



Guidelines for Applicants - Expression of Interest (EOI)

Irish Cancer Society Translational Research Scholarship Programme 2021

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General Introduction to the Irish Cancer Society Translational Research Scholarship Programme

The Irish Cancer Society is now accepting Expression of Interest applications for the Translational Research Scholarship Programme 2021.

The objective of the Irish Cancer Society Research Scholarship Programme is to offer excellent graduates the opportunity to undertake postgraduate training in translational biomedical cancer research. There is scholarship funding available for one applicant of the highest calibre: this scholarship must focus on translational biomedical cancer research. We strongly encourage applications in the area of cancers with unmet needs. Definitions and descriptions of (i.) translational biomedical research and (ii.) cancers with unmet needs, as applicable to this programme, will follow in section 2.3.

During the four-year programme, Scholars will undertake general and cancer-specific training while participating in structured PhD programmes, and will have the opportunity to gain experience at an international research institution through a mobility/capacity building element. This will be subject to ongoing restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

All eligible EOI applications will be reviewed by an international panel and shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application.

Applications to the Translational Research Scholarships are accessible through the Irish Cancer Society Gateway Grant Tracker online system.

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Irish Cancer Society Translational Research Scholarship Programme 2021

1. Introduction: Translational Research Scholarship

The objective of the Irish Cancer Society Translational Research Scholarship Programme is to offer excellent biomedical, life science, medical, nursing and allied healthcare graduates the opportunity to undertake postgraduate training in **translational biomedical cancer research**. One scholarship will be awarded.

Translational biomedical research can be defined as “bench to bedside”, or patient-focused research, whereby the aim of the research is to **translate existing knowledge about cancer biology into techniques and tools that will accelerate progress towards patient benefit**. For the translational research scholarship programme, we will only accept translational biomedical research projects. Please see section 2.3 and the FAQ document for more information on translational research*.

In the EOI application form applicants will be asked to describe how the research is translational ($T_{0.5}$ and/or T_1 phase) as opposed to discovery research (T_0 phase) and describe the ultimate long-term end goal of the research in terms of the impact of the research on people affected by cancer. The applicant will also be asked if the project addresses a cancer with unmet needs.

A key strategic priority for the Irish Cancer Society over the next five years is research centred on cancers with unmet needs. Therefore we strongly encourage applicants with research projects focused on addressing a cancer with unmet needs to consider applying for this Scholarship**.

Although we encourage applications in the area of Cancers with Unmet Needs, all eligible translational research projects are welcome. Applications will be judged based on merit and no cancer type will receive preferential judgement under review. Only the application of the highest quality will be awarded funding, regardless of cancer type. Please see section 3 for more information on our definition of a ‘Cancer with Unmet Needs’.

** Please see Section 2.3 and the FAQ document for more information on translational research. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the project fulfils the project eligibility criteria for this scheme. If you are uncertain about your project’s eligibility, please contact us (grants@irishcancer.ie) in advance of preparing your application. The project eligibility **FAQ deadline is Thursday 18 February at 3pm**. Project eligibility queries will not be addressed after this date.*

*** Please see Section 3 and the FAQ document for more information on what is considered a cancer with unmet needs.*

1.1 Funding

The total value of the Irish Cancer Society Research Scholarship covering stipend, fees, materials and dissemination will be €153,000 for a maximum of four years.

A mandatory provision of €1,000 is included within this budget to support Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in the proposed research project*.

An additional **mobility/capacity building funding** of up to a maximum of €5000 will be available. This important element is intended to provide awardees experience that goes beyond the traditional research environment in developing the awardee's career. In order to encourage well-rounded researchers with varied experiences, applicants are required to develop a mobility or capacity building element as part of their award application. Information on this element will be provided to the applicants shortlisted to the full application stage.

A further fund of up to €2000 will also be available in Year 3 & 4 of the scholarship to contribute towards dissemination of research in a high impact journal. This funding is separate to the travel and dissemination budget which must be detailed in the budget section of the application. The successful scholar will need to apply for this dissemination funding support at least three months in advance of the planned publication. Each application (scholar mobility/capacity building element and dissemination awards respectively) will be reviewed before a funding decision is made. Further details of the dissemination fund will be provided to the applicants shortlisted to the full application stage.

Please note a detailed budget is not required at the EOI stage, and full details of budget guidelines will be provided to applicants that get shortlisted to the full application stage of this funding award.

Please note that the €1,000 available for PPI may be supplemented with funds remaining from the student's annual budget. However, the annual budget may **not be supplemented with the PPI fund.*

1.2. Timeframe

Thursday 21 January	Expression of Interest (EOI) Applications Open
Thursday 18 February 3pm	Project eligibility FAQ deadline
Wednesday 24 February 3pm	EOI online submission Deadline
March	Review of EOI applications for shortlisting
Early April	Shortlisted applicants invited to submit full application
Thursday 6 May 3pm	Full Application deadline
May-June	Review of full applications
Mid-June	Shortlisted applicants Invited to Interview
June- July	Interviews (will be held virtually)
July	Announcement of awards

Further details of important dates for the full application stage will be given to shortlisted applicants. *Please note: this is for guidance purposes only, and is subject to change.*

2. Eligibility Criteria

2.1. Applicant Eligibility Criteria

Applications from individuals that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be assessed. We therefore strongly recommend you read the following eligibility criteria to be made aware of requirements for the Applicant, the Host Institute, and the Research Team:

Eligible Applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- You must have obtained (or be about to obtain) a first class honours or upper second class honours bachelor degree or equivalent*. If examination results are not known at the time of application, the Irish Cancer Society may make a provisional offer on condition that the applicant's final grade for their bachelor's (or equivalent) degree is a first class or upper second-class honours.
** If you did not receive a first class honours or upper second class honours bachelor degree but received (or are about to obtain) distinction- or merit-level in a master's degree you are eligible to apply.*
- You must not be registered for a PhD prior to application. This funding is for a four year PhD only, therefore individuals undertaking an MSc on their chosen project will not be eligible to use this funding to transfer onto the PhD register.
- This must be your first PhD.
- You must complete the PhD at an Institution in the Republic of Ireland. This must be one of the [HRB's approved host institutions](#).

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that they fulfil the eligibility criteria for this scheme. If you are uncertain about your eligibility for this scheme, please contact us (grants@irishcancer.ie) in advance of preparing your application and before **Thursday 18 February at 3pm**.

2.2. Supervisor and Research Team Eligibility Criteria

- Supervisors

The proposed PhD project must have at least 2 Supervisors, both of who are active in the supervision of the work.

- One Supervisor must be based at the proposed host institute and have a minimum of 5 years post-doctoral experience and hold a contract that covers the period proposed for the PhD.
- The other supervisor must have a minimum of 1 year post-doctoral experience*.
- Ideally both supervisors should hold a contract that covers the duration of the PhD. However, given one of the supervisors is only required to have 1 year post-doctoral experience, we will consider any co-supervisor who can demonstrate their commitment to the supervision of the student throughout the whole period.

We recommend applicants ensure that their supervisors also meet the host institution's requirements for a research supervisor. Please refer to the guidelines for supervisors specific to their research organisation.

**Please Note: We are allowing one supervisor to have a minimum of 1 year post-doctoral experience to strongly encourage more junior researchers to act as a PhD supervisor. The proposed supervisor's stage of career will be taken into account when reviewing each supervisor's CV.*

- Research Team

Research teams eligible to supervise a Research Scholar will include those in Irish higher education institutions as well as other institutions in Ireland who can demonstrate to the international peer review panel a sufficiently high international research reputation.

2.3. Application Eligibility Criteria

- Translational Research Project Eligibility

Translational biomedical research can be defined as “bench to bedside”, or patient-focused research: the aim of translational research is to translate existing knowledge about cancer biology into techniques and tools that will accelerate progress towards patient benefit.

Figure 1 outlines the Irish Cancer Society Phases of Translational Biomedical Research. T₀ research is defined as discovery research, it involves gaining knowledge and the understanding of biological or disease-specific mechanisms. T_{0.5} research builds upon the discoveries from phase T₀ and improves the translational potential of basic biomedical discoveries through testing pre-clinical studies. T₁ research yields knowledge that demonstrates potential new strategies for treatment and diagnosis, through proof-of-concept phase 1 clinical trials.

For this translational research scholarship programme, we will only accept translational biomedical research projects (**T_{0.5} and/or T₁ phase**) *. Applications where the research is predominantly at T₀ phase with some proposed aspects of the project being T_{0.5} phase will not be accepted. Examples of eligible projects are provided in the Translational Research Scholarship FAQ document.

Please note, applications in the areas of prevention, survivorship, drug design, SAR (structure–activity relationship) analysis, or drug screening will not be considered at this time. In addition, applications where the project is focused on **non-biomedical** translational research are not eligible for this award.

** It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the project fulfils the project eligibility criteria for this scheme. If you are uncertain about your project's eligibility, please contact us (grants@irishcancer.ie) in advance of preparing your application. The project eligibility **FAQ deadline is Thursday 18 February at 3pm**. Project eligibility queries will not be addressed after this date.*

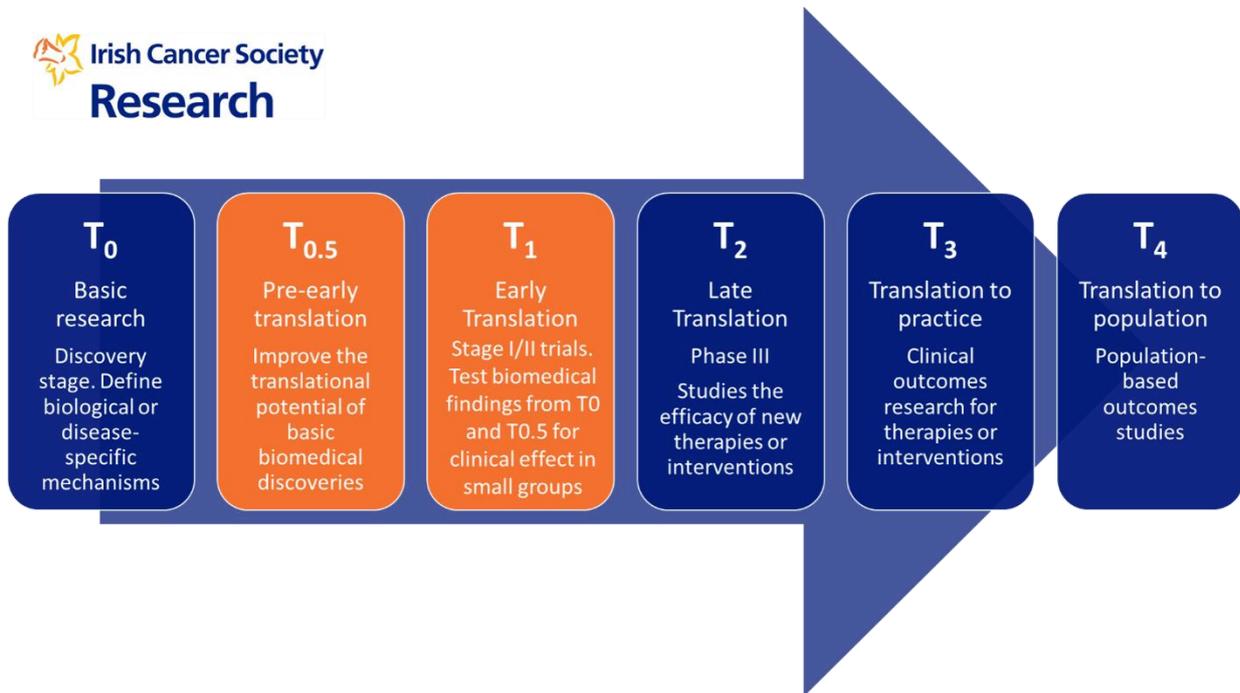


Figure 1: The Irish Cancer Society Phases of Translational Biomedical Research.

- 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](#).

3. Cancers with Unmet Needs

Advances in prevention, detection and treatment have revolutionised cancer medicine and survival. Outcome has significantly improved in Ireland in the last 30 years with 6 in 10 cancer patients now surviving at least 5 years after their diagnosis.

However, the pace of progress has not been the same for every cancer. Globally and nationally survival has not dramatically increased in some cancer groups such as rare cancers, cancers affecting children and young adults, as well as hard-to-treat cancers like primary and metastatic forms of lung, pancreatic and oesophageal cancers, and brain tumours. These cancers continue to have unmet needs in terms of a lack of effective treatment options and/or a lack of research capacity within the area, both of which contributes to inferior survival and outcome.

A key priority for the Irish Cancer Society is to ensure that all patients in our community benefit from world class cancer research and expertise, and that the gap in survival between different cancer groups is closed. In line with this commitment the Irish Cancer Society encourages applications focused on research in a Cancer with Unmet Needs.

While there are many definitions of such a scope and all cancers have inherent challenges for those who are affected by them, in this award cancers with unmet needs are defined as:

- Rare cancers (annual incidence of less than six cases per 100,000)
- Childhood and youth cancers (aged 0–24 years)
- Lung, oesophageal, pancreatic cancers and brain tumours (primary and metastatic forms)

Although we strongly encourage applications in the area of Cancers with Unmet Needs, all applications will be judged based on merit: no cancer type will receive preferential judgement under review. Only the application of the highest quality will be awarded funding, regardless of cancer type.

4. Public and Patient Involvement

The Irish Cancer Society is 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.

In line with this commitment, it is expected that all applicants include a PPI plan (and the associated €1,000 budget allocation) within their application. Summarised details of planned PPI is expected at the Expression of Interest stage, all applicants that are shortlisted to progress to full application will be required to incorporate all comments from the PPI reviewers and provide a revised PPI plan in their full application. It is expected that all applicants will predominantly incorporate patient “involvement”, activities as part of their plan and will be required to submit a budget and dissemination plan. Each successful scholarship recipient will be expected to attend a PPI development workshop during the first year of their PhD.

Please note, people affected by cancer, “PPI reviewers”, will review the PPI sections of the application, therefore it is important that all applicants carefully review the supporting detail included in our PPI guidance document which can be found in Appendix 1.

5. Application Procedure

Prior to applying, you **must** read this document through to completion. You must identify at least two suitable research supervisors, and discuss the proposed research project with these supervisors before completing the application form.

The scholarship application should be initiated by the applicant, with strong input from the supervisors throughout. **The application must NOT be written by the supervisors alone.** Applicants who will be invited to attend the interview stages of assessment must display an in-depth knowledge of the proposed research project and demonstrate the ability to think independently. Therefore, it is essential that the applicant themselves lead the scholarship application.

5.1. How to Apply

Applications must be completed and submitted through the Irish Cancer Society Grant Tracker online 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 of the registration form.

5.2. Overview of the Application Process

When you enter your login details you will be directed to the Portal Homepage. 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

5.3. Making an application

When you have ensured that all your basic details are inputted then you can proceed to start a new grant application. This can be done by returning to the Portal Homepage and clicking to apply for funding from one of our grant streams. Or alternatively through the 'My Applications', tab on the left hand side of the page, and clicking the 'New Application', button.

You will then be asked what Grant Type you would like to apply for. Click 'Apply', for the grant type detailed as 'Translational Research Scholarship - EOI 2021'.

5.4. Eligibility Criteria

Once you click 'Apply', you will be required to tick that you meet all of the eligibility criteria before you can proceed to make an application. If you do not meet all criteria, then you will be unable to make an application.

6. The Application Form

Once you have indicated that you meet all eligibility criteria you will then be directed to the application form.

There are 9 sections outlined on the left hand side of the page:

1. Introduction
2. Project Outline
3. Applicant Details
 - a. Applicant CV
 - b. Personal Statement
4. Supervisors
 - a. Add supervisors
 - b. Supervisors' CVs
 - c. Declaration of Support - Supervisors
5. Project Summary
6. Public Patient Involvement plan
7. Sharing of Research Findings
8. Declaration of Support - Head of Department
9. Validation Summary

These sections are to be viewed and completed. It is recommended that you save the information as you complete each section. This can be done by clicking 'Save' as you go along. 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.

As you proceed through the sections you will see a small blue question mark icon next to some of the sections. By clicking on this icon you will get more information on the section to be completed.

Sections that are required to be filled out have a red circle icon next to them. You will not be able to proceed with the application if these sections are not completed.

1. Introduction

This section gives overview information on the scholarship programme.

2. Project Outline

Please enter the details of your application into this section. Input and save the information as required under the following headings:

- a) Proposed PhD Title
- b) Proposed Start Date - Must not be before 01/09/21
- c) Duration - Must be 48 months
- d) Proposed Research Institute
- e) Cancer Type
- f) Is this considered a 'cancer with unmet needs'?
- g) Keywords
- h) Research Type
- i) Discipline
- j) Translational research stage and overview (**150 words max**)

3. Applicant Details

a. Curriculum Vitae

Please upload your CV - completed using the template provided (the template is downloadable in this section on the online system or on the website). More information on each section is given in the template.

- Name
- Contact details
- Academic qualifications

Please complete a table for each year of your qualification. For example, one table for Year 1, another table for Year 2, etc.

Example of a completed academic qualifications table for one year:

Degree/Qualification	BSc Genetics
Year	1
From	01/09/17
To	01/06/18
Subjects	Molecular Genetics, Emerging Therapies, Drug Discovery and Development, etc....
Institute	University College Dublin (UCD)
Department/School/Division	Pharmacology
Country	Ireland
Grade	70% or GPA 3.1 (First Class)

- Research experience
- Employment
- Publications
- Research grants

b. Personal Statement

The personal statement section should include only relevant information which will add merit to your application (**300 words max**).

The following must be covered:

- Reasons for pursuing a PhD in cancer research
- Reasons for choosing the proposed research centre and supervisors

4. Supervisors

a. Add supervisors

You must add your **two** proposed supervisors to the application. Your supervisors will have to confirm participation in the application and also approve the application after you complete it and before it is finally submitted to the Society.

To add your supervisors, you can search for your supervisors by entering their email address. If the supervisor has already created an account, then they will appear on the list. To add them as your supervisor, click 'Select'. Please note that on saving, the contact will be added to the Application as a Supervisor and they will receive a notification of this via email.

If your supervisor does not already have an account, you can click 'Add a New Contact' and enter their name and email address. Please note that on saving, the contact will be added to the Application as a Supervisor. They will receive a notification of this via email.

Please note you must upload a CV from each of your proposed supervisors (uploaded in Section 4b - *Supervisors' CVs*).

b. Supervisors' CVs

Please upload the CVs of your two proposed primary supervisors. These CVs must be completed using the template provided (this template* is downloadable in this section on the online system or on the website).

**Please note this template is different to the Applicant CV Template.*

Please ensure that you first have the permission from your supervisors to upload their CVs.

c. Declaration of Support - Supervisors

Please upload a declaration of support from each of your two proposed primary supervisors. The Declaration of Support Template is downloadable from this section on the online system or on the website. This must be completed on headed paper.

5. Project Summary

Please give a summary of your proposed research project (**1000 words max**).

This should include summary details of the following:

- Background information/existing literature/preliminary results
- The hypothesis and the objectives
- Methodology
- Summary and conclusions

6. Public and Patient Involvement plan

The Irish Cancer Society is dedicated to putting patients, families, survivors, supporters, and the public at the very heart of what we do.

In this section, please provide a summary of your research project and details of your plan for integrating patient involvement into your research project. Do not use scientific or technical language. For more information please review the supporting detail included in our PPI guidance document which can be found in Appendix 1.

Please note that patient involvement is a fundamental aspect of the application, a revised patient involvement plan will be required at the full application stage (feedback from the EOI PPI review should be incorporated into the full application). PPI reviewers will review this section.

We strongly recommend that applicants consult Appendix 1 before completing these sections.

Please detail the following:

A. Project Summary (patient involvement):

The project summary section will be used to set the context for the PPI reviewers.

When completing this section, please carefully consider the following questions: **(200 words max)**

- What is the background information to your research?
- What is the overall aim of your research project?
- Steps in the research project
- How is the proposed research relevant and important to patients and the public?

B. Patient involvement plan:

The patient involvement plan should detail how patients will be involved in the research project. It should be well thought out and as detailed as possible. Vague plans are to be avoided. The patient involvement plan should be given as much consideration as the scientific sections in the application.

When completing this section, please carefully consider the following questions: **(350 words max)**

- What is the overall goal of involving patients?
- What stage will patients be involved in your research project? E.g. planning, design, implementation, management, evaluation and/or dissemination.
- How exactly will you involve patients? Give as detailed information as possible, for example numbers of patients involved and how they will be recruited, what exactly will be required from them. What are the logistics of the involvement activities etc.?
- Articulate the challenges that might arise from involving patients in your research, and how any issues will be prevented.
- What supports will be available for patients involved, (should they be needed)?

Please note, while patient participation and engagement activities are permitted and encouraged as part of an application and can be detailed as part of the patient involvement plan, the Society will only fund applicants who predominately include “involvement” activities as part of their plan.

Please see Appendix 1 for further details and examples.

7. 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 sharing research findings with 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. (250 words max).

8. Declaration of Support - Head of Department

Please upload a declaration of support from the head of department. The Declaration of Support Template is downloadable from this section on the online system or on the website. This must be completed on headed paper.

The declaration of support required from the head of department is simply a standard letter stating that they are aware of and support the application.

9. Validation Summary

In this section any required fields in the application form that have not been completed will be detailed. You will not be able to submit the application until all required fields are completed.

7. Submission of the Application.

Final submission can only occur after the signatories (two supervisors) approve the application. Please see below for more information.

The application is ready for submission for signatory approval once:

- It has been verified that all required questions are answered in the correct manner on the application form.
- Both supervisors have confirmed their participation.
 - An email will be sent to each supervisor requesting their participation when they are added to the application.

The application is ready for final submission to the Irish Cancer Society once:

- The application submitted by the applicant is approved by each signatory (two supervisors).
 - The supervisors will be notified by email once the applicant has submitted the application.
- The signatories will be able to see the full application in PDF format on their online portal.
- The signatories may approve or reject at this stage.
 - The applicant will be notified of both approval and rejection of the application. Rejected applications will be returned to the applicant.

Applications that have been submitted by the lead applicant but not approved by the signatories before the deadline will not be considered. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that each signatory approves the application before the deadline. Please ensure that the application is submitted with sufficient time allowed for each signatory to approve.

8. Assessment Procedure

Applications will be reviewed by both international scientific reviewers AND patient representatives (PPI reviewers). Sections of the application will be assessed in the following way:

	PPI Reviewer	Scientific Reviewer
Expression of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Summary – will be used to set context for PPI and Sharing of Research Findings plans • Patient Involvement (PPI) Plan • Sharing of Research Findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant CV • Supervisors' CVs • Project Summary • Personal Statement • Declaration of Support-Supervisors
Full Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to PPI Reviewers' Comments • Project Summary – will be used to set context for PPI and Sharing of Research Findings plans • Patient Involvement (PPI) Plan • PPI Budget • Sharing of Research Findings • Impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to Scientific Reviewers' Comments • Research Programme • Research Environment • Mobility Element • Budget • References
Interview	Present	Present

Please note that this is for guidance purposes only. Applicants however will be notified of any changes to the review process.

Scientific reviewers will evaluate applications based on the scientific merit of the proposed research; the strength of the applicant and the applicant's commitment to cancer research; and the strength of supervisory support. PPI reviewers will evaluate applications based on their potential impact, and relevance to people affected by cancer. In addition to the strength of patient involvement (PPI) and dissemination plans.

Please note, the scientific reviewers will not be assessing any of the PPI reviewer sections, and *vice versa*. As such, it is vital that the sections reviewed by PPI representatives are written in accessible plain English. Failure to do this may result in the PPI representatives not being able to provide feedback on these sections of your application.

Incomplete or ineligible applications and those submitted after the deadline will not be assessed.

8.1. Conflicts of Interest

We will endeavour to ensure that the international peer review panel and PPI panel chosen do not have any conflicts of interest regarding the applications they are assessing.

8.2. Assessment Procedure

The following will be assessed by the international panel of scientific reviewers:

- Applicant CV
- Supervisors' CVs
- Project Summary
- Personal Statement
- Declaration of Support – Supervisors

The following will be assessed by the PPI panel of reviewers:

- Project summary
- Public and patient involvement plan
- Sharing of research findings

8.3. Assessment outcome

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of review by email. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a Full Application.

9. Full Application

Applicants whose EOIs are shortlisted will be invited to submit a full application. For the full application, you will be required to respond to the comments the academic and PPI reviewer provided at the EOI stage. You also will be asked to provide greater detail on all aspects of the proposal including: Research programme (including basis for research, translational research details, aims, methods, ethical approval, first year objectives, SWOT analysis, Gantt chart, public and patient involvement plan, sharing of research findings, research environment, mobility/capacity building plan,) budget and impact plan. The full application will be reviewed by international scientific reviewers (research programme, mobility, budgets) and PPI reviewers (full Public and patient involvement plan, involvement plan budget).

The top applicants from the full application stage will be invited to attend a virtual interview in June/July 2021.

10. Application Checklist

- Completed Application form.
 - Including the upload of:
 - Applicant's CV
 - Both proposed Supervisors' CVs
 - Declaration of Support from both Supervisors
 - Declaration of Support- Head of Department

The application must be submitted to the Irish Cancer Society **ONLINE by 3pm Wednesday 24 February 2021.**

11. Contact

If you require assistance with the online application system or have any queries about the application which are not currently addressed in the FAQ document, please contact us:

Email: grants@irishcancer.ie

Appendix 1: Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research Guidelines

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Appendix 1: Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research Guidelines

1. Background

The Irish Cancer Society is committed to putting patients, families, survivors, carers, supporters and the public at the very heart of what we do. In keeping with this commitment, we are embedding Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in our research processes. The majority of Irish Cancer Society grant calls will require researchers to detail their plans for including patients in their proposed research. These involvement sections will be reviewed by people affected by cancer (PPI reviewers).

This document is intended as an additional resource on PPI for researchers planning on submitting a grant application to the Irish Cancer Society.

Information specific to individual grant calls can be found in the Guidelines to Applicants document for each call.

2. What is Public and Patient Involvement in research?

Interaction with patients and the public can be contextualised in the many different ways people with cancer can interact with research, specifically by means of *participation*, *engagement*, and *involvement* outlined below.

Participation

A person with cancer may be recruited into, and take part in, a research study e.g. a clinical trial, and provide data of some form.

Engagement

Engagement is when the researcher communicates and disseminates research information, for example, at science festivals, public talks, television programmes, or radio.

Involvement

Involvement is distinct from participation or engagement. Where participation and engagement are conducted ‘to’, ‘about’, and ‘for’ people with cancer, involvement is conducted ‘with’ or ‘by’ people with cancer¹. People with cancer can be involved at any stage of the research process, from conceptualisation to dissemination.

Involvement does not refer to researchers raising awareness of research, sharing knowledge or engaging and creating a dialogue with the public. It does also not refer to the recruitment of patients or members of the public as participants in research. However, these different activities – involvement, engagement and participation – are often linked and, although they are distinct, can complement each other¹.

3. Why is PPI important?

PPI is becoming increasingly important in research. The Irish Cancer Society is committed to expanding the involvement of those affected by cancer in the research that the Society funds, and in the funding decision-making process. This commitment is reinforced by the Irish Governments’ National Cancer Strategy (2017-2026)², which highlighted:

“Patient involvement in cancer research improves the relevance of research questions, the quality, acceptability and feasibility of research conduct and the likelihood of uptake of research outputs.”

PPI creates a partnership between people affected by cancer and researchers. It is more than a tokenistic gesture to comply with policy, but can provide a real and substantial benefit to all key stakeholders. While not without its challenges, PPI can:

- Promote a sense of empowerment and value among patients³
- Enhance patient trust in researchers³
- Improve researchers’ insight into their own research area³
- Help researchers identify barriers and come up with solutions to research³
- Increase trust and acceptability in the patient community of research findings³
- Inform the provision, access, and location of healthcare services⁴
- Improve the dialogue between healthcare professionals and patients⁴

Specific to the cancer setting, PPI may be used by patients as a resource, to make sense of living with a chronic condition⁵. People with cancer report feeling enhanced knowledge and skills from taking part in PPI, as well as feeling they contributed to research by providing a lay perspective (i.e., practical knowledge about being a patient with cancer)⁶.

As such, PPI can be a valuable tool in the research process for both patients and researchers, and the Irish Cancer Society aims to continually to build on its PPI work.

4. PPI is a partnership

PPI is about creating a partnership between researchers and people affected by cancer, whereby all contribute collaboratively in varying degrees towards the research process or the research output. Each voice is of equal importance in PPI.

Involving people affected by cancer as early as possible in your planning process, and ensuring on-going clarity about their activities, roles and goals, is crucial to the success of PPI

Be clear from the outset what will be required from all involved in the patient involvement activities. A good exercise to do is to complete a role description for the role of the patient involved along with a description of what your role (the researcher) is with regards to PPI. This is beneficial as it is clear to both the researcher and the person affected by cancer what exactly is involved from both sides from the outset.

Relationship building is key for successful PPI. Having an open and respectful relationship is key to successful PPI. A number of different factors are important for a good relationship between the PPI contributor and the researcher(s), these are listed below.

- A good communicator including keeping in touch as needed
- Shows respect, empathy and understanding
- Has time for each other and the PPI activities

It is a good idea to keep in mind this relationship aspect of PPI when designing the Patient Involvement plans.

5. PPI and the funding process

The majority of Irish Cancer Society application forms contain sections relating to patient involvement. These sections will be reviewed by PPI reviewers and in most instances PPI reviewers will contribute

to funding decisions along with scientific reviewers. As such, the review of applications is undertaken by scientific and PPI reviewers. In doing this, we ensure that the research we fund is of the highest scientific quality, while being relevant and important to people affected by cancer.

PPI reviewers are people affected by cancer including patients, survivors, family members and carers who have all received appropriate reviewer training.

6. PPI Sections in the Application

The following sections give information on PPI sections in application forms. Please note that not all sections outlined below may be in all application forms.

These sections will be reviewed by PPI reviewers. For some grant calls the PPI reviewers will score the sections and provide feedback and for other grant calls the PPI reviewers will give feedback only. This information will be given in the call guidelines.

6.1. *Project Summary*

A project summary should provide an overview of the research proposal, written in a format appropriate and understandable to your audience. A good summary should describe what you intend to do, why you intend to do it, and establish context. A clear understanding of the research project will allow the PPI panel to effectively evaluate other sections, such as the Patient Involvement Plan and Sharing of Research Findings sections.

For some awards, particularly those that include human participants, the PPI panel will review the practicalities and feasibility of the project and its relevance to people affected by cancer. Therefore, it is important to be clear and detailed.

Remember, your audience, who will be people affected by cancer, **may not** have a scientific background. Therefore, ensure the project summary is written in plain English (please see Section 6). However, an important consideration when writing the project summary is to determine the right balance between pitching it to the correct lay audience and oversimplifying it too much. As such, the summary should be written in clear plain English, but also adequately conveys the details on the research question, research plan and what makes that particular research project important. The

abstract may still have some “jargon” or scientific names when necessary, once they are clearly defined in understandable terms.

6.2. Patient involvement plan

The patient involvement plan should detail how patients will be involved in the research project.

It should be well thought out and as detailed as possible. Vague plans are to be avoided. The patient involvement plan should be given as much consideration as the scientific sections in the application.

It is strongly recommended that plans include specific details such as how many patients will be involved, how these patients will be recruited, what exactly the patients will be doing etc.

As with any project we acknowledge that patient involvement plans may change over the course of an award but detailed plans are still sought at the application stage.

Please note that activities outlined in the Patient Involvement plan are required to be included in the Gantt chart (when a Gantt chart is required as part of the application).

Information on types of involvement:

Involvement can be incorporated into almost any stage of the research process, which should be planned from the very beginning of study design. Some examples of how patient involvement can be incorporated into research includes (but is not limited to):

- as members of a patient advisory group for the project-
 - advising on the direction of the research; *
 - commenting on and developing patient information leaflets, consent forms, questionnaires or other research materials;
 - commenting on and developing dissemination materials (e.g., conference abstracts, posters, presentations);
- user and/or carer researchers carrying out the research e.g. conducting interviews, co-facilitating focus groups, assisting in the interpretation of results.
- Involvement in organising and running public and patient engagement activities;
- Input into grant applications

**Any post-award significant alterations to study design or protocol suggested by the patient advisory group would need to be approved in advance by the Irish Cancer Society throughout the duration of the research project*

Challenges

- When planning how you will involve people, it is important to think about what might go wrong and how you might handle any challenges that arise.
 - A PPI Ready: Researcher Planning Canvas was developed by MacCarthy et al⁷, which researchers may find useful when considering potential challenges and how to address them.
- In some instances, patients may need additional support (emotional), it is a good idea to identify supports that could be offered to patients should they need it.
- Patients may also need practical supports to be involved. For example not all patients will have easy access to a computer. Offer to post printed copies of information and allow for additional time for people to read information and paperwork. Some people may need to use the phone as opposed to a computer to join meetings. These practical needs should be assessed at the start.

Additional things to consider-

- A number of universities within the Republic of Ireland already have dedicated individuals, infrastructure, training, or programmes in place dedicated to PPI. We strongly recommend that you engage with these local resources when planning how patient involvement will be integrated into your project.
- Engagement can sometimes be mistaken for involvement (more information on both in section 2). While engagement activities are important and can often lead to involvement opportunities, it is predominantly involvement that should be outlined in this section - *Involvement is conducted ‘with’ or ‘by’ people affected by cancer.*
- For translational biomedical laboratory based research it can be difficult to initially envision the practicalities of how patients can be involved in a research project in a meaningful way.

However there are a lot of valuable opportunities to involve patients in this type of research. Further guidance on PPI in lab-based research can be found here- <https://sites.google.com/parkinsons.org.uk/ppi-in-lab-based-research/home>

6.3. *Sharing of research findings*

The Irish Cancer Society is the largest voluntary funder of cancer research in Ireland. Research is conducted primarily for the benefit of patients, therefore, a key priority of the Irish Cancer Society is 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 sharing of research findings plan to include communication of their research to **all** relevant audiences including the public and patients. As part of this section of the grant application, researchers are encouraged to carefully consider the different stakeholders that may be interested in their research, and develop a plan for communicating which each of these stakeholder groups.

It is important to note that while peer-reviewed journals are an important means of communicating research findings to academic researchers, members of the public are less likely to access academic journals.

Some examples of research dissemination and knowledge exchange includes but is not limited to:

- Peer-reviewed journals (open-access is encouraged).
- Dissemination at conferences and meetings
- Non-peer reviewed professional periodicals e.g., The Irish Psychologist, World of Irish Nursing;
- Public engagement talks or events e.g., Irish Cancer Society ‘Decoding Cancer’, Pint of Science, Science Week events, public university talks, etc.
- Newspapers/media e.g., The Irish Times, thejournal.ie, Newstalk;
- Blog posts e.g., professional blog, Irish Cancer Society website;
- Newsletters
- Online videos and website content

6.4. Budgeting for PPI

The cost of PPI is dependent on how you plan to embed it into your study i.e., your Patient Involvement Plan. As such, it is difficult to prescribe guidelines on how to budget for PPI. However, at a minimum, it is expected that the out of pocket expenses of PPI members associated with involvement are covered by the research grant

Before beginning to budget we recommend that you check that the host institute has appropriate systems in place for the payment of PPI costs and expenses. The host institute may also have specific guidelines in place around budget costs and allowable expenses, we recommend that you check this with your institute before completing the budget.

The steps to PPI budgeting are described below:

Step	Activity
Step 1: Framework selection	Select a framework for mapping involvement costs. This might be the research project cycle (i.e., the step-by-step research process/procedure) or a project timeline (e.g., Gantt chart).
Step 2: Planning your involvement	Make a plan of the involvement activities you intend to incorporate into your research.
Step 3: What are the costs?	For each activity, identify the specific costs for which you will need to budget.
Step 4: How much will it cost?	Estimate the cost or range of costs against each involvement activity. To work out the budget for your study, go to the online cost calculator: https://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment-and-recognition-for-public-involvement/involvement-cost-calculator/ . Please note the online calculator is in Pound Sterling.
Step 5: Mapping	Map the involvement activities onto your selected project framework so that you know exactly when in the project timeline costs are allocated.
Adapted from the UK National Institute for Health Research, Budgeting for Involvement (2013)	

An online calculator is available on the NIHR Involve website: <https://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment-and-recognition-for-public-involvement/involvement-cost-calculator/>. Please note the online calculator is in pound sterling (£), euro conversion rates will apply. **The online calculator is a guiding tool, all costs must be appropriate to costing in the Republic of Ireland and all researchers must verify the costs associated with their PPI plan.**

Costings from all categories of the online calculator will be eligible (see below). However, please note that final approval of all costs is at the discretion of the Irish Cancer Society.

Justification must also be given for a costs. Please note this is not an opportunity to elaborate on details of your patient involvement plan or sharing of research findings plan, all relevant information on these plans must be in the relevant sections.

PPI budgeting costs:

Costing category	Related costs
Payments and rewards	Fees to individuals Vouchers/tokens for individuals Prize draw awards Fee/donation to a group Funding for additional training and learning Honorary appointment e.g., lay fellow or research partner
Expenses	Travel Subsistence Childcare Carer costs Personal assistants Overnight accommodation Home office costs
Involvement activity	Finding people/advertising Training and learning costs Venues and catering Equipment and books Access to university facilities Conference fees
Involvement staffing	Administrative support Involvement coordinator Independent facilitator Peer researchers/interviewers
Other costs	Disclosure and barring service Language translation and interpretation costs Support for people with impairments

Adapted from the UK National Institute for Health Research, Involvement Cost Calculator

Working examples

Please see the worked costing examples below for guidance on creating and budgeting for the PPI plan.

Worked costing example for virtual advisory group:

A researcher wishes to set up a patient advisory group to advise on dissemination of the research results and assist with writing lay summaries for grant applications.

The researcher is looking for three patient representatives to form the advisory group. The group will meet for 3 half day virtual workshops over 2 years.

The estimated costs associated with the advisory group are as follows:

Category	Detail	Quantity	Cost	Total
Virtual Meetings	Online meeting platform used by institution for example Zoom. No cost as institute pays for the licence.	1	€0	€0
Advisory group honorarium	Honorarium for attending virtual advisory group/workshops	3 x 3= 9 (3 representatives x 3 meetings)	€100	€900
TOTAL COST (€1000 from PPI budget)				€ 900

All costs were calculated in the Republic of Ireland as of January 2021.

Worked costing example for in-person advisory group:

A researcher wishes to set up a patient advisory group to advise on dissemination of the research results and assist with writing lay summaries for grant applications.

The researcher is looking for three patient representatives to form the advisory group. The group will meet for 2 half day in-person meetings and 1 virtual meeting over 2 years.

The estimated costs associated with the advisory group are as follows:

Category	Detail	Quantity	UnitCost	Total
Travel	Local travel in Dublin (1 representative x 2 meetings)	1 x 2= 2	€8	€16
	Travel from outside of Dublin	2 x 2= 4 (2 representatives x 2 meetings)	€30	€120
Advisory group payment x 2	Honorarium for attending advisory group meetings)	3 x 3= 9 (3 representatives X 3 meetings)	€100	€900
Virtual Meetings	Online meeting platform used by institution for example Zoom. No costs as institute pays for licence.	1	€0	€0
Venue costs	University meeting room cost No cost as at host institute.	1	€0	€0
Catering costs	Lunch for attendees (€10 per person/per meal	3 x 2= 6 (3 representatives x 2 meetings)	€10	€60
TOTAL COST (€1000 from PPI budget and €96 from consumables budget)				€1,096

All costs were calculated using estimated costs for train tickets, hotels, and so on in the Republic of Ireland as of January 2021.

Please note- This budget is for specific costs associated with involvement only. If part of your PPI plan is that patients will organise an event or dissemination materials, the budget for these must be incorporated into the dissemination category of the main grant budget.

7. Writing in plain English

As outlined in Section 6 the project summary should be written in plain English. There are many online resources available to guide you in writing an effective plain English summary. Some of these resources are listed in Section 9 of this document.

Here are some general notes on how to write in plain English:

- People affected by cancer are not scientists (usually) and knowledge should not be assumed. Avoid using technical language or scientific terminology. Use everyday words to communicate your point and explain the science.
- While language should be understandable, it should not be dumbed down - It may be necessary to use scientific words and jargon in order to convey why your research is special, but be sure to explain it thoroughly and be consistent in its use.
- Use short clear sentences.
- Use paragraphs
- Make sure grammar, punctuation, and spelling are accurate.
- Bullet points (like these ones) can make it easy to digest a lot of information

8. Contact

If you have any questions relating to PPI please contact grants@irishcancer.ie.

9. Additional Resources

General resources

- INVOLVE – UK National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) initiative to support PPI.
<http://www.invo.org.uk>
- National Standards for Public Involvement.
<https://www.invo.org.uk/posttypepublication/national-standards-for-public-involvement/>
- NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency)
<https://www.nala.ie>
- Access to Understanding: Promoting public understanding of biomedical and health research
<http://www.access2understanding.org>
- Versus Arthritis: Patient & Public Involvement, A researcher's guide
<https://www.versusarthritis.org/media/1373/patient-and-public-involvement-booklet.pdf>

Writing a Lay Summary

- Duke, M. (2012). How to write a lay summary.
<http://www.dcc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/HowToLaySummariesDec2012.pdf>

Communicating to patients

- NHS England. Language Matters: Language and Diabetes.
<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/language-matters.pdf>

Writing in plain English

- NALA (National Adult Literacy Agency). *Writing and Design Tips*.
<https://www.nala.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Writing-and-design-tips.pdf>

Budgeting for PPI

- INVOLVE PPI Involvement Cost Calculator
<https://www.invo.org.uk/resource-centre/payment-and-recognition-for-public-involvement/involvement-cost-calculator/>

10. References

- 1) INVOLVE. (2018). *What is public involvement in research?* Retrieved from <http://www.invo.org.uk/find-out-more/what-is-public-involvement-in-research-2/> . Accessed 07/01/21.
- 2) Department of Health. (2017). National Cancer Strategy (2017-2016). Retrieved from <https://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/National-Cancer-Strategy-2017-2026.pdf>. Accessed 07/01/21.
- 3) Brett, J., Staniszewska, S., Mockford, C., Herron-Marx, S., Hughes, J., Tysall, C., & Suleman, R. (2014a). A systematic review of the impact of patient and public involvement on service users, researchers and communities. *The Patient-Patient-Centered Outcomes Research*, 7(4), 387-395.
- 4) Mockford, C., Staniszewska, S., Griffiths, F., & Herron-Marx, S. (2011). The impact of patient and public involvement on UK NHS health care: a systematic review. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 24(1), 28-38.
- 5) Thompson, J., Bissell, P., Cooper, C. L., Armitage, C. J., & Barber, R. (2014). Exploring the impact of patient and public involvement in a cancer research setting. *Qualitative Health Research*, 24(1), 46-54.
- 6) Froggatt, K., Preston, N., Turner, M., & Kerr, C. (2014). Patient and public involvement in research and the Cancer Experiences Collaborative: benefits and challenges. *BMJ Supportive & P Care*, 5, 518–521.
- 7) MacCarthy, J., Guerin, S., Wilson, A and Dorris, E. (2019). Facilitating public and patient involvement in basic and preclinical health research. *PLoS One*, 12(5).