Irish Cancer Society Research

Allied Health Professional Cancer Research Award 2024

Guidelines for Applicants

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1. Introduction
1.1. Overview

The Irish Cancer Society wishes to invite research teams led by eligible allied health professionals (AHP) to submit an application for the AHP Cancer Research Award 2024.

The aim of this award is to stimulate, develop, and support allied health cancer research in the Republic of Ireland. As such, this award will fund an AHP-led, partnership-based research project between an AHP and an Academic Researcher. Clinical-academic partnerships encourage research that is of the highest quality and clinical relevance, while expediting the translation of research into practice.

This is intended to be a transformative investment in an AHP, who demonstrates great potential in driving and leading clinically relevant and innovative cancer research in Ireland. This research will focus on areas which will impact positively on patient care outcomes and should be aligned to the National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026 and the Irish Cancer Society Strategy 2020-2025.

1.2. Indicative Timelines

Milestone	Date*
Grant Call opens	Wednesday 5th June 2024
Application Deadline	Thursday 11th July 2024, 3pm
Review	July/August 2024
Interviews	Late August 2024
Awardees Announced	Early September 2024

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

1.3. Funding & Duration

The purpose of this award is to fund an AHP-led, partnership-based research project. There are **two** awards in 2024.

One award will fund an **Adult**-related research project, and another award will be made to fund a **Children, Adolescent, or Young Adult (CAYA)** research project. Therefore, please ensure that you have clearly outlined which age-group classification you wish to be considered for and are applying to the correct funding call stream (see Section 1.6).

Each applicant may only be listed as a **lead applicant on one application** for this award. Applicants can apply for funding up to a maximum of **€75,000** for a project of **12 to 24 months** in duration. It is expected that institutional ethical approvals will be received within the first 6 months of the research grant. Payment may be withheld until ethical approval is obtained in this timeframe.

1.4. Clinical-Academic Partnership Structure

The applicant team should comprise of two applicants who will undertake a body of research work over a 12-to-24-month period. The team must have one AHP working in oncology in a clinical role (**AHP Lead**) and one researcher working in an academic role (**Academic Lead**).

The two project leads should work collaboratively to achieve success in the project and enhance the research capacity and leadership of the AHP Lead. Each partner will bring a different expertise, allowing for learning opportunities that are reciprocal. While each partner may take on certain responsibilities specific to their skill set, it is expected that both research partners will play a role in all aspects of the project.

Role of AHP Lead:

The AHP Lead should be the primary driver of the research project. The AHP Lead provides clinical expertise e.g., clinically relevant idea generation, logistics, patient recruitment, advice in navigating the health system. The AHP Lead should be involved in most aspects of the research project and its governance, being the person who carries out the research and manages the project. Their clinical role may be backfilled by this award to allow them protected time to drive this research forward.

In some cases, supervision of dedicated research staff (e.g., Research Assistant) may be allowed where both lead applicants possess:

      a)   Significant practical research experience

      b)   Significant research management experience

      c)   Experience of supervising research staff

If considering this option, please contact grants@irishcancer.ie before applying.

Role of Academic Lead:

The Academic Lead provides expertise in good research practice, scientific excellence, research policy and governance, and navigating academic responsibilities (e.g., ethical review process, scientific and financial reporting, data protection).

1.5. Education & Training

The AHP Lead will be entitled to pursue training and education in furtherance of their career in research. This includes postgraduate, research-focused degrees. Degrees must be completed within the timeframe of the award. Qualifications that are primarily clinically focused are not eligible for funding.

Capacity building training/education may be allowed for other members of the research team. Please contact grants@irishcancer.ie before budgeting training/ education for other research team members.

1.6. Research Classification & Eligibility

Two awards will be made to fund cancer research projects related to the following age-group classifications:

Award 1   Adult Grouping - (25+ years of age)

Award 2   CAYA Grouping - Child (0-15 years of age), Adolescent & Young Adult (16-24 years of age)

In addition to these age-related classifications, all proposals must be aligned with the Irish Cancer Society Strategy (2020-2025) and the Society Research Roadmap. Proposed projects may be aligned with any of the following areas:

  a. Translational Biomedical
  b. Clinical trials
  c. Survivorship
  d. Strategic Priorities

Research Theme Details:

— **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 potential through pre-clinical studies. Much of the outputs of translational research naturally merge into trials, 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.

— **Clinical trials** are 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.

— **Survivorship** covers the period from diagnosis to treatment outcome (including palliative and end-of-life care). Survivorship research seeks to improve the care and outcomes experienced by people living with and beyond cancer. Including: prevention and early detection of recurrent cancer; long term effects of cancer and its treatment; quality and experience of treatment and care; psycho-social effects of cancer and its treatment; self-management; health information and literacy; genetic risk and counselling; physical and practical needs e.g., financial, employment, mobility; etc.

— **'Strategic Priorities'** is a crosscutting theme, which seeks to specifically foster and grow research into areas of high unmet need in cancer. For example, cancers which have not benefited from the huge strides in outcome seen in some malignancies (metastatic disease, rare cancers and cancers with poor response or outcomes); the unmet needs of children, adolescents, and young adults affected by cancer; tackling misinformation and disinformation in cancer; addressing the needs of under-represented groups of people (e.g., Travelling community, ethnic and language minority communities, migrant communities, communities with socio-economic or mental health challenges, or any other socially excluded group).

Intervention Development Projects:

If considering an intervention development study, proposals should favour a single development phase rather than attempting to complete the entire development life cycle within a single project. The proposed stage of development must appropriately align with any previous development phases completed prior to this application.

Applicants should not attempt to develop a novel intervention where a similar intervention already exists, unless there is robust justification of need. If considering a complex intervention, please refer to the Medical Research Council's Framework for Developing and Evaluating Complex Interventions or similar for guidance.

2. Eligibility
2.1. Applicant Eligibility

Applications from individuals that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered. Applications must be made by at least two co-applicant partners, the AHP Lead and the Academic Lead. Details on the suitability and minimum eligibility criteria of lead applicants are outlined below, as well as specifications for any project co-applicants and official collaborators.

AHP Lead Applicant

Suitability:

The AHP Lead is an Allied Health Professional working in clinical practice in the Republic of Ireland who is committed to a career involving research. For the purpose of this award, AHPs are considered healthcare professionals who are not nurses, midwives, or medical doctors. They may be based in a public hospital, primary care, community services, or any other public setting, during which clinical time is spent working with people affected by cancer. The AHP Lead will be expected to lead the project and provide expert clinical input to the applicant team. Previous experience in research would be expected, for example, recruitment and data collection in research studies, conducting clinical audits, presentation at research meetings or conferences, authoring publications, and completion of research training.

Minimum Eligibility Criteria:

At a minimum, the AHP Lead must meet the following criteria:

- Hold a professional qualification in a relevant profession. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. If you have any queries, please contact the team at grants@irishcancer.ie
    - Dietetics
    - Genetic Counselling
    - Occupational Therapy
    - Pharmacy
    - Physiotherapy
    - Podiatry
    - Psychology (e.g., Clinical, Counselling, Neuropsychology)
    - Radiation Therapy or Radiography
    - Social Work
    - Speech & Language Therapy
- Be accredited with CORU or relevant professional body (e.g., Psychological Society of Ireland)

- Currently hold an appointment in their respective professional field in the Republic of Ireland during which clinical time is spent working with people affected by cancer.

Eligible AHP Leads **must not**:

- Currently hold a professional appointment as a medical doctor, nurse, or midwife. If you previously received a professional qualification in any of these three fields, or have other eligibility queries, please contact the team at grants@irishcancer.ie

Academic Lead Applicant

Suitability:

The Academic Lead will act as a scientific and academic advisor to the project and will support the AHP Lead for the duration of the award. The Academic Lead should have an established track record in research, for example, a history of principal investigator roles, history of grant awards, involvement in clinical trials, research supervision, national or international research partnership development, presentation at national or international conferences, etc. The Academic Lead should demonstrate a commitment to ensuring the highest research standard of the proposed body of work.

Minimum Eligibility Criteria:

At a minimum, the Academic Lead must meet the following criteria:

- Currently hold an academic appointment in a higher education institution in the Republic of Ireland for the duration of the award. This higher education institution will act as the host institution for the duration of the award.
- 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.

* 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.

Co-Applicants:

Each application may include up to 10 co-applicants. Co-applicants must play a significant role in the development or delivery of the application or proposed project e.g., significant contribution to the direction of the research, or someone who plays a

significant role in the conduct of the research or research-related activity. If proposals are co-designed with key stakeholders (e.g., people affected by cancer, PPI groups), they may also be added as a co-applicant. A role description is required for each co-applicant.

Each co-applicant will be required to confirm their participation through the online system prior to submitting an application. Once the lead applicant has added a co-applicant to an application, the co-applicant will be sent an email with instruction on how to confirm their involvement.

Official Collaborators:

Official collaborators can be included in applications, once they have a significant, distinct, and clearly definable role in the design or delivery of the research. Superfluous collaborations, or those mentioned in name only, are not permitted. Each collaborator must clearly add value integral to the proposed research project.

2.2. Institution Eligibility

The host institution of the Academic Lead is the organisation which will receive and administer grant funding, and is responsible for compliance with all general and specific terms and conditions of the award. In order to be eligible to apply for funding, the host institution of the Academic Lead must be based in the Republic of Ireland and must be listed as an approved host institution on the Health Research Board's website.

AHP Lead applicants may conduct research out of 'non-approved' sites (e.g., hospital), however, the Academic Lead's host institution must be responsible for the management of all finances for the duration of the award.

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

2.3. Patient and Stakeholder Involvement

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

In line with this commitment, it is expected that all applicants include a detailed PPI plan and allocate a **minimum €3,750 in their budget for PPI activities**.

It is strongly recommended that applicants read **Appendix 1 'Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research' Guidelines** prior to beginning work on an application.

3. Application Procedure
3.1. Application Overview

This is a two-stage application process, including a written application stage and an interview stage. Both lead applicants must read through this application procedure section prior to preparing their proposal.

The research project should be designed and jointly written by **both** lead applicants. The application must <u>not</u> be written by the Academic Lead or the AHP Lead alone.

For applications shortlisted for interview, both applicants will be expected to attend, and both will be expected to display an in-depth knowledge of the proposed research project.

Either applicant partner may initiate an application. The second lead applicant can be added to the application on the 'Project Outline' page. For instance, the AHP Lead may create the application initially and subsequently add the Academic Lead to the application. The Academic Lead will then have access to the form, with editing capabilities.

There are two stages to the application process:

Stage	Description
Stage 1: Full Application	The full application allows applicants to provide a detailed written plan for the award.
	Each application will be evaluated by an independent review panel, made up of academic/clinical experts (scientific panel) and experts by lived experience (public & patient involvement (PPI) panel).
	Applications that are of the highest quality will be shortlisted to the next stage, interviews. 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 revise and improve the application in advance of the interviews.

3.2. How to Apply

Applications must be completed and submitted through the <u>Irish Cancer Society online grant management system</u>. To submit an online application, you are required to register at the following address: <u>https://grants.cancer.ie</u>. 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 grant tracker online system.

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 '**ADULT** Allied Health Professional Cancer Research Award 2024' **OR** '**CAYA** Allied Health Professional Cancer Research Award 2024'.

4. Application Form

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

a) Application Outline
b) Lead Applicants' Details
c) Co-Applicant and Collaborator Details
d) Scientific Research Programme
e) PPI Summary
f) Impact Plan
g) Organisational Support
h) Budget
i) 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.

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

Before progressing with your application, please ensure that you are applying for the correct stream (**ADULT** OR **CAYA**) of the Allied Health Professional Cancer Research Award 2024.

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 title
- Proposed start date (must be Q4 2024)
- Funding Period/Grant Duration (12 to 24 months)
- AHP Lead applicant details
- Academic Lead applicant details
- Proposed host institution
- Cancer type(s)
- Research type(s)
- Research theme(s) and justification
- Keywords

b) Lead Applicants' Details

In this section you will be asked to provide greater detail on the AHP Lead and Academic Lead applicants, including CVs, an AHP Lead career development plan, and information on the proposed research partnership.

- **Lead Applicants' Curriculum Vitae (CVs):** Complete and upload a CV for both lead applicants. Each CV should be completed using the template provided and be no more than three pages long. Template is downloadable in this section on the online system or on the dedicated grant webpage.

- **AHP Lead Career Development Plan:** The funding is intended to be a transformative investment in an AHP professional. Please describe the AHP Lead's short- and longer-term career goals and how this award will contribute to these goals (**400 words max**). Please consider the following:

  - o AHP Lead's career plans and ambitions.
  - o How this award would be transformative to the AHP Lead's career and establish them as a leader in research (please be as specific as possible).
  - o What skills will be obtained by the AHP Lead and how this will contribute to their career plans.
  - o The next steps following the completion of the proposed research programme (i.e., longer-term career goals), including any funding body/bodies to which a future proposal(s) might be submitted.

- **Research Partnership:** The partnership between the AHP Lead and the Academic Lead is a core aspect of this award. It is expected that partners will work closely together to ensure the success of this project and reciprocally

learn from each other's expertise (**250 words max**). In this section, you should describe the nature of the partnership, including:

- o Details on whether the co-lead applicants have previously worked together and the nature of this previous partnership.
- o An overview of how the partnership will work practically over the course of the study (including information such as number and format of interactions, etc.).
- o An overview of how responsibilities will be divided amongst the lead applicants.
- o Details of the knowledge-sharing that will reciprocally occur between the AHP Lead and the Academic Lead (i.e., what unique knowledge/experience will each partner bring to the table?).

Please Note: The successful applicants will be expected to provide evidence of this research partnership throughout the award as part of the reporting process.

c) Co-Applicant and Collaborator Details

In this section, you will be asked to add any co-applicants or collaborators to the application. Please note that this section is not formally assessed and, as such, applications without co-applicants or collaborators will <u>not</u> be penalised.

- – **Co-Applicants:** Each application may include up to 10 co-applicants. A role description is required for each co-applicant. Each co-applicant must confirm their participation in an application.
- – **Collaborators:** You may provide a brief description of any relevant collaborations (**500 words max**). Official collaborators are not signatories on an application and do not need to approve the application before it is received by the Society.

d) Scientific Research Programme

Please provide an overview of the proposed research programme, covering the basis for research, hypothesis and/or aims, and methods (**1,000 words max**). You will also be asked to provide a Gantt Chart. More information on each of these sections is provided below. A separate textbox will be provided for references.

- – **Basis for Research:** Please describe previously published research, which forms the basis of your research proposal. You may include any initial research carried out by the applicants' research team.

- – **Hypothesis and/or Aims:** Please outline the hypothesis, research questions, and/or aims of your research proposal. Please ensure that the aims are realistic and achievable in the funding period.

- – **Research Methods:** Please describe and justify the methods, procedures, and experimental design you will use to conduct your research.

- For <u>quantitative</u> 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 recruitment plan, including feasibility of obtaining/accessing sufficient/required sample sizes of relevant participant groups.

- For <u>qualitative</u> 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.

– **Gantt Chart:** You must upload a Gantt chart for the proposed research study, which includes PPI activities. The chart must be uploaded in PDF format. Gantt charts should be restricted to a single page, where possible.

– **Research Images:** You may optionally upload up to <u>five</u> research images. All uploads must be in PDF format. Please ensure that figures/graphs are legible when uploading. Illegible figures may be difficult for the peer review panel to assess and could detract from your application.

e) PPI Summary

In this section, please provide an accessible summary of the proposed study and your plan for co-developing and integrating clearly identifiable patient involvement. An expert PPI Panel will review this section. As such, please use plain, accessible language and if technical terms are used, they must be explained. Patient involvement and partnership is a fundamental aspect of the application. Please consult <u>Appendix 1</u> before completing this section.

– **Project Summary:** Please provide a detailed and structured plain-English abstract; detailing the following (**300 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).

- 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.

- Detail how the proposed research is relevant and important to people affected by cancer.

– **Involvement Plan:** The involvement plan should detail how people affected by cancer and any other relevant stakeholder(s) will be involved in the study

as partners. It should be well thought out, as detailed as possible, and given as much consideration as the scientific sections in the form. Vague plans are to be avoided. When completing this section, please detail the following (**300 words max**).

- o What is the overall goal of your PPI plan?

- o What are the aims and objectives of your PPI plan?

- o At what stage of the research programme will patients and other stakeholders be involved, e.g., planning, design, implementation, management, evaluation, dissemination?

- o What will be expected of the patients and stakeholders who become involved? What is the burden of involvement and how will people's time and expenses be compensated?

- o Please describe any patient or stakeholder involvement that has occurred to date in the development of the proposal.

- o How will the planned involvement activities influence the research and how will you ensure that the involvement activities are not tokenistic?

- o What key patients and stakeholders will be involved, how many will be recruited, and from where will they be identified?

- o Articulate the challenges that might arise from involving patients in your research and how any issues will be prevented or overcome.

- o What, if any, supports or training will be available to those involved?

- o What PPI supports are available to you locally or nationally and how will these supports be utilised?

Please note: While patient participation and engagement activities are encouraged as part of an application and can be detailed as part of this plan, the Society will only fund applications that predominately include *involvement or partnership* activities. Please see Appendix 1 for further details and examples.

- – **Sharing of Research Findings:** Please describe your plan for sharing your findings. This may include printed or electronic articles, presentations, public engagement events, social media content, etc. (**200 words max**).

- – As the largest voluntary funder of cancer research in Ireland, the Irish Cancer Society relies on the generous donations from the public in order to fund cancer research. A key priority is, therefore, to ensure that the public (including people affected by cancer) are kept up to date on research that is funded by the Society. In line with this, it is a requirement that all applicants produce a dissemination plan to include communication of their research to all relevant audiences, particularly the public and people affected by cancer.

f) 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 Strategic Objectives 2020-2025.

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.

It is important to start thinking about the pathway to impact from the start of the project. We are aware that the impact plan provided by 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.

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 project. However, it is the Irish Cancer Society's duty to ensure that the research we fund makes a difference to the lives of those who are affected by cancer. Therefore, all research funded by the Irish Cancer Society should aim to have an impact on the lives of those who are affected by cancer and make steps towards a positive change.

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. The Irish Cancer Society is aware of this and understands every project is different.

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'**.

Therefore, 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.

An impact plan can be designed using the **sequence of steps outlined in the figure below:**

1 Inputs → **2** Activities → **3** Outputs → ... → **4** Outcomes → **5** Goal

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 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 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.' 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, a number of 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. (**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**).

g) Organisational Support

Organisational support is very important for this award, for both the AHP Lead and the Academic Lead. Indeed, assessment of applications will favour those with the strongest letters of support.

Each application requires an unequivocal and strong organisational declaration of support (in PDF format) from both the clinical organisation of the AHP Lead and the higher education institution of the Academic Lead. Declarations of support should be completed using the template provided, downloadable from the application form and from the dedicated grant webpage on the Society's website.

- **AHP Lead's Organisational Declaration of Support:** Should be from the applicant's line manager, or similar. The letter must acknowledge that the individual, and the organisation more generally, is aware of and supports the application, and will enable the applicant to fulfil research obligations. This support includes the appointment of new staff, or staff to cover the AHP Lead's buy-out time (as appropriate). The letter should describe how this support will be accomplished in the context of providing a clinical service. In addition, the clinical site must agree to provide indemnity cover that may be required by any staff carrying out research at the clinical site.

- **Academic Lead's Organisational Declaration of Support:** should be completed by the head of department at the host institution. It must include acknowledgement that the organisation is aware of the application and will act as host institution should the applicant team be successful. This letter should also include acknowledgement that they will provide the staff of the award with research space, access to resources, and the appropriate insurance cover.

h) 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 (see 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**:

Budget Item	Details
Personnel costs	All salary costs and staff should be detailed and robustly justified, with costs calculated using the appropriate HSE or IUA scales and inclusive of employer PRSI and appropriate pension contributions.
	Backfill for the AHP Lead's time may be budgeted. Salary costs for the Academic Lead cannot be budgeted.
	The hiring of junior research/support staff is allowable where the AHP Lead is not in a position to carry out the research themselves but possesses **significant** experience leading research programmes. Research staff will be supervised jointly by the AHP Lead and the Academic Lead. If research staff are to be hired, both partners should be able to demonstrate that they possess the necessary skills and experience to act in a supervisory capacity.
	Scales:
	https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/benefitsservices/pay
	https://www.iua.ie/research-innovation/researcher-salary-scales/
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.
Equipment	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. Requests for large pieces of equipment will not be funded. Where appropriately justified, computer equipment up to the value of €1,500 may be purchased.
Training & education costs	Education and training for members of the research team may be budgeted. This may include attending courses, workshops, professional development training, etc. Include any training-related travel and accommodation costs here.
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.
PPI costs	Costs associated with involvement activities should be budgeted (a minimum of €3,750 should be budgeted for involvement activities). Research participation costs (e.g., participant travel) should not be included here. Please see Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) in Research Guidelines on 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.

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 co-applicants who have yet to confirm their participation. Once the application has been validated, it may be submitted by the <u>lead applicant who initiated the application</u>.

The application will then be routed to the lead applicant who did not initiate the application for sign-off. For example, if the AHP Lead creates the application form and submits it, the form will be routed to the Academic Lead for sign-off. The application will not be received by the Society until both lead applicants have approved it. All signatories must approve the application before the application deadline. It is the responsibility of the lead applicant to ensure that signatories 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
- ✓ AHP Lead CV
- ✓ Academic Lead CV
- ✓ Host Higher Education Institute Declaration of Support
- ✓ Clinical Employer Declaration of Support
- ✓ Gantt Chart

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 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 unduly bias the decision-making process.

6.2. Assessment Procedure

Applications are reviewed by a panel of international academic/clinical experts (scientific panel) AND a panel of experts by lived experience (public & patient involvement (PPI) panel). The scientific panel will consist of experts in the areas of social science, nursing, and allied health. The PPI panel will be made up of individuals with a lived experience of cancer. Sections of the application will be assessed in the following way:

	PPI Panel	Scientific Panel
Full Application	– PPI Summary – Gantt Chart – Impact Plan – Organisational Support	– Lead Applicant Details – Co-Applicant and Collaborator Details – Scientific Research Programme – Impact Plan – Organisational Support
Interviews	Reviewers Present	Reviewers Present

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

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.

The Scientific Panel will score applications based on:
- The strength and relevance of the applicant team's academic and clinical experience.
- The applicants' commitment to cancer research.
- The demonstrable benefit of the proposal to the research skills, capacity, and career development of the AHP Lead.
- The scientific merit of the proposed research, including feasibility of timelines.
- The strength and clarity of the impact plan to translate research funding into meaningful impact, aligned with the goal and outcomes of the Irish Cancer Society.
- The strength of endorsement from the applicants' organisation and the support structures available to both lead applicants.

The PPI Panel will score each application based on:

- Rationale for research and its relative importance to people affected by cancer.
- Feasibility of the proposed interactions with participants i.e. will the research work in practice.
- Clarity and feasibility of the PPI plan e.g. use of local resources, tokenism of plan, inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, timelines etc.
- A clear understanding by the researcher of the value of involving patients in their research project.
- Whether the PPI activities constitute true involvement and not participation/engagement.
- Whether the applicant's dissemination plan is feasible and includes all relevant stakeholders.
- The strength and clarity of the impact plan to translate research funding into meaningful impact, aligned with the goal and outcomes 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 interviews. Applicants will be informed of the outcome by email. Reviewer feedback will be available to all applicants.

7. Interviews [Stage 2 of 2]

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an online interview in late August 2024 (date to be confirmed). 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 panels' comments. This will be followed by a question-and-answer session.

Both lead 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 grant call, including questions regarding initiative eligibility, please contact the Irish Cancer Society Research Department:

Email: grants@irishcancer.ie

FAO: Dr Sarah Tighe