



Irish Cancer Society Research

Clinician Research Development Fellowship 2026

1. Introduction	2
1.1. Overview	2
1.2. Indicative Timelines	3
1.3. Purpose and Objectives	3
1.4. Research Themes	4
1.5. Funding and Duration	5
1.6. Patient and Stakeholder Involvement	6
1.7 Research Impact	6
2. Eligibility	7
2.1. Applicant Eligibility	7
2.2. Institution Eligibility	9
3. Application Procedure	10
3.1. Application Overview	10
3.2. How to Apply	10
4. Application Form	11
5. Submission of the Application	25
6. Application Assessment	26
7. Next Stage: Interviews	27
8. Contact	28

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

A key priority in the [Irish Cancer Society Strategy](#) is to ensure that Irish patients benefit from world-class cancer research and expertise. Central to this focus is developing research talent to ensure that Ireland can foster, attract and retain world-class cancer research leaders who will drive evidence-based improvements in patient care. As such, the Society seeks to work in partnership with the medical community to drive forward fundamental change across the health research landscape as well as creating an environment where pioneering cancer research can take place.

As part of this commitment, we wish to invite eligible **Non-Consultant Hospital Doctors** (NCHDs) training in any oncology-related discipline, to apply for our **Clinician Research Development Fellowship 2026**.

As highlighted in the [National Cancer Strategy](#), we recognise that cancer clinicians require support at this pivotal time in their training to develop as competitive cancer researchers and to be able to conduct and drive world-class cancer research in the **Republic of Ireland** in future.

Therefore, the purpose of the **Clinician Research Development Fellowship 2026** is to provide the opportunity for NCHDs to **develop cancer research experience**.

Ideally, the NCHD candidate will be aligned with an Irish postgraduate training body and enrolled on a higher specialist training (HST)/ specialist registrar (SpR) Scheme. However, this is **not** a mandatory requirement, and applications from candidates conducting a parallel training path or other NCHDs will be accepted provided they provide proof of strong support from a clinical mentor.

Once appropriately justified, the funding available can be used for a variety of activities. For example, the successful awardee, could use this funding for salary, enabling them to spend some time away from clinical and administrative commitments to focus on developing an important aspect of Irish cancer research, such as writing and developing clinical trial applications. A maximum of €8,500 each year could alternatively be used towards M.D. or Ph.D. enrolment fees.

This is meant to be a **transformative investment** for a clinician who has already demonstrated that they are passionate about conducting active, patient-focused cancer research, but needs the extra support to enable them to accelerate their trajectory to leading and directing research based in the Republic of Ireland.

1.2. Indicative Timelines

Milestone	Date (2026)*
Grant Call Opens	Thursday, 23 rd July
Application Deadline	Wednesday, 19th August, 3pm GMT
Review of Applications	August/ September
Interviews	Early October
Award Announced	October
Earliest Start Date	December

*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 the Clinician Research Development Fellowship Award is to support an outstanding **NCHD** in the development and progression of their cancer research career. This award will aid the candidate in developing their career and thus become an oncology leader with a diverse clinical cancer research portfolio. The purpose of this call is **not focused on providing funding for one distinct research project**, rather it is to **facilitate career development and research capacity** for the applicant to go on to become an oncology leader.

This award is intended to be a **transformative investment** in those who demonstrate great potential conducting innovative Irish cancer research. This individual will be a NCHD currently conducting training in a cancer-related discipline and be enrolled on a HST scheme or an equivalent parallel training path, in the Republic of Ireland.

The ideal candidate is someone who has a demonstrable track record in cancer research that is aligned to their career stage. While this might mean that applicants may not have the most extensive research track record, the experience they do have will display their **passion for research** and the potential for them to become **future leaders in cancer research in the Republic of Ireland**. Ultimately, the candidate will present a persuasive application to a review panel consisting of top international cancer experts and Irish patient partners. Specifically, how our investment will advance their research career development, leveraging on their existing background to lead a cancer research sector in Ireland in the future.

The fellowship plans should be strong and have demonstrable potential to be impactful and be realistic about what is achievable during this award.

The candidate will enjoy the full support of their peers and institution (including their mentor(s)) to achieve the plans set out in this application. Their host institution must also make a commitment to support their work and be able to conduct the necessary administration (contract sign off, financial reports etc.) associated with the award in a timely manner.

In summary, the ideal candidate:

- is an NCHD at an early stage of their career
- is based in the Republic of Ireland
- is conducting training in a cancer-related discipline
- is enrolled on a HST scheme affiliated with a Postgraduate Training Body (or conducting an equivalent parallel training path)
- has the desire and potential to become a future leader in cancer research in Ireland
- has a fully supportive institutional environment

The funding provided by this award would give them a unique and transformational opportunity to develop their career.

1.4. Research Themes

The Clinician Research Development Fellowship aims to invest in a clinician in an oncology-related discipline, enabling the candidate to develop experience in cancer research. It is hoped that fostering this research experience at an early stage of their clinical career will facilitate the clinician becoming a future leader of cancer research in the Republic of Ireland.

All proposals must be aligned with the Society's Strategy. Proposed projects can be in any of the following areas: a) translational biomedical research, b) clinical trials or c) survivorship. These areas are described below in greater detail.

- 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 carefully designed studies in people to evaluate the safety, effectiveness, and benefits of new approaches to cancer treatment and care. For example, clinical research may investigate whether a new medicine can improve survival outcomes for individuals with a particular type of cancer.

In addition to funding Investigational Medicinal Product (IMP) trials, the Irish Cancer Society is committed to supporting high-quality non-IMP clinical research. The Society welcomes applications for non-drug-based trials that have the potential to improve cancer outcomes, patient experiences, and quality of care. Eligible areas of research for non-IMP trials include, but are not limited to, diagnostics, digital health and other technologies, radiotherapy, surgery, psycho-oncology, exercise and physical activity, nutrition, supportive care interventions, and multidisciplinary approaches that combine multiple treatment or care modalities

- c) Survivorship Research** seeks to improve the care and outcomes experienced by people affected by cancer, through person-centred research methods. Studies should yield person-centred data, and can include research such as prevention/screening incidence and behaviour; psycho-social or physical long term effects of cancer and its treatment; quality and experience of treatment and care (including palliative and end-of-life care); self-management and health behaviour; health literacy and information; genetic risk and counselling; physical and practical needs of people living with cancer or those who care for them (e.g. financial, employment, accessibility). Survivorship research does not include in-vitro or ex-vivo methods (i.e. studying cancer cells or tumour tissue outside a living organism), or in-vivo methods (i.e., studying cancer cells or tumour tissue within a living experimental model)

1.5. Funding and Duration

There are **two** awards available.

The total maximum value of this award is **€100,000**, over an 18 – 48 month period. This award can provide funding for a variety of research activities, e.g. salary, running costs associated with a specific research project(s), training and dissemination costs, PPI costs, M.D. or Ph.D. fees etc. Please note the following budget stipulations specific to this Fellowship Call:

- For any staff salary proposed, all applicants should include employer's PRSI and pension contributions in accordance with the appropriate salary scale and

research institution (e.g. HSE or IUA scale). Salary can be budgeted on a part-time or full-time basis

- A **minimum provision** of €2,000 must be allocated to support Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) throughout the duration of this award
- A maximum budget of €8,500 per annum is allowable towards M.D. or Ph.D. enrolment fees

Further details on budget requirements are described in Section 4K, and Appendix 2 'Irish Cancer Society Research Budget & Expenses Guidelines 2026'.

1.6. Public and Patient Partnership or 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 Partnership or Involvement (PPP/ PPI) in the research process ensures that research is meaningful and of benefit to those affected by cancer. PPP 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 detailed PPP plan (and the associated minimum €2,000 budget allocation) and sharing of research findings plan within their application. **It is strongly recommended that applicants read Appendix 1 'Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research' Guidelines prior to beginning work on an application.**

1.7 Research Impact

Creating impact from the research 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.

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 3**. The RIF can be used by applicants, and funded researchers alike, to guide research impact planning and monitoring.

2. Eligibility

2.1. Applicant Eligibility

Applications from individuals that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be assessed. This award is open to non-consultant hospital doctors training in an oncology related discipline.

a) Lead Applicant

At a **minimum**, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Be a non-consultant hospital doctor (or clinically equivalent level), actively conducting training at Registrar or Specialist Registrar level (either through an Irish Postgraduate Training Body or via a parallel training path) in a cancer related discipline* in a public hospital in the Republic of Ireland
- Currently be a resident in the Republic of Ireland
- Be affiliated through their clinical facility with a higher education institution in the Republic of Ireland that is one of the HRB's approved host institutions below:
 - Atlantic Technological University (ATU)
 - Dublin City University (DCU)
 - Maynooth University (MU)
 - Munster Technological University (MTU)
 - 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)
- Demonstrate a high level of support from the academic host institution, hospital, training body (where relevant) and peers for the duration of the award

- Demonstrate a high level of mentorship support
- Have a promising track record in cancer research exemplified by, for example, publications or other relevant research outputs, national/international research partnerships etc

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

- Surgery
- Pathology
- Radiotherapy
- Radiology
- Haematology
- Molecular medicine
- Psychiatry
- Paediatrics
- Gynaecology
- Palliative Medicine
- Medical oncology
- Geriatric oncology
- Primary care**

Please note: eligible candidates will only be considered from specialities that spend most, if not all their time focusing on cancer care. This is an award aimed at providing the opportunity for an individual to develop cancer research experience and expertise. **It is not intended to support development of general service approaches in cancer care.**

** **Primary care:** while primary care is not an oncology specific field, we welcome applications from trainee general practitioners provided the research is focused in the area of oncology.

b) Academic Mentor

As part of the application, the applicant must identify an academic mentor. The role of the academic mentor is to provide guidance and support in terms of the academic aspects of the research award such as grant administration, laboratory, technical or other healthcare expertise (nursing, dietetics, physiotherapy etc.) that may be required by the applicant during the duration of the award.

The academic mentor may also assist in establishing further research networks nationally and internationally.

The academic mentor must be:

- an established senior academic with a proven track record for research

- based in one of the HRB-approved institutions listed as per the subsection 2.1 a) 'Lead Applicant'

c) Career Mentor

A cornerstone of many high-performing clinical researchers is their integration into an ongoing network of direct and indirect mentorship and supportive counsel. We wish to highlight and reinforce the importance of this, often undervalued, aspect of a fellow's career development.

As part of the application form, the review panel will examine the candidate's articulation of the current and future arrangements to support them as a mentee. Mentors may include individuals and/or committees. They could be of any relevant background who will ensure a rounded evolution of the applicant's career, will help benchmark, will broaden their expertise base and collaborative network (nationally/internationally) and foster and champion the further development of the candidate.

A mentor should be an established senior academic or clinician with a proven track record for research and mentorship.

If the mentor is a senior academic within one of the listed HRB-approved host institutions in the Republic of Ireland, they **may also** fulfil the role of academic mentor for this grant.

2.2. Institution Eligibility

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. The applicant should be affiliated with one of the HRB-approved institutions listed under the subsection 2.1 a) 'Lead Applicant'.

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

3. Application Procedure

3.1. Application Overview

There are two stages to the application process:

- i. Full application stage
- ii. Interviews

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

Stage	Description
Stage 1: Application	The application should provide a detailed description of how this funding will support their development as a cancer researcher and support their proposed research project(s). An expert international review panel, comprised of both scientific/clinical and PPI expert reviewers, will evaluate the application submissions. Applications will be evaluated based on their quality. Applications that are of the highest quality will be shortlisted to the interview stage. Reviewer feedback will be made available to all applicants.
Stage 2: Interviews	Interviews are conducted between shortlisted applicants and the review panel. Feedback from the full application stage should be used to further improve the application in advance of the interviews.

3.2. How to Apply

Applications must be completed and submitted through the **new** Irish Cancer Society 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, please fill out all fields on the registration form.

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 system.

When registering, you will receive a verification email from 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 'Clinician Research Development Fellowship Award'.

4. Application Form

The use of AI or ChatGPT to write applications is **not** permitted and will be deemed ineligible.

There are 12 sections outlined on the left-hand side of the page:

- a) Project/ Application Outline
- b) Lead Applicant Details
- c) Academic Mentor*
- d) Career Mentor*
- e) Plans for the Award
- f) PPI Plan
- g) Sharing of Research Findings Plan
- h) Impact Plan
- i) Research Time Practicalities
- j) Organisational Support Plan
- k) Budget
- l) 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'.

***Academic and career mentors:** you may need to **send invitation(s) to your mentor(s)** for them to view/ 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 mentor.

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

Further details on each section of the application form

a) Project 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 title
- Expected start date (this is an estimate start date)
- Duration (must be between 18 – 48 months)
- Proposed host institution
 - The HRB-approved host institution that you will be affiliated with. The grant contract will be administered by this host institution
- Postgraduate training body or equivalent
 - If relevant, please identify the postgraduate training body that you are affiliated with. To be eligible for this award, you must have permission and support from your training body
- Oncology specialist field
 - Please indicate the oncology-related training discipline in which you are currently enrolled
 - Eligible oncology specialist fields are listed in subsection 2.1 in this document
- Keywords
 - Please provide up to 5 keywords which describe the main elements of your research e.g T cell therapy, nutrition, digital health, psycho-social, macrophages etc
- Cancer type(s)
 - Please indicate your cancer focus: are you advancing research on particular anatomically or biochemically defined forms of cancer?
- Research type(s)
 - Please select the most appropriate research type for your proposal using the [Common Scientific Outline \(CSO\)](#).

b) Applicant Details

i. Applicant Curriculum Vitae

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

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

ii. Extended leave (optional)

Any extended leave will be taken into consideration upon assessment of applications. This is to recognise that activities conducted during a period may be less due to a period of extended leave during that time.

Please indicate if you have taken extended leave*, and please detail the amount of time taken. You are not required to disclose the nature of this leave.

*Eligible leave includes carer's, maternity, paternity, adoptive, parental, medical leave etc.

c) Academic Mentor

As part of the application, the applicant must identify an academic mentor. This person must be affiliated with one of the listed HRB-approved host institutions within the Republic of Ireland. The role of the academic mentor is to guide and support the academic aspects of the research, such as grant administration, laboratory, technical or other healthcare expertise required by the applicant during the award.

i. Add academic mentor

To add your academic mentor, please enter the relevant details.

Additionally, you may need to **send invitation(s) to your mentor(s)** for them to view/ edit the application via the 'MANAGE INVITATIONS' button on the lefthand side of the page.



ii. Academic mentor information

Please detail why you have chosen your academic mentor and how they will support you over the period of the award (**2,300 characters max**).

iii. Academic mentor CV

In this section you are required to upload the CV of your academic mentor*, completed using the CV template, downloadable from this section.

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

iv. Academic letter of support

In this section you are required to upload the letter of support of your academic mentor*, completed using the Letter of Support template. This template is available to download from this section of the online application.

To upload their letter of support, click 'BROWSE FILES' or drag the file to the dotted box. **This must be in pdf format, using the Irish Cancer Society template. The page limit is 2 pages.**

*Please note: if your academic mentor and career mentor are the same person, you can upload **one** overall letter of support covering both aspects detailed in Sections c & d.

d) Career Mentorship

As part of the application, the applicant must articulate meaningful plans for real engagement with individuals or committees who will support and mentor their development as a research leader.

One person must be nominated who will agree to be listed and contribute their support to the application. This person must be an established senior academic or clinician with a proven track record for research and mentorship. **If the mentor is a senior academic within one of the listed HRB approved host institutions in the Republic of Ireland, they may also fulfil the role of academic mentor for this grant.**

i. Add career mentor

To add your career mentor, please enter the relevant details.

Additionally, you may need to **send invitation(s) to your mentor(s)** for them to view/ edit the application via the 'MANAGE INVITATIONS' button on the lefthand side of the page.



ii. Career mentor information

Please detail why you have chosen your mentor and how the mentor's arrangements will support your growth as a research leader over the period of the award.

Please detail any other individuals or committees that will support and mentor your further evolution as a research leader **(2,300 characters max)**.

iii. Career Mentor CV

In this section you are required to upload the CV of your career mentor*, completed using the CV template.

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

*Please note: if your academic mentor and career mentor are the same person, you can upload **one** CV to cover both Sections c & d.

iv. Career mentor letter of support

In this section you are required to upload the completed letter of support of your career mentor*, using the letter of support template.

To upload their letter of support, click 'BROWSE FILES' or drag the file to the dotted box. **This must be in pdf format, using the Irish Cancer Society template. The page limit is 2 pages.**

If the candidate is not officially enrolled on a HST scheme and is progressing on an alternative parallel training path, in this letter the career mentor must declare their support for the applicant's training plan and outline the supervisory plans in place that will provide the applicant with the structure required to progress on their professional clinical training path**.

*Please note: if your academic mentor and career mentor are the same person, you can upload **one** overall letter of support covering both aspects detailed in Sections d & e

** Please note: this information is only required if the applicant is not enrolled on a HST scheme. To accommodate this extra information, the letter of support can be a maximum 2 A4 pages in length.

e) Plans for the Award

When completing these sections please keep in mind that the award is aimed at investing in an excellent NCHD, who will become an oncology leader with a diverse clinical cancer research portfolio. **It is not focused on providing funding for one distinct research project**, rather it is to **facilitate career development** for the applicant to go on to become an oncology leader. As such, the applicant should use this section to articulate the career development plans and research activities that they will conduct during the award.

i. Research Experience

Please detail your research experience to date in an oncology-related specialist field **(3,850 characters max)**.

ii. Planned research projects and collaborations

Please outline current and planned research projects and collaborations both nationally and internationally, and **how this award will allow you to develop your career** over and above what would be possible without it **(5,400 characters max)**.

Please include details of which organisations and individuals you will need to engage with and how you will engage with them.

This should include:

- Are you planning on doing an M.D. or Ph.D. as part of this fellowship award?
- Research projects and collaborations
 - Details of any planned involvement in research studies, cancer clinical trials etc. and the proportionate contribution to be enabled by this Fellowship

iii. Transforming Research Career

Please describe how your research plans described in the above section will ensure career development for you in your area of cancer research in the next 2 to 5 years.

How does this fit into your vision for cancer research in the area? (**3,850 characters max**)

This should include how the following will be impacted and enhanced:

- Your career trajectory post specialist training (HST or equivalent)
- The lives of those affected by cancer
- Research networks in Ireland
- Innovative cancer research in Ireland

iv. Motivation for applying for the award

This award is intended to be a transformative investment in an individual who is motivated to become a leader in cancer research in the Republic of Ireland.

Please detail your motivation for applying for this award and how this award could be transformative to you and your career. In this section please also describe why you are the best candidate for the award (**4,650 characters max**).

f) PPI Plan*

Along with career development and cancer research experience, it is important that the successful applicant also uses the award to build relevant PPI networks in Ireland. By building these networks it is expected that the applicant will incorporate PPI in their current and future research, for example including PPI partners as part of future grant applications.

In this section, please detail your plans to build on existing or establish new PPI networks in Ireland that are relevant to your research and how you plan to include PPI in your research going forward (**2,300 characters max**).

It is strongly recommended that applicants read **Appendix 1 'Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research'** Guidelines prior to writing this section.

*Please note: the PPI review panel will review this section. It should be written in **plain English**, in a manner that is accessible to a non-scientific audience.

g) Sharing of Research Findings Plan*

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 required that all applicants produce a dissemination plan to include communication of their research to all relevant audiences, particularly the people affected by cancer.

Please provide an outline of a communications plan, describing how outcomes from your Fellowship will be shared with:

- Scientific, clinical, and healthcare communities
- Key patient and public stakeholders

This may include printed or electronic articles, presentations, public engagement events, social media content, etc. **(2,000 characters max)**.

It is strongly recommended that applicants read **Appendix 1 ‘Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research’** guidelines prior to beginning work on this section.

*Please note: The PPI Review Panel will review this section. It should be written in **Plain English** and in a manner that is accessible to a non-scientific audience.

h) Impact Plan*

Please consult the Research Impact Framework (RIF) (**Appendix 3**) when completing this section.

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

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

*Please note: The PPI Review Panel will review this section. Feedback from the application will be given to shortlisted applicants prior to the interview stage. A PPI reviewer will use this section during the interview stage.

Please see information from the Irish Cancer Society on Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research Guidelines (**Appendix 1**).



What you need

Resources required to do your research e.g. funding, staff, equipment.

What you do

Activities involved in doing your research, using the inputs e.g. data collection, analysis etc.

3a. What you deliver

What you produce from your research activities e.g. publications, training programmes.

3b. Impact-Enabling Activities

How you drive outputs to outcomes.

What you change

The meaningful change your research causes for those affected by cancer e.g. increased survival, quality of life, etc.

What impact you have

Working toward a unified goal.
Achieved through bringing about a series of changes to outcome.

3c. Evidence of progress – from outputs to outcomes

This is how you know the research is making a difference e.g. the development of a trial to further examine the research or the submission of a grant application to continue the research.

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	This is the goal of the Irish Cancer Society. It is pre-determined by the <u>our Strategy</u> and cannot be changed. This goal is that all ‘Irish cancer patients will survive their diagnosis, and everyone affected by the disease will have access to world-class treatment, care, and support. In future, no one in Ireland will die from cancer.’ This is the goal that all research funded by the Irish Cancer Society should be working towards. Please note, you will not be required to add anything additional to this category of the impact section.
4. Outcome	To reach the above goal, several core changes or ‘outcomes’ must first be accomplished. These outcomes, identified through stakeholder consultation, will drive us toward our goal. You must select at least one outcome from the below list: • Treatments and diagnostics increase survival

- Treatments and diagnostics increase the quality of life of people affected by cancer
- Increased numbers of patients accessing clinical trials and early access programmes
- Screening increases survival
- 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. **(1,200 characters 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 specify the activities needed for the outputs to lead to the identified outcome and provide the expected timeline for these activities. Responses can be submitted in narrative or bullet-point format **(2,300 characters 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) **(2,300 characters 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 (**1,200 characters 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 (**1,200 characters max**).

i) Research Time Practicalities

Please detail the practicalities involved in how you will conduct and deliver the fellowship plans. For example, will you be conducting the research full-time or part-time? If part-time, how will you balance your research commitments with your clinical commitments? Etc.

The plan should include details on buy-out time logistics if relevant i.e., who will cover your clinical activities during the buy-out time and what days of the week you plan on using the buy-out time (**2,300 characters max**).

j) Organisational Support Plan

As the grant will be managed by the host institution but the candidate may also be part of a HST scheme or a parallel alternative training path, it is essential that the applicant has support from the:

- host institution (mandatory)
- And if relevant, the training scheme/postgraduate training body to which the candidate is affiliated

The terms and conditions of the award will be managed by the **host institution**. The host institution must be aware of the application and be demonstrably able to process and discharge all aspects of the award contract should the applicant be successful. This will likely require grant terms and conditions negotiation, financial reporting etc.

Cancer treatment services are busy, and manpower is limited. Therefore, if a candidate is enrolled on a postgraduate training scheme or equivalent, it is very important that the candidate's postgraduate training body is aware of the application

and that there is clear evidence that the broader team/institutional environment of the applicant's scheme is fully supportive of this application.

It is the responsibility of the host institution and/or postgraduate training body to ensure that the applicant has the full support of all hospital sites at which the applicant may be employed in for the duration of this funding.

Failure to follow through in a timely manner on the commitments made, in the acceptance, processing or discharge of this award may invalidate the selection and lead to it being awarded to the secondary candidate.

i. Organisational Support Plan

The organisations may wish to complement this award with other strategic innovations in support of leveraged research activity. Please detail the steps, both in the host institution and clinically, that will need to be taken to ensure organisational sign-off for this award (e.g. two days a week time bought-out for four years) should you be successful. If you have academic/teaching/other commitments these must also be considered **(3,050 characters max)**.

ii. Organisational Letters of Support

A strong letter of support is required from the host institution and the Applicant's postgraduate training scheme body (if relevant).

The letter of support must emphasise that the organisation is aware of the application and fully committed to supporting the processing of the award if the applicant is successful.

It must also be clear in both letters of support that the host institution and postgraduate training scheme body have communicated on the application and agree to support the application.

The 'Letter of Support' template must be used (downloadable in this section on the online application form).

To upload their letter of support, click 'BROWSE FILES' or drag the file to the dotted box. **This must be in pdf format, using the Irish Cancer Society template. The page limit is 2 pages.**

k) Budget

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

Budget Item	Details
Salary	Salary costs should be calculated using the most up-to-date HSE or IUA salary scales, as appropriate, and include employer PRSI and pension contributions. Applicable annual increments (e.g. 2.5%) per annum should be included. A breakdown of each salary cost is required, detailing and justifying a) the point, level, and scale used, b) the employer PRSI contribution, c) the employer pension contribution, d) any annual increments, and e) the FTE (full time equivalent) of each post. <u>Scales:</u> HSE: https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/pay/pay-scales/ IUA: https://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/researcher-salary-scales/
Equipment	Requests for large pieces of equipment will not be funded. The purchase of computer equipment will be considered for any grant of over 24 months' duration, provided a strong rationale is given at the time of grant application. The maximum allowed budget for the purchase of a computer or laptop is €1,500. The Irish Cancer Society will allow researchers to purchase small equipment items up to a maximum value of €3,000. A 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.
Travel & Dissemination costs	Costs associated with research dissemination may be budgeted e.g., poster printing, open-access publication costs, engagement events, conference attendance, etc.

	Include any dissemination-related travel and accommodation costs here.
Running costs	Running costs are costs associated with conducting the principal research activities e.g. materials and consumables, survey costs, travel for participants, transcription costs, etc.
Registration fees	University registration fees may be budgeted up to €8,500 per annum. An annual increase may be included, and it is the applicant's responsibility to budget accordingly.
Training & Education costs	Education and training for the researcher may be budgeted. This may include attending courses, workshops, professional development training, etc. Include any training-related travel and accommodation costs here.
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 1- Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research Guidelines, when developing a PPI budget.

I) 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. Before submitting, please ensure **invitations to co-applicants are managed/ sent** via the blue '**MANAGE INVITATIONS**' button on the lefthand side of the page. This will give them read-only access or full access to edit the application.

5. Submission of the Application

The application is ready for submission once the form has no incomplete sections. Please double check for any mentors 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 mentors have approved it before the application deadline. It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure that mentors 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
- ✓ Academic mentor CV
- ✓ Academic mentor Letter of Support
- ✓ Academic mentor confirmation of participation via the email link from Optimy
- ✓ Career mentor CV (if different from academic mentor)
- ✓ Career mentor Letter of Support (if different from academic mentor)
- ✓ Career mentor confirmation of participation via the email link from Optimy (if different from academic mentor)
- ✓ Host Institution Letter of Support
- ✓ Postgraduate Training Body Letter of Support (if relevant)

6. Application Assessment

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

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

6.1. Conflicts of Interest

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

6.2. Assessment Procedure

Applications will be reviewed by both a panel of international academic/clinical experts (scientific panel) **and** a panel of experts by experience (PPI panel). Each

reviewer will provide scores and feedback on each application, shortlisting the top applicants to invite to interview stage.

Please note: the PPI reviewers will have access to the whole application but will not be asked to provide feedback on any of the scientific review sections, and *vice versa*. Both PPI and scientific reviewers will assess the ‘impact’ section.

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

	PPI Panel	Scientific Panel
Application	• PPI Plan • Sharing of Research Findings Plan • Impact Plan	• Applicant details • Academic mentor • Career mentor • Plans for the award • Impact Plan • Organisational Support
Interviews	Present	Present

The Scientific Panel will not formally assess any of the PPI panel’s sections, and *vice versa*. As such, it is vital that the sections reviewed by the PPI panel are written in **plain accessible English**. Failure to do this may result in the PPI panel being unable to accurately score and provide feedback on these sections of your application. The review panel will be asked to provide feedback on the budget, which the Society will take into consideration. The approval of all grant budget items is at the discretion of the Irish Cancer Society.

6.3. Assessment Outcome

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

7. Next Stage: Interviews

Applications shortlisted at the Application Stage will be invited to the Interview Stage by email. The interview panel will be made up of scientific and PPI reviewers, in addition to an Irish Cancer Society representative.

Applicants will be asked to present a summary of their project, including a response to the review panel's comments. This will be followed by a question-and-answer session. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate a detailed and critical understanding of their proposed project. The final funding decision will be co-decided by the scientific and PPI reviewers.

8. Contact

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

Email: grants@irishcancer.ie FAO: Dr Serena Foo