



Translational Research Scholarship Programme 2021: Expression of Interest

Frequently Asked Questions

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Who can apply?

1. Can a student with only a 2.2 honours degree or lower apply for a Scholarship?

No, you must have obtained (or expect to obtain) a first or upper second class honours bachelor degree to apply for a scholarship.

2. I received a 2.2 in my undergraduate degree but received a distinction- or merit-level master's degree, am I eligible to apply?

Yes, you can apply if you have a distinction- or merit-level master's degree.

3. Are the scholarships available for students to study abroad?

No, the research must take place at a host institution in the Republic of Ireland. This must be one of the HRB's [approved host institutions](#).

4. Are non-Irish citizens living in the Republic of Ireland eligible to apply?

Yes, if you are a non-Irish citizen but are eligible to study in Ireland, and you meet the eligibility criteria, you can apply for a Scholarship. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure they are eligible to study in Ireland.

5. Are Scholarships tenable for individuals studying in Northern Ireland?

Scholarships are tenable only for researchers who will conduct their research in the Republic of Ireland. This is because the money raised for the Irish Cancer Society to fund cancer research is raised in the Republic of Ireland.

6. Can I apply for funding if I have already begun my PhD?

No, you can only apply for a scholarship if you have not yet commenced your PhD.

7. Is there an upper age limit to the application?

No, there is no upper age limit.

8. I completed my undergraduate degree a number of years ago, am I still eligible?

You will only be eligible if you have been working in a field relevant to your proposed PhD study i.e. maintenance of skills and knowledge gained during your undergraduate studies.

To discuss eligibility in such cases, please contact grants@irishcancer.ie.

9. Can medical doctors apply for the PhD Scholarship?

Yes, medical doctors may apply for the scholarships. However, the proposed project must be in the area of translational biomedical science.

10. I wish to complete my PhD in 3 years, can I apply?

No, the Scholarship must be 48 months in duration.

Translational Biomedical Research Project Eligibility

1. What does translational biomedical research mean?

Translational research can be defined as “bench to bedside”, or patient-focused research. The aim of translational biomedical research is to translate existing knowledge about cancer biology into techniques and tools that will accelerate progress towards patient benefit. Non-biomedical based translational projects will not be considered.

2. What type of projects are eligible?

If you are unsure of your project eligibility, please contact grants@irishcancer.ie before 3pm Thursday 18 February.

The following are examples of the types of projects that will be considered; please note that the examples are for demonstrative purposes. The list of examples given is not an exhaustive list but will provide guidance on some project options.

Please note: Basic discovery or knowledge gathering research projects (T₀) will not be accepted. The project must be translational (T_{0.5}– T₁) as per Figure 1.

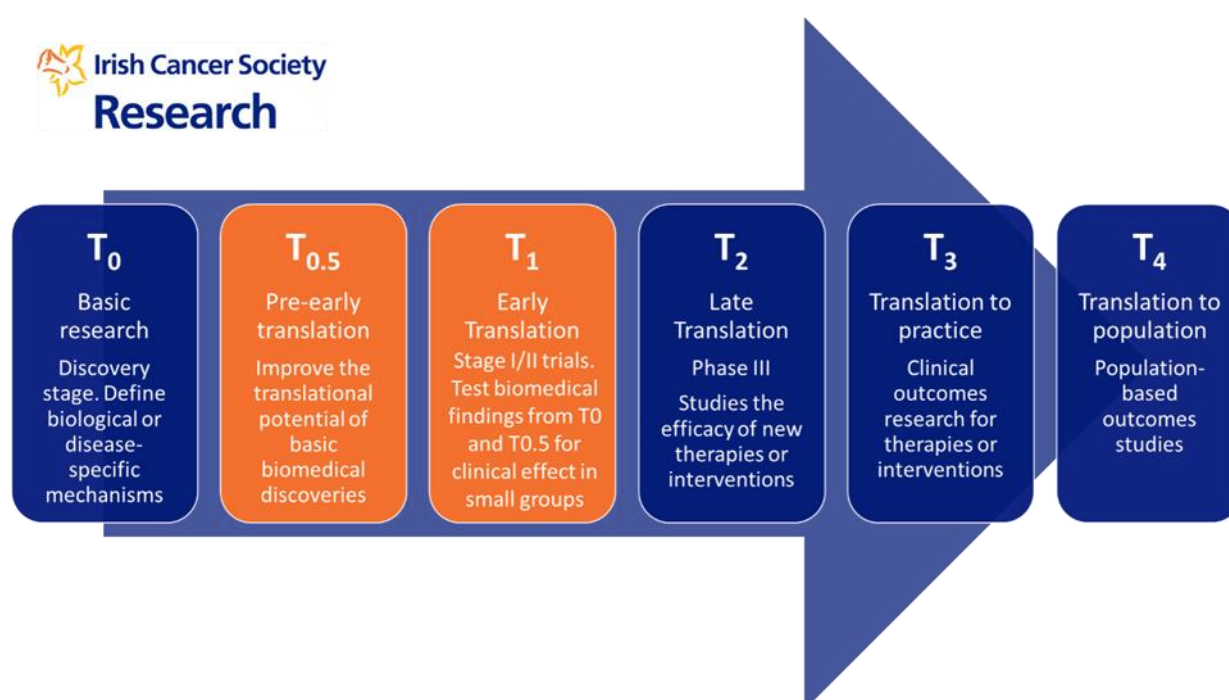


Figure 1: The Irish Cancer Society Phases of Translational Biomedical Research.

The following are eligible project examples:

- *As preliminary work, the researchers identified a new drug which prevents growth in lung cancer cells (T_0 basic research discovery). As part of the scholarship, the researchers will now complete further studies to test if the drug will progress positively towards early-stage cancer trials ($T_{0.5}$ to T_1).*
- *As preliminary work, a protein has been identified as a potential candidate for targeted therapy (T_0 basic research discovery). As part of the scholarship application, the translational research project ($T_{0.5}$ to T_1) will evaluate potential compounds or combinations of compounds that will potentially have therapeutic efficacy. The compound will be tested using an established experimental system.*
- *Biomarker projects to stratify patients for treatments, i.e. advancing personalised treatment.*
- *A translational research project associated with a clinical trial. Payment to the host institute will only be released on receipt of all necessary institutional ethical approvals. However, a small provision of allocated monies may be made available at the start of the award to facilitate the ethical approval process where necessary.*
- *Preclinical studies to determine the optimal combination and sequencing of standard-of-care drugs prior to the commencement of a clinical trial.*
- *Preclinical or early phase trials to aid in guiding treatment regime/assess response to therapy e.g. test markers, imaging or assays.*

3. I am unsure if my project is eligible, how do I ask for advice?

If you have any concerns please contact grants@irishcancer.ie. Please note, the deadline for checking project eligibility or any additional FAQ queries is Thursday 18 February at 3pm.

‘Cancers with Unmet Needs’, Translational Research Project Eligibility

1. What is considered a ‘Cancer with Unmet Needs’?

For the scope of this project, a ‘cancer with unmet needs’, is considered to be a cancer that has a lack of effective treatment options and/or a lack of research capacity in the area. While there are many definitions of such a scope and all cancers have inherent challenges for those who are affected by them, for 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)*

2. My project isn’t focused on a cancer with unmet needs, is it still eligible?

Yes. Your project does not need to be focused on a cancer with unmet needs. However, investing in cancers of unmet need is a strategic priority for the Irish Cancer Society therefore, we do encourage applications in this area. The scholarship will be awarded based on merit to the top ranked application, regardless of cancer type.

If you are unsure of your project eligibility, please contact grants@irishcancer.ie before 3pm Thursday 18 February.

Supervision

- 1. Can a supervisor sponsor more than one student for separate projects who are both applying for a Scholarship?**

Yes, a supervisor can sponsor more than one scholarship applicant.

- 2. Can a supervisor sponsor a project more than once but with different applicants who are both applying for a Scholarship?**

No, a project cannot be submitted more than once. Applications with the same project from different applicants will be automatically discounted.

- 3. Is it necessary to have two supervisors?**

Yes, two supervisors must be identified when completing your application through the Irish Cancer Society [Gateway Grant Tracker](#) online system.

- 4. What is the purpose of having two supervisors?**

It is often good practice for there to be two supervisors for every student, as it provides back up for those situations where one supervisor is ill, leaves, or issues arise with the supervisor-student relationship. In addition it can provide breadth and support to the project. It is important that all supervisors are aware that they have a responsibility for the student and there is no scope for nominal supervision.

The role of each supervisor will vary according to the research project. In many cases one supervisor will play a major role in directing the research and the role of the second supervisor will be more supportive. However, both supervisors have a responsibility for the student's progress and will be expected to take an active role in the supervision process.

One supervisor may have a minimum of 1 year's post-doctoral experience. In having this criteria we are encouraging more junior members of research teams to be actively involved in the research project and to be recognised as a supervisor.

5. Can there be more than two supervisors?

You can include additional supervisors but they must have a documented and active role in the research as collaborators. Such proposed relationships should be described in the application.

6. Do supervisors need to be permanent members of staff?

The most experienced supervisor must hold a post at the proposed host research institute that covers the duration of the scholarship.

Ideally the second supervisor should also hold a contract for the duration of the PhD. However, given this person is only required to have 1 year postdoctoral experience, we will consider any co-supervisor who can demonstrate their commitment to the supervision of the student throughout the whole study period.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their supervisors also meet the host institution's requirements for a research supervisor.

7. Why do I need to submit CVs for my two proposed supervisors as part of the application process?

The research track record of the supervisors, relative to their career stage, will be assessed as part of the overall research scholarship application.

Funding

1. Is there an overall limit for the amount of funding granted?

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 element and dissemination awards respectively) will be reviewed before a funding decision is made. Further details of the dissemination fund will be provided at the full application stage.

Please note that full details of budget guidelines will be provided at 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.*

2. How many Irish Cancer Society Translational Research Scholarships are available?

There is one scholarship available in 2021: this scholarship is for Translational Biomedical Cancer Research. The application of the highest quality will be awarded funding, regardless of cancer type.

3. Does the grant cover host institute overheads?

As a charity, the Irish Cancer Society is not in a position to pay for host institution overheads for its research funding.

Expression of Interest Deadline

1. When do expression of interest applications need to be in by?

*Applications must be submitted online through [Gateway Grant Tracker](#) by **3pm Wednesday 24 February 2021**. Please note however, the deadline for checking project eligibility or any additional FAQ queries is Thursday 18 February at 3pm. If you have any concerns please contact grants@irishcancer.ie.*

2. Do the signatories have to approve the application by this deadline?

Yes. All signatories (your two proposed supervisors) have to approve the application by this deadline. They can do this through their online portal.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is approved by all signatories before the deadline. Please ensure that the application is submitted with sufficient time allowed for the signatory to approve.

Progression to Full Application

1. When will applicants find out if they have been shortlisted to submit a full application?

Applicants will find out if they have been shortlisted to submit a Full Application in April 2021.

2. What will the full application entail?

The full application will look for more specific and in-depth research project details such as project background, hypothesis, objectives, methodology, ethical considerations and plans, plus a revised, detailed Public Patient involvement plan, sharing of research findings, mobility/capacity building element, research environment, budget and impact plan.

Shortlisted applicants will be provided guidance documents on how to complete the full application.

3. Will the application review process be exactly as outlined in the guidance document?

This document is used for guidance only. The Irish Cancer Society reserves the right to modify the review process. Applicants however will be notified of any relevant modification to the review procedure.

4. Will I need to attend an interview?

If your full application is shortlisted, you will be expected to attend an interview in June/July 2021 (date to be confirmed). Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, this is expected to be held virtually.

Start of Research Scholarship Programme

1. When does the successful Research Scholar commence their programme?

The successful Research Scholar will begin their PhD in September 2021, and will continue their research for 48 months. Please note, the commencement of the PhD in September 2021 must be in line with any public health guidelines in place in Ireland at that time due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.