



# Irish Cancer Society Research

## Networking Awards 2026

### Guidelines for Applicants

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Overview

The Irish Cancer Society Networking Awards will contribute towards the cost of **hosting** or **developing** networking events, training activities, collaborations, or partnerships (e.g. host a workshop, conference, training, or another networking activity) **focusing on cancer research**. These awards are intended to support motivated individuals who would not otherwise be able to host these activities. Please see eligibility criteria.

The aim of this award is to offer cancer researchers the opportunity to establish and strengthen collaborations and relationships with cancer researchers. This programme will give clinical professionals and academic researchers, at any stage of their career, the opportunity to learn about up-to-date cancer research, network and collaborate, and gain experience in research dissemination.

**Please note**, this is **not** a travel bursary award i.e. this award is not for attending conferences.

## 1.2. Indicative Timelines

Milestone	Date (2026)*
Grant Call opens	Wednesday, 20 <sup>th</sup> May
<b>Application Deadline</b>	<b>Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> July at 3pm</b>
Review	July/ August
Awardees Announced	Mid-August

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

## 1.3. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this award is to give cancer researchers (translational, clinical, survivorship) the opportunity to establish and strengthen collaborations and relationships with others in the cancer research community.

Applicants to the Irish Cancer Society Networking Awards 2026 should aim to **host** or **develop** networking events, training activities, collaborations, or partnerships which will stimulate, develop, and build capacity in the cancer research community (please refer to **Section 2.3** for examples of eligible events). The term “networking event” or “event” will be used to encompass any eligible workshops/ events/ activities for this award.



## 1.4. Funding and Duration

The purpose of this award is to contribute towards the costs of a cancer research networking event. Applicants can apply for funding up to a **maximum of €2,500**. The number of awards made will be dependent on the number of applications received, and the total budget requested in each. Each applicant may only submit one application.

The proposed networking event must not begin prior to **2<sup>nd</sup> November 2026**, and the event must be completed within 12 months of the grant start date. The earliest grant start date is 12<sup>th</sup> October 2026 (when payment can be requested for the grant).

## 1.5. Reporting

Recipients of this grant will be expected to provide a written report to the Society within one month of the funded event. This will include a financial report, detailing expenses and including receipts for reimbursement.

# 2. Eligibility

## 2.1. Applicant Eligibility

Applications from individuals that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered.

This award is open to cancer researchers of all backgrounds. This includes academic and clinical researchers, medical doctors, and professionals of social sciences, nursing, and allied health (e.g. speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, dietetics, psychologists, occupational therapists etc.) working with those affected by cancer. Further eligibility requirements are listed below.

Researchers who are not funded by the Irish Cancer Society but funded by **most other funding bodies** should be eligible. Please email [grants@irishcancer.ie](mailto:grants@irishcancer.ie) your funding body to check beforehand.

## Lead Applicant

### Minimum Eligibility Criteria

Academic or clinical applicants are eligible to apply. There can only be one lead applicant.

### The **Lead** applicant must

- be actively participating in translational, clinical or survivorship cancer research (with a minimum of completing an undergraduate degree) in the **Republic of Ireland**
- show a demonstrable commitment to cancer research

### Medical doctors must

- be a qualified medical doctor, registered with the Irish Medical Council
- be working in an oncology-based discipline\* \*\*

### Nurses and Allied Health professionals must\*\*

- be a qualified nurse or allied health professional registered with CORU or the relevant professional body (e.g. Psychological Society of Ireland, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland)
- be working in an oncology-based discipline or working directly with people affected by cancer\*\*

### Eligible lead applicants must **not**

- have access to existing funding that covers the development of the workshop, conference, or other networking event in full. Co-funding of a networking event **may** be considered. In such cases, applicants should contact [grants@irishcancer.ie](mailto:grants@irishcancer.ie) before making an application

\*Eligible **Oncology-specialist** fields include (but are not limited to):

- Surgery
- Radiation
- Haematology
- Molecular Medicine/Pathology
- Psychiatry
- Paediatrics
- Gynaecology
- Palliative Medicine
- Medical oncology
- Geriatric oncology

\*\*Please note: Eligible candidates must spend the vast majority, if not all their time, focusing on cancer care.

## **Co-Applicants**

A maximum of 5 co-applicants is allowed to be added to the application. Co-applicants must play a significant role in the development and planning of the activity e.g. significant input into event design and organisation, or participation. If projects are co-designed with key stakeholders (e.g. Public and Patient Partnership, please see **Appendix 1**), you may add them as a co-applicant to the project. You will be asked to provide a brief role description for each co-applicant. Co-applicants will be required to confirm their participation prior to submitting your application.

## Official Collaborators

Official collaborators can also be included, if they play a significant and substantial role in the planned networking event. Academic and non-academic collaborators are acceptable. For this award, collaborators are defined as individuals or organisations that provide focused help or assistance on certain aspects of the plan. For example, a collaborator may provide the use of their venue facilities.

## 2.2. Institution Eligibility

The host institution is the organisation which receives and administers grant funding and is responsible for compliance with all general and specific terms and conditions of awards.

To be eligible to apply for funding, a proposed host institution must be based in the Republic of Ireland and should be one of the below:

- Atlantic Technological University (ATU)
- Dublin City University (DCU)
- Munster Technological University (MTU)
- Maynooth University (MU)
- Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)
- South East Technological University (SETU)
- Technological University Dublin (TUD)
- Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS)
- Trinity College Dublin (TCD)
- University College Cork (UCC)
- University College Dublin (UCD)
- University of Galway (UoG)
- University of Limerick (UL)

Applicants conducting research out of non-approved sites (e.g. hospital) must nominate an approved host institution and all finances must be managed by this institution.

We recognise that not all hospital-based cancer researchers, i.e. doctors, nurses, or allied health professionals, will be affiliated with one of the host institutions listed above. In such cases, award agreements may be made directly with the applicant's employing hospital and payments will be made in arrears upon submission of receipts and invoices. This will be done on a case-by-case basis, please contact [grants@irishcancer.ie](mailto:grants@irishcancer.ie) if this applies to you or if you have other institutional-based enquiries.

## 2.3. Eligible Networking Events

As a guide, some eligible networking events include\*:



- Organise and host a small-scale conference or workshop in cancer research in the Republic of Ireland
- Organise and host a cancer specific ‘summer school’ (or similar) in the Republic of Ireland
- Host a meeting in the Republic of Ireland with national/international researchers or clinical professionals with the aim of establishing new research collaborations in a translational/ survivorship cancer research topic

**\*Please note**, this is not an exhaustive list. The Society is open to all networking events which satisfy the purpose and objectives of the call. If you are unsure of the eligibility of your event, please contact [grants@irishcancer.ie](mailto:grants@irishcancer.ie).

Past awarded events include:

- “Cancer Survivorship: Digital Health Care and the Cancer Recovery Trajectory” – a conference exploring innovative approaches to improve cancer survivorship in rural regions (ATU)
- “Pelvic Health in Oncology: The Role of Rehabilitation” – a workshop looking at the role of rehabilitation in oncology pelvic health (TCD)

## **3. Application Procedure**

### **3.1. Application Overview**

This is a one stage application process. Once your application has been submitted, an expert external review panel will evaluate the application submissions. Reviewer feedback will be made available to all applicants upon request.

### **3.2. How to Apply**

**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 online grant management system.

Applications must be completed and submitted through the Irish Cancer Society’s **new** online grant management system. To submit an online application, you are required to register at the following address:

<https://irishcancersociety.optimytool.com/en>.

When registering, you will receive a verification email from [noreply@optimytool.com](mailto:noreply@optimytool.com) within five minutes (please check your spam).

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

1. Manage personal data
2. Change email address
3. Change password
4. Delete your account

You should then select 'Submit a new application' at the top of the homepage, then 'Cancer Research Networking Award'.

## 4. Application Form

There are 8 sections outlined on the left-hand side of the page:

- a) Application Outline
- b) Event Details
- c) Benefit to the Applicant's Career
- d) Applicant's CV
- e) Declaration of Support
- f) Supporting Documentation
- g) Budget
- h) Validation Summary

By clicking 'PREVIOUS SCREEN' you will be brought to the previous section and by clicking 'NEXT' SCREEN you will be brought to the next section, and your application will be saved. Alternatively, you can click 'SAVE AND EXIT'.

### 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:

- Proposed grant start date (must be on or after 12<sup>th</sup> October 2026) \*
- Funding Period/Grant Duration (up to 12 months)
- Lead applicant(s) details
- Proposed host institution
- Co-applicants (if applicable)\*\*
- Collaborators (if applicable)

**\*Please Note:** The earliest date we can process payment for the grant is 12<sup>th</sup> October 2026 meaning that the earliest event start date is 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2026.

**\*\*Additionally,** you will need to **send invitation(s) to your co-applicant(s)** for them to approve and edit the application via the 'MANAGE INVITATIONS' button on the lefthand side of the page.



You can choose which sections will be visible to them and grant either 'Full access' or 'Read-only access' to the co-applicant.

If you re-invite a co-applicant to access the application again, they should use the **original** link i.e. there will not be a second link sent.

## **b) Event Details**

In this section, you will be asked to describe and justify the cancer research networking event you wish to develop/host. You will be asked to complete the following:

- Title of Event
- Nature of the event (e.g. workshop, conference, training course etc.)
- Description of the event (**300 words max**)
- Cancer Type(s)
- Location of event: city, country e.g. Athlone, Ireland
- Event dates: first day of grant (including planning) until last day of the event e.g. 02/11/2026 to 31/01/2027



### **c) Benefit to the Applicant's Career**

Please describe the benefit of this event, including to you (the applicant), your career, and to those taking part (**max 500 words**).

This should address:

- How this event is relevant to you
- How this event aligns with the objectives and aims of the funding call
- The knowledge/skills you (and, if applicable, other researchers) will gain from this event
- What types of connections you hope to make with other researchers or cancer research groups attending the event
- How will this funding benefit your future career and research plans?
- How the proposed event will benefit the wider cancer research community in Ireland

### **d) Applicant 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.

Please only fill in relevant details, certain sections can be left blank if not applicable to the applicant's career stage. You will not be penalised for this. Senior applicants would be considered those who have **more than 2 years** of postdoctoral experience.

To upload your CV, click 'BROWSE FILES' or drag file to the dotted box. **This must be in pdf format, using the Irish Cancer Society Senior or Junior CV template. The page limit for CVs is 3 pages.**

### **e) Declaration of Support**

Please upload a letter of support from the **Head of Department** or **Head of School** at your host institution. They should indicate that they support your application and that they will ensure your ability to take time away from, or adjust, your current work duties to accommodate the development/hosting of the proposed networking event. On awarding of the funding, a contract will be made between the Irish Cancer Society and the institution at which you, the awardee, work. The declaration of support should indicate that the Head of Department or Head of School will facilitate this process.

Hospital-based applicants who are not affiliated with an approved host institution are **not** required to submit a host institution letter of support. However, all hospital-based cancer researchers must upload a declaration of support from their **manager** demonstrating the organisation's support for the applicant to fulfil the requirements of the award. The letter should explicitly state that the applicant would be provided the necessary time and resources to accomplish the goals of the award, which includes covering any required backfill or other staffing considerations.

The declaration of support template is downloadable from this section on the online system or on the website.

To upload your letters of support, click 'BROWSE FILES' or drag file to the dotted box. **This must be in pdf format, using the Irish Cancer Society Declaration of Support template (this should be a maximum of 2 pages).**

## **f) Supporting Documentation**

Please upload any supporting documentation relevant to your application. For example, if you have already started planning a networking event or have previously hosted an event, please provide information here.

## **g) Budget**

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

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

<b>Budget Item</b>	<b>Details</b>
<b>Networking Event Running costs</b>	<p>Costs associated with the development and hosting of the proposed cancer research networking event should be included here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expenditure for events such as these should be kept as low as possible, compatible with the occasion</li> <li>• Where possible, room hire for any events should be restricted to locations that are free of charge. Exceptions may apply but would need prior approval from the Irish Cancer Society</li> <li>• For events that utilise internal and external suppliers, it is expected that the most economical supplier be utilised</li> </ul> <p>Costs for materials required for the event, such as stationery, should be included here.</p>
<b>Dissemination costs</b>	<p>Costs associated with research dissemination should be clearly planned and articulated as part of your research</p>



	<p>budget. Such costs include printing posters, generation of leaflets, publication costs, etc. All costs must be inclusive of VAT, where applicable.</p>
<p><b>Travel, Accommodation and Subsistence</b></p>	<p>Costs associated with travel, accommodation and subsistence for invited speakers or workshop facilitators only (excluding listed applicants) should be outlined here.</p> <p><b><u>Travel</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Travel should be by the most economical means available, and the Society encourages the use of public transport whenever possible. Tickets for public transport should be booked in advance where possible and should be standard class or economy class only</li><li>• Taxis may be used but are the least preferred method of transport. Taxis should be shared where possible and incur no additional fees i.e. waiting time charges or tips</li><li>• In situations where events in Ireland are not accessible by means of public transport, external speakers/facilitators may use their own vehicle to travel to and from the conference/ meeting. A standard motor travel rate of <b>41.8cent per kilometre</b> is permitted in instances where this is necessary. Higher mileage rates permitted by the Research Institution will not be covered by the Society. The motor travel rate paid is deemed to cover all expenses incurred in running the car e.g. insurance, tax, running costs etc</li></ul> <p><b><u>Accommodation</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The cost of accommodation should be reasonable and in line with the duration of the event</li><li>• External speakers/facilitators must endeavour to book accommodation not exceeding a 4-star rating</li><li>• For accommodation in Ireland, a <b>rate not exceeding €140 per night</b> (B&amp;B; standard room) should be sought. If this is not possible, please provide the alternative and an explanation in the budget justification section</li><li>• Accommodation costs for travelling partners will not be covered</li><li>• In situations where a Research Institution has agreed a discounted rate for accommodation, which exceeds a 4-</li></ul>



star rating, prior approval must be sought from the Society to proceed with any booking

- Facilities and services which are not provided free of charge by the hotel are not permitted (e.g. Wi-Fi costs, room service, newspapers, etc.)

### **Meals**

- All meal expenses **must be** vouched expenses. The Irish Cancer Society does not permit any researchers to claim standard subsistence rates that may be outlined by their individual Research Institutions
- Meal costs to a value of
  - €10 for breakfast
  - €20 for one daily meal (lunch **or** dinner and not including breakfast)
  - €37.50 for two daily meals (lunch **and** dinner and not including breakfast)per person respectively would be deemed reasonable.
- The Society will not fund alcohol
- An added tip or discretionary service charge of up to 15% on bills is deemed reasonable in countries where such charges are expected and are standard practice

You will also be asked:

- For justification for each category
- Does the proposed budget to the Irish Cancer Society cover the budget of the event in full?
- If not, where is the shortfall covered from?

**Please Note**, if available do upload supporting images of estimated costs e.g. travel and accommodation costs

## **h) Validation Summary and Submitting the Application**

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. Before submitting, please ensure **invitations to co-applicants are managed/ sent** via the blue '**MANAGE INVITATIONS**' button on the left of the page.

The application is ready for submission once the form has no incomplete sections. Please double check for any co-applicants who have yet to confirm their participation/ approval. Once the application has been validated, it may be submitted by the lead applicant by clicking 'VALIDATE AND SEND'.

The application will not be received by the Society until all co-applicants have approved it before the application deadline. It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure that co-applicants are given sufficient time to approve the application before the deadline.

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

Application Checklist:

- ✓ Completed application form
- ✓ Applicant CV
- ✓ Declaration of Support
- ✓ Supporting documentation (if applicable)

## 5. Application Assessment

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

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

### 5.1. 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.

### 5.2. Assessment Procedure

Applications are reviewed by a panel of PPI reviewers. They are also assessed by international academic/clinical experts in the areas of translational or clinical research, or social science, nursing, or allied health science who are **outside** of the Republic of Ireland and **external** to the Irish Cancer Society. The panel will assess all sections of the application.

**The Panel will score applications based on:**

- Feasibility of the planned networking event
- How the event will benefit the applicant(s) career
- How the event will support and build the cancer research community in Ireland

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

### **5.3. Assessment Outcome**

The deadline for applications is **3pm, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2026**. Applications submitted will be reviewed and notified of the outcome by email.

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

### **5.4 Payment of Funding**

For awardees affiliated with an approved host institution, the host institution will receive 70% of the requested amount upfront, the remaining 30% of funds will be held until the submission and approval of a progress and financial report covering the event, along with the submission of receipts for all expenditure. Funding will be paid directly to the recipients' employing/host institution, and it is the responsibility of the employer/host institution to set up a dedicated research account for these funds and to administer the funding to the awardee.

For hospital-based staff who are not affiliated with an approved host institution, the Society will be unable to provide the funding to the applicant in advance. In such cases, 100% of the funds requested will be reimbursed retrospectively to the applicant's employing hospital. The reimbursement of funds will be dependent on the submission of the following:

- A detailed report covering the event
- A financial report detailing the statement of income and expenditure
- Receipts for all expenditure

**Please note** the Irish Cancer Society will only cover the costs of items included in the pre-agreed budget and will not reimburse for any expenditure that is not covered by a receipt. Screenshots of bank statements or ATM receipts will not be accepted.

## **6. Contact**

If you require assistance with the online grant management system or have any questions about the grant call, including questions regarding event eligibility, please contact the Research team at the Irish Cancer Society:

Email: [grants@irishcancer.ie](mailto:grants@irishcancer.ie)

FAO: Dr Serena Foo