

NORTH WEST CANCER RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATION GUIDANCE NOTES: CANCER DISCOVERY CALL

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to assist potential applicants for a Cancer Discovery Project Grant supported by North West Cancer Research (NWCR or the Charity) in the process of applying.

2. Who we are

We are the leading independent cancer research charity for the North West of England and North Wales, tackling the toughest forms of cancer in the region.

We are striving to improve awareness, diagnosis and treatment of cancer, prioritising the forms which hit our region the hardest. We are determined to find cures and stop cancer sooner.

3. Our vision

Achieving the best local research for a cancer free future.

4. Research

North West Cancer Research funds cancer research work at academic institutions in the North West of England and North Wales. Much of our funding goes to projects, but we additionally support Lectureships, Chair positions, Fellowships and PhD studentships. Please contact research@nwcr.org for more information.

We have separate calls for research from the fields of underpinning (translational), applied science and cancer inequalities. These calls have different eligibility criteria and direction is provided in guidance specific to each call enabling researchers to make considered applications.

5. Award

The Cancer Discovery grants provide funding for 1 – 3 year projects. On average, the funding for 3 year projects lies between £180,000 and £280,000 but applications should have a maximum value of no greater than £300,000.

In making their applications, researchers should consider the relevance of the application to the people of the North-West of England and North Wales.

Applications for this funding round are open to researchers in Lancashire, Merseyside and North Wales.

In addition to the broad area of cancer discovery, applications to advance the early detection of cancer are also sought.

6. Application Process

Applications should be submitted before the grant close time and date as published on the NWCR website. Applications must be submitted electronically via the Charity's website in one document. Applications that do not meet this deadline will be held over until the following round.

The Scientific Advisory Group will meet approximately 3 months after the submission date to review the applications. The Board of Trustees will meet to consider the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Group and give approval for funding. The applicants will be notified of the final decision within one month of the Scientific Advisory Group meeting.

7. Review

The Charity's review processes have been constructed in line with the guidance set out by the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) Principles of Peer Review (<http://www.amrc.org.uk/publications/principles-peer-review>).

On receipt of application, the Charity conduct a 'charity check' to ensure applications meet with the application guidance. At this stage, the Charity considers the principle investigator and co-applicants previously funded projects and their added value. Where there have been previous difficulties with projects not completing to agreed timescales or the added value of the research team, in terms of engagement, is not satisfactory, the scientific advisory group will be given this information when they review the project. This may influence the panel's decision and voting.

Applications, which pass the charity check, are sent to all members of the Scientific Advisory Group who recommend appropriate independent reviewers, according to the specific cancer type and research activity or technology being proposed. In addition to this expertise, the Charity will contact nominated reviewers (named in the application by the principle investigator). The Charity may also request advice from other experts in their database.

Where the researchers wish to exclude independent reviewers, this must be sent to the charity Research Manager directly Tania@nwcr.org. Researchers will be required to provide a full and detailed justification for excluding independent reviewers. The Scientific Advisory Group will be informed of the decision to exclude reviewers.

Nominated and Independent reviewers are asked to provide a written report on the proposals and provide a score (1-6) which will be taken into consideration by the Scientific Advisory Group. Scoring is as follows:

6	Research which will contribute significantly to the understanding or management of cancer. World-leading. Highly likely to have a significant impact on the field.
5	Research which is very likely to contribute significantly to the understanding or management of cancer. Internationally excellent. Will answer important questions in the field.

4	Research which is likely to contribute significantly to the understanding or management of cancer. Internationally competitive. Will advance the field.
3	Research of merit which may contribute to the understanding or management of cancer. May not be entirely novel but will generate worthwhile data.
2	Research that adds to understanding, but which may be of lesser quality, urgency or significance.
1	Research that is flawed in its approach, repetitious or otherwise unlikely to make a significant contribution to cancer research.

At the Scientific Advisory Group meeting, the members consider the nominated and independent reviews, together with their own assessment of the quality of science and grade and rank the applications accordingly. The applications are scored anonymously and the mean average then calculated. A minimum average score of 5 is required for funding.

Whether or not an application is funded will depend upon the resources available at the time.

8. Resubmissions

Resubmissions of applications are not permitted within 12 months unless invited to do so by the Scientific Advisory Group. If an application is resubmitted after an invitation, a covering letter outlining the changes to the original application, and how the comments made by reviewers and/or the Scientific Advisory Group have been met must be provided. Covering letters should be part of the single document electronically submitted.

9. Data protection

Applicants must understand and agree to North West Cancer Research holding information about their Research Grant. The information we hold will be used to support our impact measurement work. We will not share your details with any third parties for their marketing purposes, although we reserve the right to provide details of funded projects to other charities, sector umbrella bodies and other institutions where this is required in order to fulfil the requirements of memberships held by NWCR.

GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM

The sections below provide guidance on completing the application form sections.

1. **Project Title**

The project title should give potential reviewers a clear idea of the proposed research. Any confidential or commercially sensitive information should not be included in the title.

2. **Proposed Start Date and Duration**

An award should begin as soon as possible and no later than six months after the date of the award letter.

3. **Applicant(s)**

Only one application will be considered at each submission round for a principle investigator. One additional application will be considered for a researcher named as a principle investigator on another submitted application, when the applicant is a named on a second application as a co-applicant. Applications will be returned if these guidelines are not adhered to.

All applicants named on the grant MUST sign the application form. If signatures are not included, the application form will not be accepted.

Co-investigators should be experienced researchers who have a significant role in the design or management of the project. The roles of each co-investigator must be justified within the application.

4. **Scientific Summary of Proposed Research**

Please do not include confidential or commercially sensitive information in this summary as it is circulated to potential reviewers. Word limit 250.

5. **Lay Summary of Proposed Research**

This summary must be suitable for the general public. Do not use technical language. Word limit 250.

6. **Communications Plan**

Outline your plan to communicate details of your research. This should include potential impacts for academic and non-academic users. Word limit 250.

7. **Impact Summary**

Outline the potential impact of your work and the steps you will take to achieve these. We appreciate Cancer Discovery work has a longer impact in most cases. Please therefore consider the wider definition of impact and how, as a charity, we measure impact. In your summary please consider how your project would: generate new ideas; translate research in to new ideas and services; create evidence that could influence policy and stakeholders; develop the human capacity to do research; stimulating further research via new funding partnerships. Word limit 250.

8. Previous Submission

If the application is a resubmission to the Charity, please include a covering letter and highlight details of changes from the original application. Please address the concerns raised by both the Scientific Advisory Group and external reviewers following the original application.

9. Human Subjects

North West Cancer Research expects the research they fund to be conducted to the highest levels of integrity, clarity and good management. Research grants are made between the Charity and the research institution, and the Charity expects that the researcher and their employers will work within the appropriate legal and ethical boundaries.

10. Use of Animals

NWCR recommends that researchers follow the guidelines for the welfare and use of animals in research as outlined [here](#). The Charity also promotes the reporting of research using animals according to the ARRIVE (Animal Research: Reporting of In Vivo Experiments) guidelines, as outlined [here](#).

11. Proposed Investigation. This section should not exceed 2,000 words.

The following information should be included:

- Background
- Preliminary Results (if appropriate)
- Hypothesis and Specific Aims
- Experimental Plan
- Identified risks and contingencies in place
- References – these can be listed and attached as a separate Appendix

Tables, images and graphs can be included. These will not be included in the 2,000-word count.

If the project involves patient information, human volunteers or tissue samples, or animals, Appendix A should be completed and submitted with the main application form as part of the submitted document.

12. Independent Referees

Nominated reviewers must be experts in the research field and/or be able to provide an expert view on the value and benefits of the research proposal.

Applicants should not provide reviewers from their own organisation or where any possible conflict of interest may arise. This conflict includes people with whom you have held grants within the last five years. It also includes anyone with whom you have published in the same period. Personal relationships are also considered a conflict of interest.

If the applicant does not want a particular reviewer contacted, this should not be added to the main application form but should be submitted directly to the Research Manager. The researcher must provide justification for this exclusion e.g. main scientific competitor or commercial sensitivity.

13. Summary of Costs

Costs should be included under a number of categories:

Salaries	Funding will be available for research staff employed specifically to work on the project. This can include PhD students, Post-Doctoral Assistants or Graduate Research Assistants. Any student stipend should not exceed £19,000.
Equipment	Funds can be requested for small pieces of specialist equipment that is essential for the project.
Consumables	Funds can be requested for routine research consumables.
Animal Costs	Total costs for the combined purchase, maintenance and experimental procedures should be included. The breakdown must be provided in Appendix A.

Research carried out in the NHS: Grant holders carrying out research in the NHS must ensure that all costs are attributed according to the [AcoR \(Attributing the costs of health & social care Research & Development\) Guidelines \(link is external\)](#), or equivalent. It is expected that researchers use the study support service when applications are written.

14. Justification for Support Requested

This information should clearly describe how the resources requested are appropriate for the research proposed.

15. Signatures

Please ensure that ALL named applicants sign the form.

The approval of the Head of Department and Administrative representative confirms that the Institution agrees with the budget request and use of facilities.

16. Letters of Support

A relevant letter of support should confirm commitment to the proposed project by articulating the benefits of the collaboration, its relevance and potential impact.

17. CVs

Please include CVs within the document for all named applicants with a list of publications.

18. PhD Supervision

Please provide details of the number of students supervised in the last 5 years, including current students. The start and completion dates (where possible) should be listed.

Please provide details of the environment in which the student will be working. This should include the number of group members e.g. PhD Students, Post-Doctoral Researchers and details of equipment available. Details of the daily support should also be included.

Please note, if applications do include requests for PhD students, the relevant Research Office will be asked to provide the institutional procedures for the support of postgraduate students.

19 Published Papers

Please include a publication list related to work resulting from funded grants received from North West Cancer Research where this has been received. This includes work funded by the charity or any of its predecessor bodies including:

- North West Cancer Research Fund
- Clatterbridge Cancer Research
- Cancer and Polio Research Fund Ltd