

Remit, timelines and processes

Q1. Are the Fellowships restricted to specific areas of research?

A1. The focus of your Fellowship application can be in any field or area of research which, in short or long term, may one day improve the quality of life of people with pancreatic cancer. We would however advise that prospective applicants read the Pancreatic Cancer UK [Research Strategy](#) in order to maximise the strategic alignment of their proposals. Please ensure that your proposal meets the other eligibility criteria by reading the Guidance for Applicants document on our [website](#).

Q2. What is the earliest possible start date? Can I change the start date later?

A2. You should allow time for project set up, for example recruitment of staff and getting approvals in place. Projects should be underway within 9 months of the receiving the award letter for the project. Please contact us if there is an issue with your projected start date before you apply.

Successful candidates may change their initially stated start date, but only if it is raised before contracts have been agreed and signed with Host Institutions and the new start date is not over 9 months following outcome.

Q3. How much funding will be awarded under each Career Foundation Fellowship?

A3. Pancreatic Cancer UK will fund a maximum of £300,000 for Career Foundation Fellowships lasting up to 3 years.

Q4. If I am successful in receiving funding, can I apply for extensions to the project?

A4: Career Foundation Fellowships should have a duration of up to 3 years. No-cost extensions for funded awards will not be guaranteed. If they are deemed necessary, they will be strictly limited. Costed extensions due to incomplete work will not be considered in the vast majority of circumstances. Please refer to the Terms & Conditions for this scheme on our [website](#) for further details.

Q5. How will my application be assessed?

A5. Applications for the Career Foundation Fellowships will undergo Pancreatic Cancer UK's normal review process, which complies with the Association of Medical Research Charities' best practice guidelines. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to interview before final recommendations for funding are made. Details of the review process and funding criteria are outlined in the 'Guidance for Applicants' that accompanies this funding round, which can be found on Pancreatic Cancer UK's [website](#).

Q6. Why does it take so long to hear the final outcome of the grant round?

A6. Pancreatic Cancer UK's Board of Trustees makes the final funding decision based on the recommendations of the Career Foundation Fellowship Panel. We aim to let applicants know the final outcome as soon as we can after the Board of Trustees meeting. Please find further details of the review process in the 'Guidance for Applicants' document on our [website](#).

Eligibility

Q7. I do not have ethical approval for my application. Can I still apply?

A7. Yes. You can still apply if you do not have ethical approval. However, if successful, we would expect you to have ethical approval before your grant starts and provide copies of documents to evidence this.

Q8. Are there any restrictions on the number of years post PhD to be eligible for the Career Foundation Fellowship?

A8. There are no limits on this. The Career Foundation Fellowship award is intentionally flexible. Pancreatic Cancer UK and the Scientific Advisory Board recognize that researchers are different in their research focus, experience level, career stage and as such their personal and professional development needs. Therefore, this award is for applicants to define themselves (within some broad eligibility criteria), however, applicants will also have to clearly and convincingly justify why the budget, duration and award type chosen enables them to realise their career goals in pancreatic cancer research. You can find out more about the eligibility criteria in the Guidance for Applicants document.

Q9. Can I apply for the Career Foundation Fellowships if I am a clinician?

A9. Yes, the fellowships are open to both clinicians and non-clinicians. The focus of the work can be in any field or area of research which, in short or long term, may one day improve the quality of life of people with pancreatic cancer. Please ensure that your proposal meets the other eligibility criteria by reading the Guidance for Applicants document on our [website](#).

Q10. Can I apply for the Career Foundation Fellowships if I am a Group Leader or PI?

A10. No. The Career Foundation Fellowships are designed to provide post-doctoral researchers the opportunity to develop the skills and build experience taking the first step towards becoming an independent investigator. Furthermore, these Fellowships cannot be used to establish the applicant as a group leader of an independent research group during the award.

Q11. Will PCUK be offering Career Progression Fellowships again?

A11. We have undertaken extensive consultation with the research community and PCUK's Scientific Advisory Board, as well as benchmarking against other UK fellowship schemes to ensure we have the most appropriate focus within our career support. We believe that the CFFs address a clear gap for researchers who require the means to demonstrate the first steps of independence – these will therefore become the Charity's strategic focus. As such, **we are pausing Career Progression Fellowships** for the time being. We will regularly review our approaches to career support and revise when appropriate.

Q12. Can I apply for less funding and/or a shorter duration of Fellowship?

A12. Yes. £300,000 for 3 years are maximum levels not a mandated size or duration. The Charity wants applicants to utilize the CFF scheme in a way that most effectively enables them to achieve their career goals. For example, if an applicant needs to use analytical technologies that require significant expenditure but over a short period, applicants could apply for £250,000 over 2

years. Whatever you apply for, it will be for you to justify to reviewers why this is needed to achieve your career goals.

Q13. Can I hold a PCUK CFF and a fellowship from another funder?

A13. We have made the CFF awards deliberately inclusive, recognizing that post-docs take very different routes. It is up to the applicants to justify why the PCUK CFF will be important within their career trajectory, especially in relation to other career support awards they may already hold. However, given the early career stage the CFFs are targeted at, it is very unlikely that a researcher already holding a fellowship from another funder will be eligible for a PCUK CFF.

Equally, you will not be able to start another funder's fellowship if your CFF is still active. Therefore, please consider the duration of CFF you apply for in the context of other awards you may apply for in the future.

Please contact the [Research Team](#) if you would like to discuss your specific situation and how this may affect your eligibility for the CFF award.

Q14. Will more experienced post-docs be more successful in their Fellowship application?

A14. No. Even though the CFFs have a broad eligibility, peer reviewers and Panel members make recommendations on each applicant's individual merits. Previous rounds have seen applicants supported who span a wide range of experience level, from final year PhD students to post-docs with 5+ years of experience following their PhD. Your success is dependent on your justification of why this Fellowship enables you to achieve your career ambitions.

Completing the application form

Q15. Do I have to use a certain referencing style?

A15. We ask that references are included in full, e.g. with full authors and without 'et al'. This information is important for reviewers for both conflicts of interest and the review itself. Applicants can choose a specific system though we encourage consistency throughout.

Q16. Why are we being asked to write a lay summary?

A16. Applications to the 2023-24 Career Foundation Fellowships will be reviewed and scored by external lay reviewers and Pancreatic Cancer UK's [Career Foundation Fellowship Panel](#) which includes lay representatives who have personal experience of pancreatic cancer.

The lay reviewer's role is not to comment on the science of the application but to ensure that the research proposed is of relevance and importance to people with pancreatic cancer. The lay summary therefore needs to contain enough information for the lay reviewers to assess the relevance and importance and should also be written in such a way that a non-scientist can understand the project plans – this may be the only section of the form to which a lay reviewer will refer.

The lay summary is also used by Pancreatic Cancer UK on its website and may be used for marketing purposes. Applicants should therefore ensure that confidential information is not included in this section.

It is vitally important that your lay summary passes the 'so what?' test, and demonstrates through a lay description of a pathway to impact why the research would be important to people with pancreatic cancer.

You can get help with writing your lay summary from Pancreatic Cancer UK's Research Involvement Network. This Network is a group of people affected by pancreatic cancer who are willing to help with the design and delivery of research. To access the Network, visit our [website](#).

Q17. Do my Supervisor and Collaborators need to sign off the grant before/after I submit it?

A17. Your Supervisor and any Collaborators will need to provide a signed letter of support confirming their cooperation in the research. This should outline their reasons for supporting the proposal and explain their role in the project (which should correlate with the detailed proposal).

Q18. To whom should we address any letters of collaboration/support?

A18. Any letters of collaboration/support should be addressed to the Director of Support, Research and Influencing at Pancreatic Cancer UK, (Anna Jewell). These should be included as an appendix on the application.

Q19. Do you need CVs for each participant?

A19. We expect CVs to be provided for the lead applicant and Supervisor. CVs should be included in the appendices using the template provided. Any publications included on the CV must include the full author list as per our referencing style detailed in Q15. In order to reduce burden on reviewers, please limit CVs to one A4 page wherever possible.

Q20. My research involves the use of animals; what information do you need?

A20. Applicants using animals within their research should provide a full justification within the research proposal and state whether the model that they are using has been genetically modified. Applicants are required to provide the power calculations that were used to determine the appropriate sample size. If statistical calculations have not been used to determine the appropriate number of animals to be used, applicants should explain why not and provide the alternative basis for calculation. Additionally, applicants must demonstrate that they are implementing the replacement, refinement and reduction of animals in research concordant with guidance from the NC3Rs.

Q21. My project might include costs that are considered patient care, NHS Treatment or NHS Support costs. Can I clarify this after my application has been submitted?

A21. No. You must liaise with the relevant departments at your institution and/or NHS Trust to confirm whether they will fund the relevant NHS costs before the application deadline. All applicants should contact their NHS Trust and NIHR CLRN before applying to ensure that these costs will be met. A letter of support indicating as such should be uploaded with your application as an appendix. If you have any questions about the eligibility of costs, please contact Pancreatic Cancer UK's [Research Team](#) before applying, so that we can discuss your circumstances and advise accordingly.

Q22. Can I use my fellowship budget for attending networking meetings?

A22. We strongly support Fellows using the budget to build their professional networks and relationships. Detailed expenses for attending and travelling to conferences, collaborator meetings or secondments should be included. Costs associated with the travel component (e.g. accommodation) can also be included.

Q23. Can I use my fellowship budget for training and development?

A23. We welcome applicants budgeting for any cost associated with their training and development as an early career researcher establishing their independence, ultimately towards PI/group leader. Any cost associated with this should be detailed in your application.