



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

1. Introduction

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

2. Who we are

We are the only independent cancer research charity funding quality research for local people in North West England and North Wales. We aim to tackle the most significant cancers in our region. Stopping 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 in the fields of underpinning (translational). Health services research including cancer inequalities and specific themed calls. These calls have different eligibility criteria and direction is provided in guidance specific to each call enabling researchers to make considered decision in their applications.

5. Award

The Cancer Discovery grants provide funding for a period of between 1 – 3 year years. On average, the funding for a 3-year project lies between £180,000 and £280,000 but applications should have a maximum value which not greater than £300,000.

Proposals to this grant call should seek to uncover the foundationally knowledge needed to advance the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of cancer.

The proposed research should, therefore, aim to understand the biological influences of cancer through greater understanding of cancer cell development, function, proliferation, spread and death and should seek to change the practice of oncology through new discoveries and practices that generate new knowledge relevant to basic biology and the causes of human cancers.

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, Chester, Keele and North Wales.

We welcome applications which incorporate a PhD project.

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 website in one PDF document. Applications that do not meet this deadline will be held over until the next call round. Applications that are not submitted as a single PDF document will be returned to the investigator for modification and will not be included in the round if this falls outside of the call closure.

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

7. Review

The Charity's review processes have been constructed in line with guidance and governance considerations 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 work and the added value they have provided to the Charity. Where there have been previous difficulties with projects not completing timely or the added value of the funded research team, in terms of engagement, not satisfactory the Advisory Group will be informed of this. This may influence the panel's decision and voting.

Applications, which pass the charity check, are sent to all members of the 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. Researcher will be required to provide a full and detailed justification for excluding independent reviewers. The 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 inform the Advisory Group when voting. 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 Cancer Discovery 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 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 (i.e. one cancer discovery grant round must occur before a proposal may be submitted to the call again) unless the investigator was invited to resubmit by the Advisory Group. If an application is resubmitted following an invitation, a covering letter must be provided outlining the changes to the original application, and how the comments made by reviewers and/or the Advisory Group. Covering letters should be part of the single PDF 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 the Charity's 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 for 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 one further submitted application, when the applicant is named in the second application as a co-applicant. Applications will be returned if these guidelines are not adhered to.

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 the 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. Please incorporate how the proposal will benefit the people in our region. 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 as well as the public. Word limit 250.

7. Impact Summary

Outline the potential impact of your work and the steps you will make 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; stimulate further research via new funding partnerships. Word limit 250.

8. Previous Submission



Please list where this proposal has been submitted for review previously. Please specify modifications made following these applications. If the application is a resubmission to NWCR, please include a covering letter and highlight details of changes from the original application. Please address the concerns raised by both external reviewers and the Advisory Group 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

Northwest Cancer Research 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 PDF 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 NWCR Research Manager. Researchers 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 are 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 [AcoRD \(Attributing the costs of health & social care Research & Development\) 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.

Applications submitted with missing signatures will be returned to the investigators for completion. When these are not returned before the closure of the call they will be rejected.

16. Letters of Support

If a letter of support is enclosed within the application this 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 PDF 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