

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

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## 1. How does Pancreatic Cancer UK define 'treatment research' in pancreatic cancer?

These grants are intended to support projects focusing on the treatment of early-stage through to late-stage metastatic pancreatic cancer. For the purpose of these grants, Pancreatic Cancer UK defines treatment research as:

- **Discovery research to identify and validate novel treatment targets:** Building knowledge of the underlying biology of pancreatic cancer tumours and surrounding cells to discover new ways to target the tumour and its surrounding environment.
- **Early phase research exploring and developing new potential therapies:** Research that is building on the discovery of promising biological targets towards understanding initial therapeutic utility.
- **Discovery, clinical or applied approaches to optimise existing treatments:** Generating understanding of how current treatments (e.g. surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy, immunotherapy) can be made more effective, increasing treatment response and decreasing side effects/increasing quality of life.

We are looking for research that considers the line-of-sight to impact in improving treatment for pancreatic cancer patients. We would like to see applicants consider the multifaceted nature of developing treatment options in the justification of their project i.e. consider the person and not just the tumour. You can read more on Pancreatic Cancer UK's strategic ambitions in treatment of pancreatic cancer [here](#).

## 2. How is 'interdisciplinary research' defined?

We are specifically looking for research that can only be addressed through interdisciplinary approaches and/or collaborations i.e., methods or research benefits that would not be realised without interdisciplinary working. We adopt the Research Excellence Framework definition of **interdisciplinary research** as '*involving significant interactions between two or more disciplines or moving beyond established disciplinary collaborations to achieve outcomes/new approaches that could not be realised within the framework of a single discipline.*' However, applications are not limited to this definition, and we welcome researchers to define and justify the interdisciplinary nature of their proposal.

Examples of interdisciplinary collaborations include, **but not limited to**:

- Researchers with similar approaches but different perspectives working together e.g., discovery researchers agnostic of disease working with discovery researchers focused in pancreatic cancer.
- Researchers with different fields/sectors but similar perspectives working together e.g., computational modelling, data scientists, bioengineering, cancer biologists, chemists, imaging specialists.
- Researchers working in other cancer types bringing their expertise into pancreatic cancer.
- Researchers working within pancreatic cancer with specific focuses working together to address the multicomponent pathology e.g., researchers working in tumour cell biology working with researchers in tumour microenvironment.

Please note, we **are not** looking for:

- Multi-disciplinary research that carries out related projects in parallel to one another
- Research proposals coming from well-established and advanced collaborations that have already progressed to larger scale funding.

- Collaborations that cannot articulate genuine complementarity.

### **3. Are these grants suitable for clinical trials?**

The scale and duration of these grants are not suitable for clinical trials or research that has progressed to a more advanced therapeutic testing.

### **4. Can applications be in cachexia (wasting syndrome) research?**

Pancreatic Cancer UK recognises cachexia as a significant component of people's experience of pancreatic cancer and welcomes proposals in the context of better understanding and treating cachexia in pancreatic cancer patients.

### **5. Is supportive oncology research within the remit of this call?**

Supportive oncology is an essential part of pancreatic cancer treatment. However, it does fall out of the remit of this particular award scheme. Pancreatic Cancer UK are supporting supportive oncology research by other more appropriate means. Please contact us if you have any questions or would like to find out more.

### **6. What is the application and review process for these grants?**

This scheme has a 3-step application and review process before a funding a recommendation is made by the Review Panel:

- **Letter of Intent submission** - The purpose of the Letter of Intent is for the Research Team to ensure your proposal fulfils the remit and eligibility criteria of these grants before embarking on the full application. The Letter of Intent can be submitted any time after the scheme launch date and the Pancreatic Cancer UK Research Team will respond to your submission within 5 working days. We advise applicants to do this as soon as possible in order to leave sufficient time to complete the full application.
- **Full application stage** – This is a detailed application form and will be made available to applicants following the submission of the Letter of Intent. Full applications 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).
- **Interview with the Review Panel** - Each shortlisted applicant will be invited to interview by the Review Panel and representatives from Pancreatic Cancer UK. This will consist of an approximately 30-minute interview for the lead applicant and a limited number of collaborators/co-applicants with the Review Panel. Recommendations for funding will be made based on reviews and interviews.

### **7. Would researchers from the same institution be considered interdisciplinary?**

Researchers may be from the same institution but must be from more than one discipline to be considered interdisciplinary.

### **8. Do the interdisciplinary collaborations need to be new or are existing partnerships eligible?**

These grants can support projects that kickstart or formalise new interdisciplinary partnerships. However, applicants may have also worked together previously, but not in the interdisciplinary manner indicated in this proposal. Alternatively, they may have worked together previously in an interdisciplinary manner, but not focused on a pancreatic cancer project.

**9. Can Pancreatic Cancer UK help find collaborating partners?**

The Pancreatic Cancer UK Research Team may be able to help identify and liaise with new connections but making those collaborations will ultimately be the responsibility of applicants.

**10. Can I apply for these grants if I am an early career researcher?**

Applications from early/mid-career researchers as Lead applicants or Co-Applicants responsible for the delivery of the work are welcome but must be supported by another applicant or collaborator deemed an expert in their field.

**11. Can I apply if I do not hold a tenured position at my institution?**

Lead Applicants can apply if they do not hold a tenured position at a UK university. However, we do encourage early career researchers/junior group leaders to collaborate with established PI's. By approving the grant application, the Host Institution also must show support for the applicant through commitment to facilitate the research proposed. Applicants are advised that the proposal will be assessed against a number of criteria including the track record of the Lead Applicant and the interdisciplinary expertise of the wider team. Please contact Pancreatic Cancer UK's [Research Team](#) with any queries before applying, so that we can discuss your circumstances and advise accordingly.

**12. Are pilot data necessary to apply for these grants?**

Preliminary data are not a prerequisite to apply for these grants. However, researchers may have significant pilot data from their individual disciplines which they can use to strengthen their application for this interdisciplinary proposal.

**13. Are costings for infrastructure support eligible?**

No. These grants are not intended for infrastructure funding.

**14. Can I include funds for a PhD student in my costings?**

No. These grants are not intended to fund PhD studentships.

**15. 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?**

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.

**16. Do my collaborators need to sign off the grant before I submit it?**

Any collaborators will need to provide a letter of support confirming their cooperation in the research for the full application stage, but not for the Letter of Intent submission. This should outline their reasons for collaborating and explain their role in the project (which should correlate with the detailed proposal).

### **17. To whom should we address any letters of collaboration?**

Any letters of collaboration 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.

### **18. Do you need CVs for each participant?**

We expect CVs to be provided for the Lead Applicant(s) and all Co-Applicants. 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 (see below). In order to reduce burden on reviewers, please limit CVs to two A4 pages wherever possible.

### **19. What if there are delays due to staff recruitment or other issues? Can I change the start date later?**

Applicants are expected to estimate a *realistic* start date allowing for time for recruitment of new staff and obtaining necessary study approvals. Projects should be underway within 9 months of receiving the award letter for the project i.e. September 2025.

If you are successful but wish to change your start date, you must contact the PCUK Research Team before Terms & Conditions are sent to your Finance Office to amend. Any amendments still need to be within 9 months of receiving the award letter.

### **20. If I am successful in receiving funding, can I apply for extensions to the project if unable to complete it in timeframe proposed in the original application?**

Projects funded under the Interdisciplinary Treatment Grants can be for a duration up to 3 years. The feasibility of completing the project within the stated timelines in the proposal will be taken into consideration by the Review Panel when recommending applications for funding. Please be pragmatic when planning your investigations and timelines. No-cost extensions for funded grants will not be guaranteed. If they are deemed necessary they will be strictly limited. Costed extensions 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.

### **21. I do not have ethical approval for my application. Can I still apply?**

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.

### **22. Do I have to use a certain referencing style?**

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.

### **23. Why are we being asked to write a lay summary?**

Applications to the Interdisciplinary Treatment Grants scheme will be reviewed and scored by the Review 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. Requests need to be sent to the Pancreatic Cancer UK Research Team in advance of the submission deadline to allow sufficient time for the Network to respond.

#### **24. My research involves the use of animals. What information do you need?**

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](#).

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

Pancreatic Cancer UK’s Board of Trustees makes the final funding decision based on the recommendations of the Review. 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 [‘Full Application Guidance’](#) document on our website.