costs here.
PPI costs	Costs associated with involvement activities should be budgeted. **A minimum of 5% of the budget (i.e., €8,000) must be spent on PPI.** Research participation costs (e.g., participant travel) should not be included here.

j) Validation Summary

The validation summary page will notify you of any incomplete required. You will not be able to submit the application until all required fields are complete.

5. Submission of the Application

The application is ready for submission once the form has been validated on the validation summary page. This will also highlight anyone who is yet to confirm their participation. Once

the application has been validated, it may be submitted by the lead applicant. **In the case of joint lead applicants, the application must be submitted by the applicant who originally created the application form.**

The application will then be routed to any required signatories. The application will not be received by the Society until all signatories have approved it. All signatories must approve the application before the application deadline. **It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure that signatories are given sufficient time to approve the application before the deadline.**

For this grant application, signatories include both lead applicants.

Applications must be received by the Society prior to the deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Application Checklist

- Completed application form
- Gantt chart
- Any research images (if relevant)
- Two applicant CVs
- Clinical Site Letter of Support
- Host Institution Letter of Support

6. Application Assessment

The Irish Cancer Society bases its funding decisions on the recommendations of an external review panel. However, the Society withholds the right to reject any funding application at its own discretion.

Incomplete, ineligible, or late applications will be rejected by the Society and may not proceed to external review.

6.1. Conflicts of Interest

The Society endeavours to ensure that external reviewers are free of any conflicts of interest that might unduly bias the decision making process.

6.2. Assessment Procedure

Applications are reviewed by a panel of international academic/clinical experts (scientific panel) **AND** a panel of experts by experience (PPI panel). The scientific panel will consist of experts in the areas of social science, nursing, and allied health. The PPI panel will be made up of individuals with a lived experience of cancer.

Sections of the application will be assessed in the following way:

	PPI Panel	Scientific Panel
Full Application	– PPI Summary: ○ Project Summary ○ Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) Plan ○ Sharing of Research Findings – Research Impact Plan – Gantt Chart – Budget	– Project Outline – Scientific Research Programme – Applicants' CVs – Research Partnership – Research Impact Plan – Career Development Plan – Organisational Support – Budget
Interviews	Present	Present

The Scientific Panel will not be formally assessing any of the PPI panel's sections, and vice versa. As such, it is vital that the sections reviewed by the PPI panel are written in **plain accessible English**. Failure to do this may result in the PPI representatives being unable to accurately score and provide feedback on these sections of your application.

The review panel will be asked to provide feedback on the budget, which the Society will take into consideration. The approval of all grant budget items is at the discretion of the Irish Cancer Society.

Scientific reviewers will score applications based on:

- The scientific merit of the proposed research, including feasibility of timelines;
- The strength and relevance of the applicant team's academic and clinical experience
- Both applicants' demonstrable commitment to cancer research;
- A demonstrable benefit of the proposal to the research skills, capacity, and career of the Clinical Nurse Lead;
- The strength and clarity of the impact plan to translate research funding into meaningful impact, aligned with the goal and outcomes of the Irish Cancer Society;

- The strength of endorsement from the applicants' organisation and the support structures available to both lead applicants.

PPI reviewers will score each application based on:

- Rationale for research and its relative importance to people affected by cancer;
- Feasibility of the proposed interactions with participants (i.e., will the research work in practice);
- Clarity and feasibility of the PPI plan (e.g., use of local resources, how genuine the plan is, inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, timelines etc.);
- A clear understanding by the researcher of the value of involving PPI contributors in their research project;
- Whether the PPI activities constitute true involvement and not participation/engagement;
- Whether the applicant's dissemination plan is feasible and includes all relevant stakeholders;
- The strength and clarity of the impact plan to translate research funding into meaningful impact, aligned with the goal and outcomes of the Irish Cancer Society.

6.3. Assessment Outcome

Review scores and comments will be collated and all applications will be discussed at a review panel meeting. The review panel will select which applications should proceed to interview stage. Applicants will be informed of the outcome by email. Reviewer feedback will be available to all applicants.

7. Next Stage: Interview

Applications shortlisted at the paper application will be invited to interview by email.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend a virtual interview the week starting October 2nd, 2023. The interview panel will be made up of scientific and PPI reviewers, in addition to an Irish Cancer Society representative. **It is the applicants' responsibility to make sure they are available for interview.**

Applicants will be asked to present a summary of their project, including a response to the review panel's comments. This will be followed by a question and answer session. Applicants

will be expected to demonstrate a detailed and critical understanding of their proposed project. The final funding decision will be co-decided by the scientific and PPI reviewers.

8. Contact

If you require assistance with the online grant management system or have any questions about the grant call, please contact the Irish Cancer Society Research Department:

Email: grants@irishcancer.ie