



Irish Cancer Society Research

PhD Research Scholarship Award 2026

Guidelines for Applicants

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1. Overview	2
1.2. Indicative Timelines	3
1.3. Funding and Duration.....	3
2. Eligibility	4
2.1. Applicant Eligibility	4
2.2. Host Institution Eligibility	6
2.3. Eligible Research Areas.....	6
2.4. Public and Patient Partnerships/Involvement.....	7
2.5. Research Impact.....	8
2.6. Mobility Element.....	8
3. Application Procedure	10
3.1. Application Overview	10
3.2. How to Apply.....	11
4. Application Form	12
5. Submission of the Application	25
6. Application Assessment [Stage 1 of 2].....	25
6.1. Conflicts of Interest	25
6.2. Assessment Procedure	26
6.3. Assessment Outcome	28
7. Interviews [Stage 2 of 2].....	28
8. Contact.....	28

Translational Biomedical & Clinical Research

PhD Research Scholarship Award 2026 Guidelines for Applicants

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

The Irish Cancer Society **PhD Research Scholarship Award 2026** offers excellent graduates the opportunity to conduct structured, comprehensive doctoral postgraduate training in cancer research within the Republic of Ireland.

These guidelines are for applications to the **Translational Biomedical and Clinical Research** funding call only. There are separate guidelines for our Survivorship Research stream.

This funding call is open to graduates of a background relevant to their proposed translational biomedical or clinical research project (e.g., biomedical engineering, life and health sciences, dentistry, pharmaceutical, dietetics, radiology, medicine). The prospective PhD researcher must be associated with an approved [host institution](#) in the Republic of Ireland for the duration of the PhD Research Scholarship Award.

This funding is intended to support innovative and relevant cancer research, that is internationally competitive. Proposals should aim to create new knowledge and evidence of benefit to both the national and international cancer research landscape, in alignment with the [Irish Cancer Society Strategy](#).

Through an additional [Mobility Element](#), this award also funds PhD researchers' secondment to a national/international research institution (maximum 3-months) as organised by the applicant and their supervisory team.

A 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQs) document is included as an appendix to these guidelines. Please read the guidelines and **FAQs document (Appendix 1)** carefully for information (including eligibility) on this funding call. Most queries will be addressed within these detailed documents.

1.2. Indicative Timelines

Milestone	Date*
Application Deadline	Tuesday 7 th April 2026, 3pm
Review	April/Early-May 2026
Interviews (Online)	Mid-June 2026
Awardees Announced	June 2026
Earliest Grant Start Date	Tuesday, 1 st September 2026

*Please note: the above dates are provisional and subject to change at the discretion of the Irish Cancer Society. Shortlisted applicants must be available to attend interviews to be considered for this award.

1.3. Funding and Duration

Translational Biomedical or Clinical Research applicants can apply for a maximum of **€185,000**.

- This €185,000 is inclusive of a maximum of €50,000 for Running Costs (including lab consumables).
- An additional €5,000 of funding is provided for a mobility element. Specific mobility budgets are not required at this time (see [Section 2.6](#) for more information).

In line with standard doctoral programme timelines, this award will cover **3 to 4 years at a full-time** capacity or a maximum of **8 years at a part-time** capacity. If you are considering applying for a part-time scholarship, please contact the Irish Cancer Society Research Team at grants@irishcancer.ie prior to submitting your application.

A detailed budget should be provided according to the proposed award timeline. The proposed budget should adequately cover costs for Stipend, Fees, Running Costs (incl. lab consumables), Equipment, Training, Travel & Dissemination, Public & Patient Partnership (PPI/PPP). Mobility element budgets are not required at this time. Detailed budget guidelines are available in [Section 4](#) of this document and in **Appendix 2**.

Please note the following budget stipulations specific to the **Translational Biomedical and Clinical Research** funding call:

- PhD stipend is funded at a set rate of €25,000 per year.
- €50,000 is the maximum allocation to the Running Costs (incl. lab consumables) category.
- A set provision of €2,000 must be allocated to support Public & Patient Partnership (PPP/PPI) in the proposed research project.
- Costs for attending conferences must be included for each year in the Travel & Dissemination category. Costs for at least one research presentation must be included within one year of the budget (e.g., poster printing).

2. Eligibility

2.1. Applicant Eligibility

Applications from individuals that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered. Please note, PhD researchers **may only be listed on one application** for this award.

PhD Researcher:

Minimum Eligibility Criteria

At a minimum, the *PhD Researcher* must meet the following criteria:

- Hold an undergraduate and/or postgraduate degree relevant to the proposed research project (e.g., biomedical, biomedical engineering, life and health science, dentistry, pharmaceutical, dietetics, radiology, medical).
- Be associated with an approved host institution in the Republic of Ireland for the duration of the award. See [Section 2.2](#) of this document for specified list.
- Identify at least two primary supervisors well-suited to the proposed research project.
- Develop their proposed research project with the nominated supervisors prior to submission.
- Demonstrate a clear and strong level of support from their host institution and one nominated referee (cannot be member of proposed supervisory team).

Supervisory Team:

Applicants should propose **two** primary supervisors*. Both primary supervisors must approve the application **before** final submission and provide a written Declaration of Support for the applicant.

Minimum Eligibility Criteria:

At a minimum, *Primary Supervisors* must meet the following criteria:

At least one primary supervisor should:

- Hold a post (permanent or on a contract basis), for the entire duration of the research project, at the named host institution in the Republic of Ireland. This must be listed as a HRB-approved host institution (See [Section 2.2](#) Institution Eligibility).

Both primary supervisors should:

- Possess a PhD or equivalent** in an academic field appropriate to the proposed project.
- Have a minimum of five senior authorships (first, joint-first, or last) in peer-reviewed academic publications.
- Have an established track record in research supervision.
- Be an established senior researcher with a track record in research; for example, a history of principal investigator roles, history of grant awards, involvement in clinical trials, national or international research partnership development, presentation at national or international conferences, etc.

* Two primary supervisors must satisfy the listed eligibility criteria. Additional or 'secondary' supervisors are not required to satisfy these criteria. See [below](#) for further information.

** PhD equivalence is defined as at least three or more senior (first, joint-first, or last) author publications in peer-reviewed academic journals (in addition to minimum authorship requirements above) **OR** 4 years' full-time research experience post-primary degree. In such instances, candidates should contact grants@irishcancer.ie before applying.

Secondary Supervisors

Additional or 'Secondary' supervisors can be proposed as part of the supervisory team (e.g., clinical expert, methodological expert). Secondary supervisors must play a significant role in the PhD researcher's training and professional development, and/or make a significant contribution to the direction or conduct of the research or research-related activities. Superfluous supervisory team members, or those mentioned in name only, are not permitted. Each additional supervisor must clearly add value integral to the proposed research or the PhD researcher themselves. Each secondary supervisor will be required to confirm their participation through the online system prior to application submission.

2.2. Host Institution Eligibility

The host institution receives and administers scholarship 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 based in the Republic of Ireland and must be named in the HRB-approved host institution list below* ** :

- Atlantic Technological University
- Dublin City University
- Munster Technological University
- National University of Ireland, Maynooth (Maynooth University)
- Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland
- South-East Technological University
- Technological University Dublin
- Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest
- The University of Dublin (Trinity College Dublin)
- University College Cork
- University College Dublin
- University of Galway
- University of Limerick

* Research can be conducted out of non HRB-approved sites (e.g., hospital, clinical site) but applicants must nominate an approved host institution, and all finances must be managed by this host institution.

** Please contact the Irish Cancer Society with any queries regarding institutional eligibility (grants@irishcancer.ie).

2.3. Eligible Research Areas

This award is intended to fund cancer research that aligns with the [Irish Cancer Society Strategy](#) and the emerging needs of people affected by cancer.

Eligible applications to the **Translational Biomedical and Clinical Research** funding call should propose a cancer research project, which aligns with Irish Cancer Society strategies, priorities, and one of the following research themes:

- a) **Translational Biomedical Research** can be defined as ‘bench to bedside’ or patient-focused biomedical research, the aim of which is to translate existing knowledge about cancer biology into techniques and tools that will accelerate progress towards patient treatment. Research in this area will build upon basic biological discoveries and improves their Translational Biomedical

potential through pre-clinical studies. Much of the outputs of Translational Biomedical research naturally merge into Clinical research, the next area of focus. Please note, applications in drug design, SAR (structure–activity relationship) analysis, drug screening or basic biomedical research will not be considered at this time.

- b) **Clinical Research** involves 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.

If you are unsure if your proposed research programme is eligible, please contact grants@irishcancer.ie.

2.4. Public and Patient Partnerships/Involvement

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

It is encouraged that PPP/PPI is incorporated within research proposals from as early a stage as is feasible. In line with this commitment, it is expected that all applicants include the following within their application*:

- a plain-language summary of the proposed research
- a detailed PPP/ PPI plan
- minimum **€2,000** budget allocation
- a plan for sharing of research findings

It is strongly recommended that applicants read **Appendix 3 ‘Public and Patient Partnership (PPP) in Research’ Guidelines** prior to beginning work on an application.

*Please note, all applicants that are invited to interview for this award will be required to address comments from the PPI review panel where relevant and provide a revised PPP/PPI plan if requested.

2.5. Research Impact

Creating impact from the research that we fund has always been of great importance to the Irish Cancer Society. The purpose of drafting an impact plan at the application stage, in line with the Society's [strategic objectives](#), is to focus all projects on working towards achieving impact from the outset.

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'** i.e., the real-life benefit of the research and the impact of the research beyond academia.

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 proposed body of work. However, it is the Irish Cancer Society's duty to ensure that the research we fund makes a difference to the lives of those affected by cancer. Therefore, it is important to start thinking about the **pathway to impact** from the start of the project. 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.

We are aware that an impact plan provided by PhD 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. 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.

Applicants are required to complete an impact plan as part of the application process. It is strongly recommended that the **Research Impact Framework (RIF)** is consulted when completing your impact plan, a copy of which is included as **Appendix 4**. The RIF can be used by applicants, and funded researchers alike, to guide research impact planning and monitoring. Further details on preparing an impact plan also can be found in [Section 4](#) of this document.

2.6. Mobility Element

The PhD Research Scholarship Award aims to fund comprehensive, doctoral postgraduate training in cancer research. As such, a unique aspect of this scholarship is the *Mobility Element*. This initiative is intended to:

- Provide the PhD researcher with skills and experience that go beyond their traditional research environment.
- Aid in developing the reach and overall impact of their research.
- Support their future career prospects and strengthen national/international research collaborations.

PhD researchers are permitted **up to €5,000*** funding, to cover costs associated with a secondment at a national or international research institution for a **maximum of 3 months**.

The mobility element must:

- Take place within the first 3 years of the scholarship.
- be organised by the PhD researcher and their supervisory team.
- not take place at the named host institution of the PhD researcher.
- advance the proposed research project aims and objectives.

A finalised mobility element plan is not expected at the application stage.

However, applications should provide a short, general description of future mobility plans and associated budget. This short summary should indicate how the proposed mobility element aligns with the PhD researcher's project aims and objectives.

Having commenced their scholarship, PhD researchers will be required to submit a detailed plan and budget at least three months prior to commencing mobility. As such, mobility element summaries and budgets submitted at application stage may differ from final post-award plans.

Map below shows some of the locations our past funded researchers have conducted their mobility element:



* Mobility element funding is separate to 'Travel and Dissemination' costs and is in addition to the €185,000 Translational Biomedical and Clinical Research Award.

3. Application Procedure

3.1. Application Overview

This is a two-stage application process, including a written application (Stage 1 of 2) and interview (Stage 2 of 2), outlined below.

The research proposal should be **written by the PhD researcher**, with strong **input from the supervisory team throughout**. The application must not be written by supervisors alone. The PhD researcher and their supervisory team must read through this application procedure section prior to preparing an application.

The use of ChatGPT or AI to assist in writing applications is not permitted and if found, will be deemed ineligible

Stage	Description
Stage 1 of 2: Application	<p>Deadline to submit applications is 3pm, Tuesday 7th April 2026.</p> <p>This stage allows applicants to give a detailed description of each aspect of their proposed research project, to demonstrate the potential impact of the research, and to outline how this award would benefit them as a future PhD researcher.</p> <p>All eligible applications will be sent for review. The review process is detailed in Section 6. Each application will be evaluated by an external review panel, made up of academic/clinical experts (scientific panel) and experts by lived experience (PPI panel).</p> <p>Applications that are of the highest quality will be shortlisted to progress to the next stage, interviews. Reviewer feedback will be made available to all applicants*.</p>
Stage 2 of 2: Interviews	<p>Interviews are conducted between shortlisted applicants and the review panel. Applicants who are invited to interview will be expected to display in-depth knowledge of the proposed project and must demonstrate the ability to think independently as a future PhD researcher.</p> <p>Interviews will be conducted in June 2026** and shortlisted applicants must be available to attend (online) to be considered for this award.</p> <p>Shortlisted applicants will be given a minimum of 2 weeks' notice to prepare for interviews. Reviewer feedback from the application stage should be used to prepare for interviews and further improve the application.</p>

* Reviewer feedback will be made available to unsuccessful applicants on request. Please email grants@irishcancer.ie to request your feedback.

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

3.2. How to Apply

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

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
4. Manage any active grants

When you have entered your basic details, you will be able to create a new application from the portal homepage. Alternatively, select '**New Application**' from the '**My Applications**' tab. Next, click '**Apply**' for the Grant Type detailed as '**Translational Biomedical and Clinical - PhD Award 2026**'.

Please note: We recommend that you use a **non-HSE email address** when creating this application to avoid any security issues when receiving correspondence from the grant tracker online system.

4. Application Form

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

- a) [Application Outline](#)
- b) [Applicant Details](#)
- c) [Supervision](#)
- d) [Research Programme](#)
- e) [Mobility Element](#)
- f) [Plain Language Summary & PPP/PPI Plan](#)
- g) [Sharing Research Findings](#)
- h) [Research Impact](#)
- 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- but these actions will not save your progress automatically.

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

To upload supporting documentation, click 'Attach', 'Choose File', then click 'Attach'. This must be in PDF format, using the Irish Cancer Society Declaration of Support template, to be deemed eligible.

Further details on each section of the application form

a) 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:

- Research Stream ([Translational Biomedical](#) and/or [Clinical](#))
- Proposed title
- Proposed start date (not before 01/09/2026; must begin by 01/09/2027 latest)
- Funding period/grant duration (3-4 years full time; up to 8 years part time)
- Proposed host institution (as listed in [Section 2.2](#))
- Research classification and disciplines
- Keywords

b) Applicant Details

In this section you will be asked to provide greater detail on the PhD researcher, including a CV, a personal statement, and a Letter of Reference.

- **Applicant's Curriculum Vitae (CV):** Please upload a CV for the PhD researcher. The CV should be completed using the template provided (the template is downloadable in this section on the online system) and be no more than three pages long. More information on each CV section is given in the template. Please only fill in relevant details, certain sections can be left blank if not applicable to the applicant. To upload your CV, click 'Attach', 'Choose File', then click 'Attach'. This must be in pdf format, using the Irish Cancer Society Junior CV template.
- **Personal Statement:** The personal statement section should only include relevant information, which will add merit to your application. In this section, you should include the following (**300 words max**):
 - o Reasons for pursuing a PhD in Translational Biomedical or Clinical Research.
 - o Reasons for choosing your proposed host institution and supervisory team.
 - o How this scholarship will contribute to your own personal and professional development.
 - o Your future career plans.
- **Letter of Reference:** A reference is required from one relevant referee (e.g., undergraduate/ masters' research supervisor, head of undergraduate/ masters' course). The letter must not exceed one page in length and must be uploaded in pdf format. This reference cannot be provided by a member of your proposed supervisory team. To upload your Letter of Reference, click 'Attach', 'Choose File', then click 'Attach'.

c) Supervision

In this section, you will be asked to add **two** primary supervisors to the application. Please read [Section 2.1](#) carefully prior to adding your primary supervisors or any additional/ secondary supervisors.

- **Primary Supervisors:** To add a supervisor, you must search for them by email. If the supervisor has already created an account, they will appear on the list. To add them, click 'Select', and the supervisor will subsequently receive a notification via email. If the supervisor does not appear on the list, they may not have an account. You can click 'Add a New Contact' and enter their name and email address. Once added, the supervisor will receive a

notification via email. Supervisors will be directed to confirm their participation through the online system.

- **Supervisor CVs:** Please upload a CV for both primary supervisors. The CV should be completed using the template provided (the template is downloadable in this section on the online system) and be no more than three pages long. More information on each CV section is given in the template. To upload each CV, click 'Attach', 'Choose File', then click 'Attach'. Files must be in pdf format, using the Irish Cancer Society Senior CV template. Please ensure that you first have permission from supervisors before uploading their CVs. Please Note: This template is different to the Applicant/Junior CV Template
- **Declarations of Support (x2 Primary Supervisors):** Please upload two separate Declarations of Support from each of your two proposed primary supervisors. The template is downloadable from this section on the online system or on the website. To upload the Declarations of Support, click 'Attach', 'Choose File', then click 'Attach'. This must be completed on headed paper and must be uploaded in pdf format.

d) Research Programme

Please provide an overview of the proposed research programme to be covered by this scholarship, including the basis for the research, hypothesis and/or aims, methods, contingency and ethical considerations. You will also be asked to provide a Gantt Chart (timeline), information on your chosen research environment, and a declaration of support from your host institution. More information on each of these sections is provided below. A separate textbox will be provided for references, to cite any literature referenced in the sections below.

- **Basis for Research:** Please describe previously published research which forms the basis of your research proposal. Include details of any initial research carried out by the applicant, supervisors, or associated research team that underpins the proposed research (**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, achievable, and well suited to a PhD research programme (**200 words max**).
- **Research Methods:** Please describe and justify the methods, procedures, and experimental design you will use to conduct your research (**1,000 words max**).
 - o 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 feasibility of obtaining/accessing sufficient/required sample sizes of

relevant participant groups that will result in statistically meaningful results.

- 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.

- **Research Images:** You may also upload up to five relevant research images/figures to support your application (one-page each, in pdf format). Please ensure that figures are legible when uploading. Please do not upload large multi-page documents
- **Gantt Chart:** You must upload a Gantt chart for the proposed research, which should include planned PPP/PPI activities and mobility element. The chart must be uploaded in pdf format. Gantt charts should be restricted to a single page, where possible.
- **SWOT Analysis:** Please provide a SWOT analysis of your proposed research project, outlining the potential **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats of your work. Please describe a contingency plan that you could employ if initial investigations prove unfruitful or your planned research is not progressing as planned (**300 words max**).
- **Ethical Approval:** Please indicate if ethical approval is required for your proposed research project. If required, please outline your plan/timeline for obtaining ethical approval for the project in a timely manner (should also be included in Gantt chart). If ethical approval has already been obtained/submitted, please upload proof of approval/application in pdf format.
- **Research Environment:** Please detail how the research group and the overall research environment at your proposed host institution is best positioned to support you and to facilitate the cancer research detailed in your application. Consider the following (**300 words max**):
 - Number of researchers in your group, their core research focus or expertise, and support you will receive from your research group (e.g., postdoctoral supervision).
 - The research themes at your wider centre/department and different research groups you could collaborate with in your surrounding environment.
 - The established relationship(s) between your academic/host institution and participating clinical/healthcare institutions (if appropriate).
 - If you will be participating in a structured doctoral programme, or the types of training that will be available to you at your host institution.
 - Any special infrastructure or factors specific to your chosen research environment that would make it a particularly good place to carry out your proposed research.

- **Declaration of Support (Host Institution):** Each application requires a strong declaration of support from the **Head of Department/ Head of School** at the applicant’s chosen host institution. This should be completed on headed paper using the template provided, downloadable from this section on the online system or on the website. The Head of Department/Head of School should include acknowledgement that the host institution is aware of the application and will act as host to the PhD researcher should their application be successful. This letter should also acknowledge that the host institution will provide the PhD researcher with research space, access to resources, and any appropriate insurance cover. On awarding of the funding, a contract will be made between the Irish Cancer Society and the nominated host institution. This declaration of support should indicate that the Head of Department/Head of School will facilitate this process. To upload a declaration of support, click ‘Attach’, ‘Choose File’, then click ‘Attach’. This must be in pdf format using the Irish Cancer Society Declaration of Support template to be deemed eligible.

e) Mobility Element

This award provides a mobility element provision for experience that goes beyond the traditional research environment of the PhD researcher to further develop their skills, career prospects, and widen their research community. Further information on the mobility element can be found in [Section 2.6](#). A finalised mobility element plan is not expected at the application stage. However, applications should provide a short, general description of future mobility plans.

Please describe your proposed *Mobility Element* plan addressing (**300 words max**):

- How the proposed mobility would aid in the professional development of the PhD researcher (e.g., new laboratory techniques/skills to be acquired).
- How the proposed mobility would contribute to the personal development of the applicant and their future career plans.
- How the proposed mobility could develop or nurture national/international research collaborations.

f) Plain Language Summary & PPP/PPI Plan

Patient involvement and partnership is a fundamental aspect of the application. It is strongly recommended that applicants read **Appendix 3 ‘Public and Patient Partnership (PPP) in Research’** Guidelines prior to beginning work on this section. PhD researchers will also be expected to attend a PPP/PPI development workshop upon commencement of their scholarship.

An expert PPP/PPI Panel will be assessing this section of the application form. As such, plain, accessible language should be used, and technical terms must be explained fully. Please provide the following:

- **Project Summary:** The project summary section will be used to set the scene for PPP/PPI reviewers. Please provide a detailed and structured plain language 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).
 - What steps are involved in the proposed research project?
 - If relevant, 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 (please note that research *participants* are different to PPI representatives).
 - Detail how the proposed research is relevant and important to people affected by cancer.

- **Involvement Plan:** Along with career development, it is important that PhD researchers use this award to build relevant PPP/PPI skills. In this section, please detail your plans to include PPP/PPI in your research (**1000 words max**). Please consider the following:
 - Aims/Objectives
 - What is the overall goal of your PPP/PPI plan?
 - What are the aims and objectives of your PPP/PPI plan?
 - Planning & Delivery
 - At what stage will people affected by cancer or other relevant stakeholders be involved (e.g., planning, design, implementation, management, evaluation, dissemination)?
 - What are the planned timelines for the stages above? Please note that PPP/PPI plans should be included within Gantt chart.
 - Describe the steps or procedures involved in integrating PPP/PPI within your project, and any logistical planning or considerations (e.g., timing, location, costs, networking).
 - Involvement
 - What will be expected from the people involved and how will these activities influence your research?
 - How many people will be involved and how/where will they be approached?
 - What steps will be taken to ensure that involvement is meaningful and not *tokenistic*?

- Were public/patient stakeholders or organisations involved in the design and development of this proposal? If yes, please upload a letter of support from those involved using the template provided (pdf format, one letter max, one page in length).
 - Articulate the challenges that might arise from involving patients in your research and how these issues will be prevented or overcome. What supports will be available for PPP/PPI contributors involved (should they be needed)?
 - What PPP/PPI resources are available to you at your host institution, or through local/national organisations, and how do you intend to use them?
- **Please note:** While public/patient participation and engagement activities are encouraged as part of this plan, the Society will only fund applications that predominately include true 'involvement' or 'partnership' activities. Please see **Appendix 3** for further details and examples.

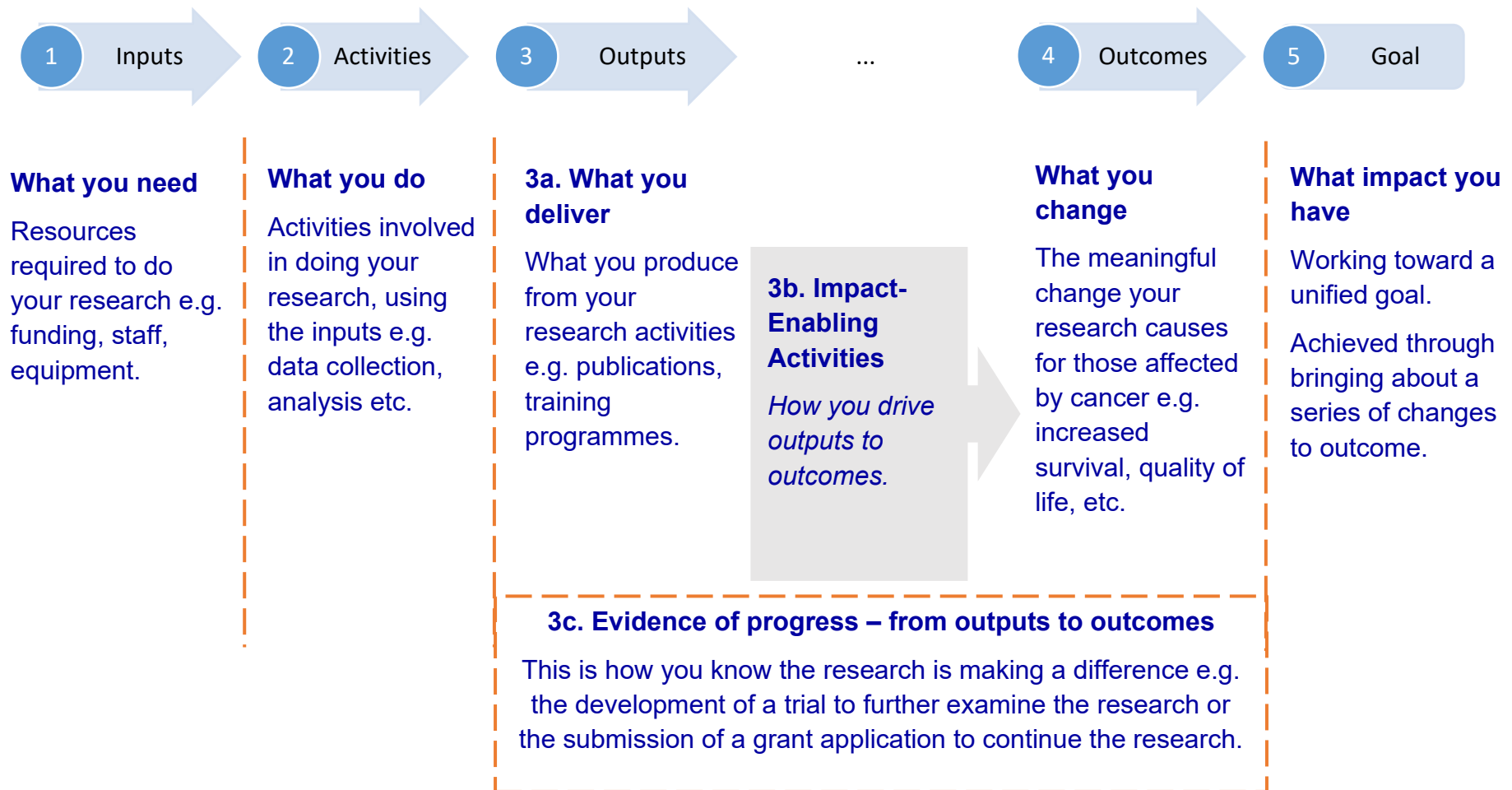
g) Sharing Research Findings

As the largest voluntary funder of cancer research in Ireland, the Irish Cancer Society relies on the generous donations from the public 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 findings 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. **(300 words max)**.

h) Research Impact

In this section, you will be asked to provide an impact plan, detailing how the input of this funding will ultimately result in meaningful impact for people who are affected by cancer. Please consult [Section 2.5](#) and the **Research Impact Framework (RIF) (Appendix 4)** when completing this section.

Your impact plan should be designed using the **sequence of steps outlined in the figure below:**



The recommended approach is to develop the impact plan by working backwards, from goal to inputs. As such, the impact plan should consist of:

5. Goal
4. Outcomes
- 3a. Outputs
- 3b. Impact-enabling activities
- 3c. Evidence of progress
2. Activities
1. Inputs

Please note: Both the PPP/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 of the impact plan follows:

Section	Description & Information
5. Goal	<p>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.’</p> <p>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.</p>
4. Outcome	<p>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.</p> <p>You must select at least one outcome from the below list:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 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.
 - 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.
- 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**).
- 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**).
-

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**).

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**).

i) Budget

All applications should include a detailed budget, with breakdowns of costs and justification for all costs. The Irish Cancer Society does not cover indirect costs or overheads.

Translational Biomedical or Clinical Research applicants can apply for a maximum of **€185,000**.

The proposed budget should adequately cover costs for Stipend, Fees, Running Costs (incl. lab consumables), Equipment, Training & Education, Travel & Dissemination, Public & Patient Partnership and Involvement (PPP/PPI). Please note the following budget stipulations specific to the Translational Biomedical and Clinical Research funding call:

- **PhD Stipend** funded at a set rate of €25,000 per year.
- Maximum of €50,000 for **Running Costs** (incl. lab consumables) category.
- A set provision of €2,000 must be allocated to **PPP/PPI** category.
- Costs for attending conferences must be included for each year in the **Travel & Dissemination** category. Costs for at least one research presentation must be included within one year of the budget (e.g., poster printing).
- PhD researchers should plan to attend at least 1 [Irish Association for Cancer Research \(IACR\) conference](#) over the duration of their scholarship.

Please consult the Irish Cancer Society Budget Spending and Expenses Guidelines when developing your grant budget (Appendix 2).

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. We therefore strongly recommend you get support from the research office in your chosen host institution when preparing this budget.

Direct costs can be requested for the following budget categories (please refer to **Appendix 2** for further detail):

Budget Item	Details
Personnel: PhD Stipend & Fees	<p>The Irish Cancer Society will fund the stipend of full-time PhD researchers at a <u>set rate</u> of €25,000 per year. Stipends for part-time scholarships should be calculated on a pro-rata basis. Applicants considering part-time scholarships should contact us prior to applying.</p> <p>The Irish Cancer Society will contribute <u>up to</u> €8,500 towards the annual costs of EU or non-EU postgraduate registration fees for up to four years. A reduction in fees permitted by some host institutions in the latter years of the PhD should be considered.</p> <p>The Society will contribute a maximum of €300 per annum towards the cost of an Irish Residence Permit.</p>
Running costs & Equipment	<p>A maximum provision of €50,000 has been budgeted for Running costs (incl. lab consumables) related to Translational Biomedical or Clinical research proposals.</p> <p>Running costs are costs associated with conducting the principal research activities e.g. materials and consumables, survey costs, travel for participants, transcription costs, etc.</p> <p>The Irish Cancer Society will allow researchers to purchase small equipment items up to a maximum value of €3,000. Strong justification must be provided for each equipment item, and a rationale must be given as to why this item is not already available to the researcher at their host institution. Only equipment items that are specific to the research project will be allowed. All costs must be inclusive of VAT, where applicable.</p>
Training & Education costs	<p>Education and training for the PhD researcher may be budgeted. This may include attending courses, workshops, professional development training, etc. Include any training-related travel and accommodation costs here.</p>
Travel & Dissemination costs	<p>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.</p> <p>Conference attendance must be included within each year of the budget. Costs for at least one research presentation must be included within one year of the proposed budget (e.g., poster printing).</p> <p>PhD researchers should budget to attend at least 1 Irish Association for Cancer Research (IACR) conference over the duration of their scholarship.</p>

PPP/PPI costs

A minimum provision of €2,000 must be budgeted for involvement activities.

Research participation costs (e.g. participant travel) should not be included here, as these form part of the running costs of the research project.

Please see Appendix 3- Public and Patient Partnership (PPP) in Research Guidelines, when developing a PPP/PPI budget.

Please Note: Justification of the costs proposed for each budget item is required. Supporting images of estimated costs (e.g. travel and accommodation costs) may be required.

j) Validation Summary

The validation summary page will notify you of any incomplete sections. 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 any supervisors who have yet to confirm their participation. Once the application has been validated, it can be submitted by the PhD researcher. The application will then be routed to all signatories (primary supervisors) for final sign-off.

The application will not be received by the Irish Cancer Society until all signatories (primary supervisors) have approved it.

All signatories must approve the application before the application deadline [3pm, Tuesday 7th April 2026]. It is the responsibility of the PhD researcher to ensure that signatories are given sufficient time to approve the application before the deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Application Checklist:

- ✓ Completed Application Form
- ✓ Applicant CV
- ✓ Letter of Reference (not member of supervisory team)
- ✓ Supervisor CVs (2x Primary Supervisors)
- ✓ Declaration of Support (2x Primary Supervisors)
- ✓ Declaration of Support (Host Institution- Head of Department/Head of School)
- ✓ Gantt Chart
- ✓ Relevant confirmations and signatures

6. Application Assessment [Stage 1 of 2]

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, or those which do not use provided templates (e.g., CV, Declaration of Support) will be rejected by the Society and will 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 will be reviewed by an external panel of international academic/clinical experts (scientific panel) **AND** a panel of experts by lived experience (PPP/PPI panel). Each reviewer will provide scores and feedback on each application, shortlisting the top applicants for consideration.

It is vital that sections reviewed by the PPP/PPI panel are written in **plain accessible language**. Failure to do this may result in the PPP/PPI representatives being unable to accurately score and provide feedback on these sections of your application.

Each section of the application will be scored by review panels as follows:

	PPP/PPI Review Panel	Scientific Review Panel
Application Outline	X	✓
Applicant Details		
Applicant CV	X	✓
Personal Statement	✓	✓
Letter of Reference	✓	✓
Supervision		
Supervisor Details	X	✓
Supervisor CVs (x2)	X	✓
Declarations of Support (x 2 Supervisors)	X	✓
Research Programme		
Research Project Details	X	✓
Gantt Chart	✓	✓
Declaration of Support (Host Institution)	X	✓
Mobility Element	X	✓
PPP/PPI Plan		
Plain Language Summary	✓	X
PPP/PPI Plan	✓	X
Sharing Research Findings	✓	✓
Research Impact Plan	✓	✓
Budget*	X	X

* Review panel will be asked to provide feedback on budget, which will be taken into consideration. Approval of all grant budget items is at the discretion of Irish Cancer Society.

Scientific Reviewer Scoring:

When scoring applications, scientific reviewers will consider the following:

- Strength and suitability of the research environment to support the applicant in their research and career progression.
- Scientific merit of the proposed research, including feasibility of the proposed research, methods of research, and any ethical considerations.
- Potential impact of the proposed research.

Scientific review panel scoring will be weighted as follows:

	% of Scientific Score
Applicant Details	20
Supervision	10
Research Programme	50
Mobility Element	10
Sharing Research Findings/Impact Plan	10
Total	100

PPP/PPI Reviewer Scoring:

When scoring applications, PPP/PPI reviewers will consider the following:

- Clarity and feasibility of PPP/PPI plan (e.g., use of local resources, genuine involvement of people affected by cancer, relevant stakeholders included).
- Applicant demonstrates clear understanding of the value of involving people affected by cancer in their research.
- PPP/PPI activities are not tokenistic; constitute true partnership, not simply participation/engagement.
- Methods for sharing research findings are inclusive and appropriate.
- Potential impact of the proposed research.

PPP/PPI review panel scoring will be weighted as follows:*

	% of PPP/PPI Score
Applicant Details	20
Plain Language Summary & Gantt Chart	30
PPP/PPI Plan	40
Sharing Research Findings/Impact Plan	10
Total	100

* Please note: PPP/PPI reviewers are given an opportunity to comment and provide feedback on the overall application, including sections they do not score.

6.3. Assessment Outcome

The deadline for applications is **3pm, Tuesday 7th April 2026**. Eligible applications submitted prior to this deadline will be reviewed.

As per the [timeline](#) provided, application reviews (*Stage 1*) will take place throughout April/Early-May 2026. Review scores and comments will be collated for discussion at a review panel meeting, and applications will be shortlisted to progress to interview.

Applicants will be informed of the *Stage 1* outcome by email in Late-May 2026. Reviewer feedback will be available to all applicants on request. Applicants shortlisted for interview (*Stage 2*) will be given at least 2 weeks' notice to prepare for interview guided by reviewer feedback.

7. Interviews [Stage 2 of 2]

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an online interview in mid-June 2026 (date to be confirmed closer to the time). The interview panel will be made up of scientific and PPP/PPI reviewers, in addition to an Irish Cancer Society representative to manage proceedings and record outcomes.

Applicants will be asked to present a summary of their project, including a response to review panel comments/feedback from the application review stage. This will be followed by a question-and-answer session. Applicants (PhD researchers) will be expected to demonstrate a detailed and critical understanding of their proposed research programme, as well as plans for sharing research findings, PPP/PPI, and research impact.

The final funding decision will be collectively decided by the scientific and PPI review panels.

8. Contact

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

Email: grants@irishcancer.ie

FAO: Dr Serena Foo