

**Pancreatic
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**Pancreatic Cancer UK
2023 Early Detection Grants**

Guidance for Applicants

Preparing and submitting the Expression of Interest form

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1. Applicant checklist to review prior to Expression of Interest submission

I have completed all sections of the application form	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have read the 2023 Early Detection Grants guidance, T&Cs and FAQs in full	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have adhered to all word limits	<input type="checkbox"/>
My proposal has a duration of no more than 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
My proposal is for no more than £500,000	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have checked that all costs included are eligible (please refer to section on eligible costs)	<input type="checkbox"/>
My proposed start date is no earlier than May 2024 and no later than December 2024	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have provided a CV for myself	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have ensured that the full list of authors has been provided for all references and publications listed on CVs (i.e. I have not used <i>et al.</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Remit of the 2023 Early Detection Grants

The aim of the Pancreatic Cancer UK Early Detection Grants is to provide the research community with the opportunity to deliver significant projects of research that ultimately aim to transform how pancreatic cancer is detected and diagnosed at its earliest possible stage.

Summary of key information	
Eligibility	Clinical and non-clinical researchers, with the principal investigator based in the UK. Multi-institutional proposals are welcome.
Award size	Up to £500K
Award duration	Up to 4 years
Essential criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrating relevance to PCUK's research strategy• Consideration of line-of-sight to impact
Desirable criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building collaborations in the UK or internationally (including with commercial organisations)• Supporting early career researchers and students• Attracting researchers from other fields of disease to pancreatic cancer research
Review process	This scheme has a three-phase review process before a funding a decision will be made by the Early Detection Grants Review Panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An Expression of Interest (EOI) stage• Full application stage• Interview with the Review Panel

Research focus:

The remit of this Early Detection Grants funding round is strategically focused on research that aims to enable the detection of pancreatic cancer at its earliest possible stages. This can include pragmatic approaches to the identification, stratification, and referral of early-stage symptomatic patients, through to innovative research to uncover the earliest possible initiation and development processes of cancer that can be exploited in its asymptomatic detection.

These grants will support discovery and translational/clinical research welcoming established and/or novel research methodologies and approaches. However, proposals must have a clear and considered line of sight to genuine early detection.

Examples of strategically relevant areas of research include (but are not limited to):

- Developing the next generation of detection/referral tools and tests that can quickly identify early-stage symptomatic patients presenting in primary care
- Innovative approaches to identifying, stratifying and monitoring people at risk
- Developing approaches to case finding and referral of at-risk patients using health records
- Discovery research in cancer initiation, preneoplasia and asymptomatic early-stage disease. Specifically, improving our understanding of:

- cell of origin and cell lineage
- the pro- and anti-cancer contribution of non-cancer cells and physiology
- early stage genetic and epigenetic alterations in tumour cells
- crosstalk between cancer and non-cancer cells in tumour microenvironment
- the role of the microbiome
- pre-cancerous lesions: how they form, advance and when/how to intervene for most timely detection
- the role of the immune system and inflammation
- cancer cell metabolism and senescence

Examples of relevant fields of research include (but are not limited to):

- Discovery research: molecular cell biology, biochemistry, genetics and biotechnology
- Data and computation-driven approaches to early detection/diagnosis
- Development and use of appropriate preclinical model systems
- Early detection technology development
- Non-confirmatory clinical trials of early detection/diagnostic technologies or approaches
- Health systems research for early detection/diagnosis
- Research into the health economics of early detection and diagnosis of cancer

Our early detection research areas of focus in the strategy are not exhaustive. What we have highlighted are approaches that we believe are relevant to the delivery of key research strategy objectives: *faster identification of people with symptoms; and identification of people at an asymptomatic stage and/or at-risk of developing pancreatic cancer*. If you believe that the approach you are proposing to adopt helps deliver those objectives, then we welcome your application. However, you will be asked to justify why that is the case, in detail, at all stages of application.

3. Key dates for the 2023 Early Detection Grant round

Key dates	
Expression of interest (EOI) applications open	28 th March 2023
Deadline for EOIs <i>Shortlisted EOIs will be invited to the full application stage</i>	1 st June 2023
Full applications invited	July 2023
Deadline for full applications	28 th September 2023
External peer-review	October-December 2023
Interview with the Review Panel <i>Shortlisted full applications will be invited to interview</i>	March 2024
Funding decisions made	March 2024

Please note: You will not be able to submit applications after the given deadlines and we are unable to enter into discussion about the submission of late applications.

Dates later in the year may be subject to minor revisions. Confirmed dates will be communicated to applicants as soon as possible.

4. Before you start

These guidance notes are provided to help applicants prepare an application to our Early Detection Grants round. Please ensure you complete your application in conjunction with these notes. We have also compiled a list of frequently asked questions.

Please also ensure that you and your institution have reviewed Pancreatic Cancer UK's "Terms and Conditions of Research Grants" (hereafter known as T&Cs), which set out the standard terms applicable to all research grants funded by Pancreatic Cancer UK.

Pancreatic Cancer UK's T&Cs and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) can be found on our website.

Please contact the Pancreatic Cancer UK if you have any trouble locating or accessing any of the relevant documentation.

5. Eligibility

In order for your application to be considered for the 2023 Early Detection Grants round, applicants and institutions must conform to the following eligibility criteria, as well as any additional requirements outlined in the T&Cs.

Submission and review

- Pancreatic Cancer UK will not consider unrevised applications that have been rejected under a previous funding scheme.
- Applicants should not approach members of the Pancreatic Cancer UK's Early Detection Grants Review Panel about their application or the funding decision.
- Once submitted, no further information will be accepted with the application.
- External lay reviewers and lay members of Pancreatic Cancer UK's Early Detection Grants Review Panel will assess and/or score your application; the lay summary included with your proposal must be clearly written in plain English and be understandable by a non-scientist. Pancreatic Cancer UK reserves the right to request a resubmission of this lay summary.
- Please use the "**Pancreatic Cancer UK 2023 Early Detection Grants - Expression of Interest form**" provided – applications submitted not using this form will not be accepted.
- You must adhere to the word limits given in the application form. Any additional text above these limits will be truncated.

Project timelines

- The 2023 Early Detection Grants are for a **duration of up to 4 years**. Projects with a duration shorter than this may be submitted. Applicants are expected to estimate a realistic start date allowing for time for recruitment of new staff and obtaining necessary study approvals.
- The feasibility of completing the project within the stated timelines in the proposal will be taken into consideration by the Early Detection Grants Review Panel when recommending applications for funding. Please be pragmatic when planning your

investigations and timelines. Concerns over feasibility and delivery are often cited by reviewers as key areas of concerns in un-funded proposals.

- Applications will not be accepted where the study is currently underway.

Applicants

- The lead applicant and proposed project must be based in the UK, at a recognised not-for-profit research organisation, such as university, hospital, or similar institution (such as the MRC's institutes or Crick Institute).
- The application should be submitted by one lead applicant with a strong track record in conducting research who will be the person responsible for the direction of the team. We will only accept one application from each lead applicant (though the lead applicant may be involved in another application in a different role).
- Applications from early/mid-career researchers as lead applicants or co-investigators responsible for the delivery of the work are welcome but must be supported by a supervisor deemed an expert in their field.
- Applications from researchers with expertise outside the immediate field of pancreatic cancer are welcome but are strongly encouraged to involve the input and expertise of investigators already working in the field.
- Applicants should ensure that they have the necessary collaborations in place before submission of the full application.
- All participants on the project should have roles clearly defined and collaborators should indicate support and specify involvement through an attached letter of support before submission of the full application.
- Collaborators may be based outside the UK, and efforts for international collaboration are encouraged, but Pancreatic Cancer UK's funding should only be allocated within the UK in your budget.

Ethics

- Pancreatic Cancer UK expects that before work commences on the research, the lead applicant has ensured, in collaboration with the host institution, that all appropriate regulatory approvals are in place. These could include (but are not limited to) those relating to human participation, radiation, genetic manipulation, stem cells, animals, embryos, ethics, personal safety and health and safety.
- Pancreatic Cancer UK expects all researchers to demonstrate a commitment towards the replacement, refinement and reduction of animals in research concordant with guidance from the NC3Rs.

Funding

- Each award will be for **no more than £500,000**.
- Once the final award amount has been agreed by Pancreatic Cancer UK's Board of Trustees, this cannot be amended at a later date.
- Pancreatic Cancer UK welcomes creative approaches to funding including complementary or matched funding to further support the intentions of the Early Detection Grants round. However, it will be expected that the aims and objectives indicated in applications for the Early Detection Grants will still be delivered within the

specified timeline even if additional funding has been secured from other sources. Any additional funding should be confirmed at the time of application.

Eligible costs

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), Pancreatic Cancer UK funds research in line with the [Department of Health's AcoRD guidance](#). Applications will not be accepted where the primary intent is the purchase of equipment.

- Pancreatic Cancer UK **will only** pay the directly incurred costs of research, including familiar direct research costs such as: salaries of staff specifically involved in or recruited for the project; consumables; animal costs; equipment (though not mobile phones or computers as it is expected these should be supplied by the host institution); travel costs (where travelling between research sites or for project meetings); costs for supporting patient involvement.
- Pancreatic Cancer UK **will not** pay costs including:
 - indirect costs: central services; general maintenance; Good Clinical Practice (GCP) training; overheads, e.g. library costs, bench fees, living expenses, electricity etc.
 - directly allocated costs of research projects: lead and co-applicants' time; estates; costs of shared resources such as staff and equipment.
 - costs associated with dissemination, including publication costs and costs to attend conferences or international meetings.
 - NHS Support or NHS Treatment Costs. Where applicable, applicants must ensure that these costs will be met should the research be funded and Pancreatic Cancer UK recommends early liaison with the necessary NIHR Networks and NHS departments.

If you are in any doubt as to whether a cost is eligible for funding under this scheme, please contact Pancreatic Cancer UK's [Research team](#) before submitting your application.

All applicants are required to complete an Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) Full Economic Costing (fEC) information form as part of the application.

6. How your application will be assessed

Governance

In our bid to support research and researchers of the highest quality we have a robust and rigorous review process for each grant that we fund.

Pancreatic Cancer UK is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), the membership organisation for the leading medical and health research charities in the UK. As a member, our overall strategy and funding schemes comply with best practice for research funding, monitoring and governance policies.

Funding decisions for this scheme are overseen by Pancreatic Cancer UK's [Board of Trustees](#) based on the recommendations by our Early Detection Grants Review Panel, which has membership drawn from world-leading pancreatic cancer researchers from across the globe. The Panel includes a diverse range of expertise in early detection to ensure that we fund only



the highest quality research. The board also includes people with personal experiences of pancreatic cancer as 'lay' members to ensure that the research we fund is relevant and important to people affected by pancreatic cancer.

All members of our Early Detection Grants Review Panel adhere to a [Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest policy](#) which is in place to protect and preserve the board when discussing and reviewing research funding applications.

Review process

The application process for the Early Detection Grants consists of 3 phases:

1. Expression of interest (EOI) stage.

This is a streamlined application form, where it is not necessary to have a detailed budget, host institution approvals or confirmation from collaborators at the time of submission.

- Applications received by the **1st June 2023** will undergo an eligibility check by the Research Team. Any applicant that does not adhere to the criteria above or has not completed all the application sections correctly will either be rejected or contacted for revisions.
- The Early Detection Grants Review Panel, which includes scientific and lay members, will provide comments and scores for each EOI, which will be used to shortlist applicants to the next stage. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified at this point.

2. Full application stage.

This is a detailed application form and will be made available to shortlisted applicants only. Full applications should include more information on the proposal, a complete budget breakdown, all host institution approvals and letters of support from collaborators at the time of submission.

- All full applications received by **28th September 2023** will be peer-reviewed by at least three independent referees in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC). All referee comments and scores will be made available to applicants in an anonymous format.
- All referee comments and scores will be used by the Early Detection Grants Review Panel to shortlist applicants to the interview stage. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified at this point.

3. Interview stage.

Each shortlisted applicant will be invited to interview in early March 2024 with the Early Detection Grants Review Panel and representatives from Pancreatic Cancer UK. Recommendations for funding will be made based on reviews and interviews.

Please note: Dates later in the year may be subject to minor revisions. Confirmed dates will be communicated to applicants as soon as possible.

7. Guidance on completing the sections of the Expression of Interest form

The following section provides guidance for completing the sections of the EOI form. Only shortlisted applicants will have the full application form made available to them in due course.

Please use the “**Pancreatic Cancer UK 2023 Early Detection Grants - Expression of Interest form**” provided. Applications that exceed the stipulated word limits will be returned for revision.

Please note: in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the personal data you enter into your application form will be processed by Pancreatic Cancer UK and held on computerised databases and manual files.

Section A: Application details

1: Applicants

- Please provide the name and contact details for each participant on the project. The project should be led by one lead applicant and can be supported by a team of co-applicants (participants with a specific role on the project), collaborators (participants contributing to the project but without an involved role) and staff members (participants whose salary will be requested through the award).
- Pancreatic Cancer UK’s Early Detection Grants Review Panel will look at the track record of the lead applicant and supporting team, and we therefore require that a one-page CV is provided for the lead applicant and each co-applicant. This can be added using the template found in the appendices at the end of the proposal template.
- A letter of support for each collaborator will be requested should your EOI be invited to the full application stage.

2: Lay Summary of proposed study

Please provide a well-structured lay summary. It is very important that the summary is written in plain English and is understandable by a non-scientific audience. This summary will be seen by people with personal experience of pancreatic cancer including lay external reviewers from our [Research Involvement Network](#) and lay members of Pancreatic Cancer UK’s Early Detection Grants Review Panel who will score and provide feedback on your application. It is therefore vital that you provide a clear summary with enough information to understand what the aims of your research are and what the impact might be. Please also **be sure not to include any confidential information** as if the proposal is successful, this summary may be used in Pancreatic Cancer UK’s materials and on our website.

The lay summary should be clear and concise, giving a comprehensive overview of the proposed work, for example under the following headings:

- **What are the aims of the study?** Provide clear aims and objectives for the project.
- **What issue in pancreatic cancer is the project aiming to address and why is this so relevant and important for people affected by pancreatic cancer?** You should clearly describe why and how your project addresses such an important issue in pancreatic cancer. There is no need to explain at length the generic importance or impact

of the disease as the group who will be reviewing the summary will have a deep understanding of this already.

- **What are you planning to do?** Describe what you will do on the project, avoiding jargon and without describing complex methodology. The use of non-scientific analogies is encouraged, and diagrams can be included as aids (though not as an alternative to the narrative).
- **How will the work benefit people with pancreatic cancer?** Please give details of the potential impact that could be realised should the project be successful in its aims.
- **Who will you be working with on the project and what expertise do they bring?** Give a brief overview of the team, the expertise they bring and their roles on the project.
- **Are patients involved as participants and if so, what will they be asked to do? If procedures are involved, give details.** If applicable, please describe what will be asked of patients who will be asked to take part in the study as participants.
- **Have you involved or will you involve people affected by pancreatic cancer as partners on the study? If so, give details.** If applicable, please describe the ways in which you've worked or plan to work in partnership with people affected by pancreatic cancer to develop the study and draft the application, or to conduct the research if it is funded.
- **How do you intend to disseminate the findings of your work and ensure they are built upon?** Describe how the findings of your work be shared, whether they are positive or negative.

We **strongly encourage** applicants to involve patients, carers or members of the public in drafting the lay summary. They may be able to advise on the content, language and structure of the summary, as well as the relevance and importance of the proposal to people who have been affected by pancreatic cancer.

Pancreatic Cancer UK has established a **Research Involvement Network**, which is comprised of over 400 people with lived experience of pancreatic cancer. If you would like to involve members of the Network in the development of your proposal/ lay summary, please download and complete an [application](#) from our website and send it along with any questions you have to the [Research team](#).

For more information on how to write a clear and informative lay summary please also use the following resources:

[INVOLVE plain English summaries](#)

[The Plain English Campaign](#)

3: Scientific abstract

- Please provide a brief scientific overview of your project, including the aims and objectives, methodology and expected outcomes if successful.
- Citations should not be used in the abstract.
- Abbreviations, if needed, should be spelled out.
- Please be sure not to include any confidential information as this abstract may be published on Pancreatic Cancer UK's website and will be shared with other organisations

that Pancreatic Cancer UK are members of (e.g. Association of Medical Research Charities and National Cancer Research Institute) during their annual data collection.

4: Research question: background, importance and relevance

Some key points to consider when answering this question include:

- What is the main problem/question motivating the study? Why is this question important?
- How does the proposed work aim to improve the lives of people with pancreatic cancer in the short, medium or long term? Even if outcomes are currently uncertain, how extensive could the potential impact be?
- How has this question been addressed thus far in the relevant literature? What are the competing theories for explanation of this question? How is this study different from prior research on this problem/question?
- If relevant previous studies are limited, why is this the case? Why has this unique approach and/or theory not been considered previously?
- If promising literature comes from another cancer type, how can these findings be extrapolated to the context of pancreatic cancer?
- What is the potential significance of the results if the project is successful e.g. potential paradigm shift, identifies a new biological mechanism.

5: Hypothesis and objectives

Please state briefly the hypothesis and objectives of the proposed research and ensure that the ways you propose to meet these are addressed the Methodology and Expertise sections. This section is meant to provide an 'at a glance' summary of your project. Please keep it succinct and to the point.

6: Methodology

For the EOI stage, a brief description of the methods and the overall timeline is sufficient. Detailed methodology and milestones will be requested in the full application.

7: Expertise and environment

This section is an opportunity to articulate why the applicants, collaborators and the host institution are best place to deliver the proposed study. Host institution approvals and letters of support from collaborators will be requested at the full application stage.

8: Strategy alignment

Please explain how your proposal, in the short or long term, will address the issue of early detection in pancreatic cancer. Please use the section 2 'Remit of the 2023 Early Detection Grants' above to articulate the relevance of your proposal to these strategy areas. You must articulate a clear line of sight to genuine early detection and diagnosis of people with pancreatic cancer.

9: Previous applications for funding

Please provide details of whether you have submitted this proposal/a similar proposal to Pancreatic Cancer UK or another organisation for funding previously.

Section B: Finances

1: Projected costs

This section should provide an estimate of costs. A detailed budget breakdown will be requested at the full application stage. Pancreatic Cancer UK will meet the directly incurred costs of the research project, with the understanding that the Host Institution will meet the directly allocated and indirect costs.

Any NHS Support and Treatment costs will be met through the usual funders under the [Department of Health's AcoRD guidance](#). Applicants have a duty to inform the relevant NHS Trust R&D office(s) of the possible NHS cost implications of proposed research projects at the earliest opportunity and **MUST indicate** within the Research Proposal that the relevant provider(s) have been notified and provide an update on the status of such discussions within the application.

a) Salary costs

Applications to the Early Detection project grants round can include requests for the salaries of staff members who are directly involved in the research project, for example for staff at post-doctoral, clinical or technical level or on administrative scales. Pancreatic Cancer UK will not normally fund the salaries of senior researchers and will only fund applicants who do not hold a tenured position at the host institution.

b) Running costs

This could include general running expenses (such as tissue culture costs, plastic-ware etc.) and specific expenses for the project (such as microscopy or sequencing costs). This could also include individual charges for use of specialised department equipment where specifically required for the research.

Any costs relating to the use of animals should be categorised under the section with the category Animal Related Costs. The cost of obtaining or maintaining licences will not be met by Pancreatic Cancer UK.

c) Equipment

Pancreatic Cancer UK expects the Host Institution to provide a basic level of equipment for the research to be undertaken. Any supplementary equipment should be fully justified. Any equipment that is less than £500 should be listed as a running expense rather than an equipment cost.

For more information regarding eligible costs, please see the 'Eligibility' section of this guidance or email the [Research team](#).

Declaration

Please use the checklist to ensure that sections of the Expression of Interest form have been completed correctly before submission.

The Lead Applicant should sign and date the declaration as confirmation that all the information provided is accurate and correct (to the best of their knowledge). Additional signatures from the Host Institution will be required at the full application stage.

Appendices

1: References

References **must be** listed as FULL CITATIONS – please do not include *et al.* Each citation must include names of all authors, publication title, book or journal title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.

Please note that no more than one page should be used for references.

2: CVs

Please ensure you have completed a one page CV template within the appendices at the end of this research proposal template for the lead applicant and each co-applicant. Publications included on CVs must be listed as FULL CITATIONS (please do not use 'et al'). Each citation must include names of all authors, publication title, book or journal title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication.

3: Other Appendices

You may attach no more than 5 sides of A4 of additional information to support your proposal. This can include supporting and preliminary data, in addition to any figures or diagrams. Anything in excess of 5 sides of A4 will be removed from your proposal and will not be considered.

Please note that unpublished manuscripts will not be sent to referees and Review Panel members.

Contact Information

To discuss applications to the Pancreatic Cancer UK 2023 Early Detection Grants round please email the [Research team](#).