Early Career Advancement Fellowship Guidance for Applicants 2025

Introduction

Blood Cancer UK's five-year strategy is focused on bringing forward the day when no one dies of blood cancer or its treatments. To help us reach this aim, we are committed to increasing the funding we have available for world quality research and maximising the support we provide for the vibrant community of exceptional blood cancer researchers working across the UK.

Blood Cancer UK's new research strategy outlining how we will invest in research over the next five years will be launched soon. We will continue to fund research across all blood cancer types and our three key priority research themes will be prevention, early detection and outcome prediction, and treatment. We also will retain our focus on strengthening the research community, and our specific commitment to supporting early career researchers.

Traditionally as a charity we have invested heavily in research fellowships and careers and many of today's blood cancer research leaders are former Blood Cancer UK fellows.

"The career path for clinical academics is perilous and is not always well supported by government and the university sector, despite national acknowledgement by a recent UK House of Lords report that clinical academics are part of the key to creating and fostering a strong foundation for the healthcare system. Blood Cancer UK funded both a clinical training fellowship for me to do my PhD and a senior fellowship to fund my first UK faculty position on my return from working in the US. I am eternally grateful for that support without which I would not have been able to develop my career as a clinical academic." **Adele Fielding, Professor of Haematology, Hull York Medical School and Honorary Consultant in Haematology, Hull University Teaching Hospitals**

"Being awarded a Senior Fellowship from Blood Cancer UK had an enormously positive impact on my career. It firmly established me as a recognised independent researcher at the University of Cambridge and strengthened my CV to the point that I was offered a tenured position at the University of Edinburgh. Most importantly, it gave me the opportunity and support to embark on a new line of research in which I was able to apply my developmental biology background to an important clinical question – the origin and pathogenesis of infant leukaemia, which has remained the main focus of my lab. I will always be grateful to Blood Cancer UK for this important stepping stone in my career." **Katrin Ottersbach, Professor of Developmental Haematology, University of Edinburgh**

At this time, our highest priority is to ensure we continue to support the development of the most talented early career researchers, so they can go on to become the next generation of

blood cancer research leaders. As part of this aim, we are excited to announce the second round of our **Early Career Advancement Fellowships.**

Remit and Eligibility

An Early Career Advancement Fellowship is designed to enable the most talented early career blood cancer researchers, who have already obtained a PhD and undertaken further research as a postdoc or equivalent, to transition towards independence as a researcher.

Fellowships will be awarded for up to three years' full time or five years' part time.

We expect the funding requested from applicants to this scheme to be in the region of £400,000-£450,000. The maximum budget available for these fellowships is £450,000. All requested costs should be fully justified and proportionate to the proposed project. All costs will be scrutinised in detail by the funding committee as part of the assessment process.

Host Institutions are limited to two Fellowship application submissions per round. Institutes that are part of an overarching host institution such as a university will be counted as part of the overall university and not as a separate institution. If you are planning to apply to this round, please notify your University Research Office of your proposed application as early as possible and ensure that your Research Office is aware of the limit on the number of applications.

We are aiming to fund four fellowships from our core budget for this round. In addition, we are pleased to announce our prestigious new Langmuir Fellowship, which will be specifically focused on myeloma. This has been made possible thanks to a generous gift from the Langmuir Family Foundation and will be awarded to the highest ranked applicant in the field of myeloma.

Applicants should be proposing to undertake a novel research project that is in line with our overarching strategic aim of bringing forward the day when no one dies either of blood cancer or the side effects of its treatments, and with at least one of the three priority research themes from our new research strategy:

- Prevention
- Early detection and predicting outcomes
- Treatment

The fellowship should also provide the researcher with leadership, career development, and training opportunities needed for the applicant to transition towards independence over the course of the fellowship.

As part of a fellowship, Fellows are permitted to undertake discovery or translational research, small scale clinical studies, or research projects associated with ongoing clinical

trials. These Fellowships are not designed to directly support the design or delivery of clinical trials.

In this scheme, we encourage applications from:

- Outstanding early career researchers who are dedicated to pursuing a career in blood cancer research, and who are aiming to transition towards independence with the support of this fellowship.

- Candidates who have had up to a maximum of six years' full time equivalent active research experience since gaining their PhD.
  - Allowances will be made for career breaks, COVID-19 pandemic impacts and clinical activity.

- Candidates from either non-clinical or clinical backgrounds.
  - For clinical applicants, candidates can remain clinically active for up to a maximum of 50% FTE. Salary requests can include the %FTE spent on the fellowship project, and we will ask you to include proof of clinical employment from your employer for the remainder of the salary.

- Candidates based at a UK university, hospital trust, or other recognised academic research institution in the UK who are able to sign up to Blood Cancer UK's Terms and Conditions. We are unable to fund fellows based in industry.

Researchers who have already transitioned to independence are not eligible to apply to this scheme. Evidence of transition to independence that could indicate you are not eligible includes:

- Award or completion of a similar or more senior fellowship from another funder of a value of £200K or more (including John Goldman Fellowships).
- Successful applications for significant research funding as the lead applicant, including project grants (£300k) and all larger awards from Blood Cancer UK or equivalent size awards from other funders.
- Current employment in a tenured research post or a post equivalent to Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, Reader or higher.

Note: Providing they meet all the other application criteria individuals would still be eligible to apply if they have already received funding as:

- a co-investigator or any other named team member on any research award. a lead applicant on smaller research awards or fellowships (under £200K).

If you have any queries regarding eligibility, please contact Blood Cancer UK's research team via research@bloodcancer.org.uk

The fellowship candidate should be the lead applicant, but the application should include a named supervisor at the host organisation who will be asked to provide a letter of support. The letter should outline how the organisation and supervisor will support the fellow including their commitment to the research proposal, resourcing, and career development.

Successful candidates will need to show that during their fellowship they will be undertaking a programme of career development activities and training alongside their research project including:

- working towards establishing their own research groups and developing the required leadership skills;
- applying for further research funding as a PI and/or preparing to apply for more senior fellowships to support the next stage of their development after this award;
- developing their research networks and engaging in the wider blood cancer research ecosystem;
- building skills and experience in patient involvement.

Timelines

Applications open: **Thursday 12th June 2025**
Deadline for submission of applications: **3pm on Thursday September 25th 2025**
Interviews: **Early March 2026**
Applicants notified of outcomes: **Late March 2026**

Assessment Criteria

All proposals submitted for this call will be reviewed by external peer reviewers from relevant fields and people affected by blood cancer.

The application and associated reviews will be assessed and shortlisted by our Fellowships Committee and members of our Patient Voice Advisory Grant Network. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interviews with members of our Fellowships Committee and Patient Voice Advisory Grant Network.

Assessment criteria used to make shortlisting and funding decisions will include:

- **Candidate**: Has the candidate got the background, career aspirations and potential to successfully transition to independence and to establish a career as a leading blood cancer researcher? Did they present their project clearly and effectively? Were they able to answer questions in a comprehensive way?

- **Proposed project:** How relevant and timely is this research for people affected by blood cancer? Is there a clear unmet need that is being addressed? Is it duplicative of previous or current research? Are there clear elements that will allow the applicant to diverge from their proposed supervisor/host lab to develop their own independent research programme in the future? Is the research proposal clear and feasible with focused aims and objectives, underpinned by strong scientific design and reasoning? Is there an appropriate plan to reach the stated aims and objectives? Are the requested costs justified? Is any proposed inclusion of animal research or clinical studies justified and appropriate? Is there an appropriate level of patient and public involvement? Are there any outstanding concerns about the proposed project that would prohibit funding at this stage?

- **Environment, Supervision and Training:** Are the Host Institution, Supervisor(s), Co-Investigators, Collaborators and Mentors suitable and appropriate for the effective delivery of this Fellowship and supporting the successful career development of the fellow? Will the proposed research project and wider career development programme provide the candidate with all the necessary training and skills for the successful development of an independent career in blood cancer research?

Recommendations from the committee will be sent to our Board of Trustees for final approval.

Online application system

All applications must be submitted via the Blood Cancer UK Grant Tracker grants management system. Grant Tracker is used for submission, peer review, award, and monitoring of all grant applications. Please follow the instructions in the 'Guide to using Grant Tracker' on our website to complete and submit an application. The application can be stored and edited at any time prior to submission.

The application deadline is **3:00pm on the date advertised (see above)**. No applications will be accepted after the deadline. Applicants should allow enough time for submission of their applications before the deadline to ensure all the required approvals are obtained.

For any enquiries about completing the application form or submitting your application, please contact research@bloodcancer.org.uk.

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Application form – Guidance

Application summary

Project Title: A concise title should be provided with abbreviations spelled out in full.

Synopsis: The synopsis should be a scientific abstract of the proposed research. This should include the background, hypothesis, and objectives as well as brief details of the proposed methodology. Applicants should also outline the proposed outcomes and impact, and potential long-term benefits to people living with blood cancer (200 words max.).

Host Institution: The name of the university, hospital trust or other organisation responsible for administering the grant should be stated. Blood Cancer UK will accept up to two Fellowship applications from any one institution. It is the host institution's responsibility to ensure no more than two applications are submitted from their institution. If the number of applications from one Host Institution exceeds this threshold all applications will be returned to the Host Institution for a final decision on which two they want Blood Cancer UK to take forward.

Proposed start date: Awarded grants are expected to be activated by the grant holder within three months from the start date indicated on the Grant Award Letter. Applicants should allow at least six months between the submission of the application and the proposed starting date of the research.

Proposed duration: The duration of the project/study in months**.** The maximum duration is 36 months full time or 60 months part time.

Previously submitted to Blood Cancer UK? Indicate whether the application is a new submission, continuation of a current or recently closed award, or a resubmission, and provide the additional details requested based on your answer.

Is your project <u>associated</u> with a clinical trial? Indicate whether the application is associated with another existing or planned clinical trial. If so, state the name of the trial and a recognised trial registry number such as ISRCTN, ClinicalTrials.gov or another register listed on the WHO International Clinical Registry Platform (ICTRP). If the trial is supported by Blood Cancer UK, then please also add the grant ref. no.

Does this grant application <u>include</u> a clinical study? Please indicate if this application includes a clinical study. This question is mandatory and should be completed before completing the rest of the application form. The answer given will determine subsequent questions on other pages of the application form.

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Main Applicant – Personal Statement

As the proposed Fellow, you are the Main Applicant. The Main Applicant should be based at the host institution for the grant and have overall responsibility for the delivery and reporting of the grant and ensuring that the terms and conditions of the award are met.

Please tell us about:

- your career and research experience to date
- why you wish to apply for this Blood Cancer UK Early Career Advancement Fellowship
- what makes you an excellent candidate
- how this fellowship would support your transition to independence and how the research you are proposing will diverge from existing and planned research being completed by your proposed supervisor/host lab
- your future career aspirations and the specific research niche you are aiming to carve for yourself as an independent researcher (1,000 words max.).

Main Applicant – Key Details

This section will be pre-populated with your name and contact details from the 'Manage My Details' section of your GT account. Please ensure that they are accurate and up to date. To amend them, save and close the application and visit the 'Manage My Details' section of your Grant Tracker record.

Main Applicant - CV

The details you add in the 'Manage My Details' section of your GT account (**Degrees/Professional Qualifications, Employment, Research Grants**) will be used to populate your application form CV section. Please ensure that they are accurate and up to date. To amend them, save and close the application and visit the 'Manage My Details' section of your Grant Tracker record.

Publications: To update your publications, go to the section 'My Research Outputs' in your Grant Tracker record. Here you can add publications manually, or you can import via Europe PMC.

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Main Applicant - Research outputs and contributions

This section is to allow additional information to be added by the main applicant to tell us about their significant research-related achievements to date, which will be taken into consideration when reviewing the applicant's track record relative to career stage.

Research outputs and contributions. Describe up to 5 of the most significant research outputs or contributions you have been involved in so far in your career. For each of these, provide a brief statement describing the output or contribution, your level of involvement, why you think it was important and what the potential impact is.

Examples of research outputs and contributions include, but are not limited to, authorship of peer reviewed original research articles (abstracts and literature reviews should not be included in this list), invited presentations at major conferences, authorship of pre-prints, development of datasets, software and research materials, involvement in the development of novel inventions, patents and commercial activity, development of new research partnerships, participation in regional, national or international committees/advisory bodies, receipt of research-related awards, design and delivery of high impact patient and public involvement activities or contributions to real world impact on patients. For peer reviewed publications, ensure that your position as author and role is clear e.g., joint first or senior co-authorship (500 words max.).

Career Breaks and Eligibility

The eligibility requirements for this fellowship state that candidates should have had up to a maximum of six years' full time equivalent active research experience since gaining their PhD and that allowances will be made for career breaks, COVID-19 pandemic impacts and clinical activity.

This section is to allow additional information to be added by the applicant to tell us about any career breaks or other information which should be taken into consideration when reviewing the applicant's track record and eligibility for this fellowship.

Career Breaks: Since obtaining your PhD have you taken a break from research or had any periods of part-time work? This could include periods of parental leave or long-term sick leave, or if you had caring responsibilities. You can also include any periods of time you were not able to work because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Clinical applicants can also detail their approximate annual %FTE clinical commitment since obtaining their PhD. These will all be taken into consideration when reviewing your track record and eligibility for this fellowship. Please identify the specific periods of time here, with a brief description of the reason for the career break. There is no requirement to include any sensitive personal information (350 words max.).

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Career Development Plans and Institutional Support

Career Development Plan: Please outline the specific key career development activities you plan to undertake during this fellowship to prepare you for your transition to independence. This can include but is not limited to:

- developing skills and undertaking training in Leadership, Grantsmanship, Project Management and other key skills required to run a successful research group
- applying for further research funding as a PI and/or preparing to apply for more senior fellowships to support the next stage of your career
- developing relationships with external mentors who are well placed to support your development and career progression
- developing your collaborative networks and engaging in the wider blood cancer research ecosystem
- building skills and experience in patient involvement (500 words max.)

Fellows must have one named Lead Supervisor based in the same department as the fellow, who bears overall responsibility for supporting the fellow's research project and training. The Lead Supervisor should be added to the application as a Co-Investigator.

Please attach a letter of support from your Lead Supervisor. This letter should include:

- Confirmation that they are willing to act as Lead Supervisor for the proposed fellowship and justification for their suitability to act as Lead Supervisor.
- A statement of support for the proposed fellow, including why they are an excellent candidate for this fellowship.
- Confirmation that the fellow will be provided appropriate lab space if required, access to all required shared resources and institutional support for the duration of the award.
- Details of why the host institution is the most suitable training environment for this fellow.
- Mention of the specific support and training that will be available to the fellow from the department and wider institution to help drive the fellow's career development during the fellowship. This may include support or training for the fellow to:
    - Develop the research management and leadership skills required for the successful establishment of their own research groups.
    - Develop their grant writing skills and apply for further research funding as a PI and/or prepare to apply for more senior fellowships to support the next stage of their development after this award.
    - Increase their research networks and profile and engage in the wider blood cancer research ecosystem.
    - Build skills and experience in meaningful patient engagement and involvement.

- Confirmation that the fellow's project does not **substantially** overlap with other work ongoing in the lab and that the supervisor will support the fellow to take this area of investigation forward as the basis of their independent group during and/or following this fellowship.

Additional Letters of Support (optional)

We would strongly encourage all potential fellows to identify additional senior colleagues who will act as either supervisors or mentors for the duration of this project, from either within or outside your host institution as appropriate.

This page allows you to attach up to three additional letters of support from named supervisors or mentors who will be involved in supporting your research and/or professional development during the lifespan of this project. These letters should include:

- Confirmation the individual is willing to act as an additional Supervisor or Mentor for the proposed fellowship and justification for their suitability for the proposed role.
- A statement of support for the proposed fellow, including why they are an excellent candidate for this fellowship.
- An overview of the support that they will provide to the fellow throughout the fellowship.

Note that this is not mandatory. Any letters attached in this section will be shown in the application PDF as one of the appendices noted in the 'Attachments' section.

Research Project Objectives

Please outline the key objectives of your proposed project in this section. Up to five can be included but note that there is a mandatory requirement for a minimum of two. The form will not be validated if less than two are added. Each objective has a word limit of 80 words. These will be used to assess your application, and if your application is successful, in your annual report forms.

Project Details

The next two questions; for 'Purpose and background' and 'Detailed plan of investigation' have a combined total word limit of 2,500 words. Figures, tables, and illustrations cannot be included here. They should be submitted using the project support documentation section on this page of the form and referenced in the application text boxes. All application attachments are also visible through the final Attachment Summary page.

Purpose and background: Outline the background and rationale behind your proposal including what gap in current knowledge or unmet need for people affected by blood cancer your project aims to drive progress towards. Include an overview of the existing knowledge from your work or others that this project builds on, including any preliminary or feasibility data you have already obtained. Outline why now is the right time to undertake this research.

Detailed plan of investigation:

With reference to each grant objective:

- Describe the specific hypotheses, aims, experimental plan and methods you will use, including reference to supporting published and unpublished methods and results where relevant.
- Describe any key analyses that will be undertaken (detailed information on specific statistical analyses can be included in a later question).
- Outline the expected outputs of the project and their potential outcomes and impact for blood cancer research and people affected by blood cancer.
- Outline any key risks to delivering the research, and what steps will be put in place to help mitigate or resolve them.

If your proposed research involves the use of animals, please also include:

- The specific species and model you plan to use.
- The rationale behind your choice of model.
- Justification of the number and sex of animals used with reference to considerations outlined in the MESSAGE framework.

If your proposal includes a clinical study, please also include:

- Your choice of design and justification of this choice, including planned outcome measures, endpoints and analysis plan.
- The target population, the planned inclusion and exclusion criteria and the proposed recruitment plan and targets.
- An overview of any planned associated research sample collection.
- An overview of how you have considered the principles of EDI in the development of the clinical study with reference to the INCLUDE guidelines and MESSAGE framework.

Research direction: Please clearly describe how the work planned for this fellowship has the potential to diverge from existing and planned research being undertaken by your proposed supervisor/host lab and supports your transition to an independent research programme in the research niche specified in your personal statement.

Detailed statistical analyses: If relevant (particularly for high volume data, animal research or clinical studies), provide a full description of statistical analyses to be used, including number of samples in each analysis, the associated level of statistical power, and any potential limitations or biases (500 words max.).

Project support documentation: A maximum of four A4 pages of additional information can be provided in support of the research proposal. Additional information can include graphs, figures, tables, and essential unpublished data relevant to your application.

Applicants must attach a **GANTT chart** outlining a schedule for the completion of the work including the objectives and key deliverables for the entire project period.

Recommended & Excluded Reviewers: You are invited to input suggestions of UK and international experts for Blood Cancer UK to consider approaching to give their views on your application. To avoid conflicts of interest, suggested reviewers should not be from the same department or research organisation as the applicants or co-investigators, and should not have worked or published together in the last three years.

You can also note any experts you would like us to refrain from approaching if possible, giving a clear justification for requesting their exclusion from the review process. We will take these recommendations into consideration, but please note that Blood Cancer UK reserves the right to seek review comments from appropriate experts in the field for all applications being considered for funding support.

References

A maximum of three A4 pages of key references related to your application can be uploaded as an attachment in this page. Please note that there is a maximum size allowance for the document of 10MB.

Ethics

Please outline how you have considered the principles of diversity and inclusion into the design of any research involving humans and animals. For animal studies please consider NC3Rs guidance on including both sexes in your experiments and the MESSAGE framework. For clinical studies, please consider all aspects of diversity and inclusion as outlined in the NIHR INCLUDE guidance and MESSAGE framework (300 words max.).

For projects involving the use of animals

All grant holders using animals must adhere to the Guidelines for the Welfare and Use of Animals in Cancer Research as set out by Workman et al, 2010 and implement the principles in the NC3Rs guidelines (including justification of species, details of power calculations and plans to minimise experimental bias).

Grant holders should make use of resources provided by NC3Rs including the online Experimental Design Assistant where appropriate and ensure that they plan to report *in vivo* studies in accordance with the ARRIVE guidelines as far as possible.

Animals Used? Please confirm whether or not your research proposal includes procedures to be carried out on animals in the UK as defined by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act.

Animal Species: Please select the animal species to be used from the dropdown list or select other and specify the species being used in the textbox provided.

Are any of these animals genetically modified? Please confirm if any of the animals will be genetically modified using the options in the dropdown list provided.

Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body: Have you obtained approval from the relevant ethical review body? Approval must be obtained prior to the start of a successful grant and Blood Cancer UK must be notified when approvals are in place. If approvals are already in place, please attach the final letter from the Research Ethics Committee to this application using the attachment section at the end of this page of the form.

Have the relevant Home Office project and personal licences been obtained? Please confirm if the licences have been obtained or are pending. If they have been obtained, please confirm the licence number. If pending, please state the expected date.

If your project involves the use of animals, what would be the severity of the procedures as per the descriptions given in appendix G of Home Office guidance (p118)? Please select as appropriate and provide further details in subsequent boxes as prompted.

- Please provide details of any moderate or severe procedures.
- Why is animal use necessary; are there any other possible approaches?
- Why is the species/model to be used the most appropriate and what will be done to minimise any pain, suffering or distress?
- Please justify the number of animals to be used per experiment including details of any sample size calculations and/or statistical advice sought.

For further information, please go to the Guidance on the operation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

Do your proposals involve the use of animals or animal tissue outside the UK? Please select the appropriate option and if yes provide details in the box provided.

For projects involving human tissue samples, stem cells, personal data, or clinical studies

Human studies: Does the proposed research involve human tissue samples? Please confirm Y/N.

Does the work involve the use of any human stem cells? Please confirm and if yes, please select the appropriate human stem cell types.

Will you be applying to access any existing patient data for use in this study? If yes, please provide details of the datasets you will apply to access and use.

Is your proposed clinical study covered by The Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations in the UK? Please confirm whether the proposed clinical study or trial is covered by The Medicines for Human Use (Clinical Trials) Regulations in the UK.

Have you obtained the required approvals for your research or clinical study from the relevant ethical review and governance bodies? Ethical approval must be sought from the appropriate research ethics committees. Ethical approval must be obtained before the relevant aspect of the project begins and Blood Cancer UK must be notified of approval. If ethical approval has already been obtained at the time of submission, please attach the final letter of approval from the Research Ethics Committee with your application. The administering organisation must ensure that ethical approval is in place at all relevant times during the research study.

Please then respond to subsequent questions as appropriate:

> **Please provide a brief overview of the relevant approvals you have in place and the dates these approvals were received (100 words max.)**
>
> **Please provide details of the approvals you have applied for and the dates you expect to receive the outcome of these applications (100 words max.)**
>
> **Please provide details of the approvals you will need to apply for and the approximate dates these applications will be made (100 words max.)**

Final approval letters: If available at this stage, please provide the final letters confirming approvals from the relevant bodies.

Related applications & current funding

Application currently submitted to other funders: If this application is currently being submitted elsewhere, please add the organisation and date of decision.

Application previously submitted elsewhere: If this application has been submitted elsewhere in the past year, add the organisation and result of the submission.

Current support - funding details: If related research in your lab is currently being supported by another funding organisation, provide details of the grant(s), including the name of the funder, name(s) of grantholder(s), title of the project, total amount awarded

(and how much of this you received), your role in the project and start and end dates. If your lab receives additional core funding or support from your host institution, briefly describe the resources provided (500 words max).

Current support - relationship to proposed project: Describe how the currently active grants listed above relate to this application. If you hold grants or there is active research in your laboratory related to the topic of this application, briefly explain how this application fits with the broader research programme and confirm that this application is for a distinct research project and there is no overlap in the funding being requested (500 words max).

Support from other sources & IP and Commercialisation Management

Support from other sources: Will funding and/or support from other organisations or core infrastructure be required to deliver the project? Provide details and confirm if funding and/or support is already in place or being applied for (1,000 words max.).

Will any aspects of this project be contracted out to third party organisations and if so, please provide details (300 words max.).

Letter(s) of support from industry partner(s): If your application includes any collaboration with an industry partner (for example the provision of free drug, equipment, or of an educational grant), please provide a letter from the industry partner demonstrating support for the proposed study, and confirming any contribution made.

Do you have access to any required background IP and Freedom to Operate? If relevant, please give details (500 words max.).

Is the proposed research likely to lead to patentable or otherwise commercially exploitable results? If yes please give details and outline how this will be managed in line with Blood Cancer UK Terms and Conditions: If appropriate, please provide information on the Intellectual Property (IP) potential of your research or if there is any existing IP associated with your research study. Please outline how this will be managed (500 words max.).

Have you spoken to your Technology Transfer Office (TTO) regarding the potential patentable or commercially exploitable results? If yes, please provide the contact details of your TTO contact and a summary of your discussions.

IP is defined as patents, copyright, trademarks, trade names, service marks, domain names copyrights, moral rights, rights in and to databases (including rights to prevent the extraction or re-utilisation of information from a database), design rights, topography rights and all rights or forms of protection of a similar nature or having equivalent or the

similar effect to any of them which may subsist anywhere in the world, whether or not any of them are registered and including applications for registration of any of them.

Plain English Section

This section is intended for a lay audience, and it is the main part of the application that lay reviewers from our Patient Voice Grant Advisory Network are asked to review, although Blood Cancer UK will make the full application available to them.

You must involve a patient or member of the public in the review of your plain English summary. You must ensure that answers to all questions in these sections are written in plain English using non-technical language and avoiding unexplained acronyms and/or technical abbreviations.

Lay reviewers will assess your proposal on the following criteria:

1. **The clarity of the lay summary and plain English section,** including details on the unmet need, the research question and how patients will be asked to participate.
2. **The potential impact of the research and benefit for patients.**
3. **Your plans for patient and public involvement in the research from design and delivery to dissemination.**

Please note that the accessibility of this section will directly impact the likelihood of your application being recommended for funding as it is part of the scoring criteria used by the Patient Voice Grant Advisory Network representatives at the shortlisting and interview stages of this round.

The word limit for the response to each question is 200 words unless otherwise stated.

Plain English Title: Provide a full project title in non-technical, plain English language.

Summary: Provide a lay summary of the proposed research for a non-specialist audience.

For further information on writing a clear lay summary, please see the INVOLVE guidelines.

Outline the background and aims/objectives of this research (1,000 words max.) Outline the background to this application. Is it a continuation of your current research or is it a new area? Please outline the objectives of the study ensuring sufficient detail on the aims and study plan including detail on:

Include detail on:

- why this project is needed/what is the unmet need;

- the number of people affected by the condition(s) in the UK;
- the treatment options currently available;
- the overall aims of the project and project plan.

Impact and benefits? What will the impact be of this research to people affected by blood cancer? If successful, when will the benefits of your research reach patients? Does your research have the potential to have a broader impact and relevance to all or other blood cancers in addition to the specific disease being studied? (500 words max.).

Patient and Public Involvement: Please outline your plans for involving people affected by blood cancer in this project. People affected by blood cancer should be involved in shaping your research proposal. The involvement of people affected by blood cancer has been shown to improve the clarity and direction of research projects and increase the likelihood of a project being funded. You must involve a patient or member of the public in the review of your plain English summary, and we recommend that you ask for their support in the drafting of this section of the application form **as a minimum**. We strongly recommend the involvement of people affected by blood cancer throughout your research project.

Please note that PPI does not refer to the recruitment of patients or members of the public as participants in a clinical study. (500 words max.).

For further guidance, please visit our webpage written for researchers, Patient and Public Involvement in Research. If you do not have a patient representative who can assist you with development of your project or assisting with the plain English summary, please contact Blood Cancer UK's Research Team on research@bloodcancer.org.uk who will be able to assist.

Communicating progress and results: How will you keep people (PPI contributors, clinical participants and the wider public) informed about research progress and the final results?

Additional questions for applications involving a clinical study:

Who can take part in the research and how will they be recruited? Do you think there will be any challenges in finding people willing to take part?

What will taking part in the research involve? (500 words max). Provide a plain English summary of the patient pathway from the time people are recruited to the time at which participation ends. Include a brief description of the types of tests and number of check-ups and follow-up appointments.

What are the benefits for participants in taking part in this study?

What are the potential risks and side effects for people taking part? How will the level of risk be assessed?

If available, please provide either draft or final versions of any Patient Information Sheets/Consent Form(s).

Describe how Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) has contributed to the design of the clinical study and how their input has been incorporated (500 words max). Include detail on the PPI representative(s)/group(s) involved in designing the clinical study (please name them where possible) and whether the PPI representative(s)/group(s) involved in the design have lived experience of the condition under study.

Describe how you will ensure ongoing PPI input, including how PPI will be embedded within the governance and management of the clinical study and how PPI will be involved in the delivery and dissemination activity for this study (500 words max). We strongly recommend that you ask PPI representatives to support in drafting this section of the application form. Please provide names of any PPI representative(s) involved/to be involved.

Finance & Costs

We expect the funding requested from applicants to the scheme to be in the region of £400,000-£450,000. The maximum budget available for these fellowships is set at £450,000. All requested costs should be fully justified and proportionate to the proposed project. Please note that all costs will be scrutinised in detail by the funding committee as part of the assessment process.

Please note the eligibility criteria described below before completing this section.

Eligible Costs

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities, Blood Cancer UK will only fund directly incurred costs and not the full economic costs of the research. We will not fund directly allocated costs or indirect costs.

Directly-incurred costs – direct costs of the research, such as:

- Applicant's salary (see further details below)
- Additional research staff
- Recurrent costs and costs directly attributable to the research study
- Equipment specific to the needs of the research.

All costs requested must be fully justified in the **'Justification for support'** section of the application which follows the Finance & Costs' page. For staff costs requested, a brief outline of responsibilities should be provided, including how each role relates to the objectives and timelines of the study.

Staff members: Support for the salary of the Fellow must be requested (full time or part time) and should be the primary salary on the application. Please specify the % FTE you will work on this project in the salary section of the form. This should be a minimum of 50% FTE.

Clinical applicants can remain clinically active for up to a maximum of 50% FTE. Salary requests should only include the %FTE spent on the fellowship project. Details of your clinical employment from the funder of the remainder of the salary should be included in the 'justification for the financial support requested' section of the form and a letter of support from your clinical employer should be attached at the end of the application form.

A request for additional research staff salary costs can be made if this can be fully justified and shown as essential to support the effective delivery of the proposed project.

Salaries are expected to be costed by the host organisation's research office according to an applicable pay model. Add the following figures to each box in the salary section of the online form in Grant Tracker: Basic Salary, National Insurance, Superannuation, London allowance (if applicable) and Inflation.

Grant Tracker will add up these costs and insert a total figure. Please show the percentage figure used for the inflation addition and for the FTE in the relevant boxes. If your costing tool automatically adds inflation to the basic salary amount then add 0 to the inflation box, but please show the percentage figure used in your calculations in the justification for resources section of the form.

Equipment: We assume that there is a basic level equipment provision by the host organisation. Applicants can request essential equipment items (including computing and software). Items of equipment greater than £10,000 must include a written quote.

Written confirmation is also required if an item of equipment is to be co-funded by the host organisation. The equipment must not be disposed of during the period of the grant without Blood Cancer UK's prior written approval.

Brief details should be added here, and fuller details can be added to the 'Justification' section which follows the Finance page.

Animals: Include all costs related to the use of animals including costs for purchase, maintenance and experimental procedures listed separately. Costs for personal licenses/Home Office licenses can be claimed under recurrent costs.

Recurrent costs: Brief details of recurrent costs should be detailed here and fully justified in the 'Justification for support' section of the application which follows the Finance pages.

Consumables: Please specify major items of consumables with accompanying details; for example, if 'Microarrays' is an item, please enter the number and type of array in the 'detail' box.

Access charges for use of specialist equipment can be applied for. A breakdown must be provided.

Patient and Public Involvement costs: costs should be included within recurrent costs. Please clearly describe these in the justification of resources. Provide details of any reimbursement of expenses and/or involvement payments you have, or will, offer to people involved in your research. For further guidance, refer to the NIHR INVOLVE policy on payments and expenses for members of the public.

For applications involving clinical studies: Any non-salary or equipment costs associated with the study should be included within recurrent costs. As Blood Cancer UK is a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), Blood Cancer UK will only fund the costs for activities attributed to the Research Part A Costs category, in line with the Department of Health (DoH) AcoRD guidelines.

The following costs should NOT be included in the budget requested from Blood Cancer UK in your application:

- Research Part B Costs (the NHS pays these costs where the funder is an AMRC member)
- Service Support Costs
- Treatment Costs
- Excess Treatment Costs (ETCs).

Travel: Travel for conferences to present research outputs directly from the award is an allowable cost for the staff member(s) employed on the grant. Costs include standard travel, accommodation, and conference fees. Blood Cancer UK grant holders are expected to acknowledge Blood Cancer UK in all presentations and/or posters.

The maximum allowance for travel to conferences is up to **£2,250** per eligible post over three years. Travel costs for conferences must be a separate budget line in the recurrent costs section.

Ineligible Costs

- Costs relating to staff recruitment and relocation costs
- Apprenticeship levy
- Funding to provide maintenance and/or insurance of equipment
- Office stationery costs unless required for the project and justified accordingly
- Indemnity insurance
- Publication costs – Award holders can apply for publication costs separately during the award
- Ineligible clinical study or trial costs as detailed above.

Directly-allocated costs – shared costs, based on estimates and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis, such as:

- Investigators: the time spent by the Co-Investigators
- Estates

- Shared resources, such as administrative and clerical staff and equipment.

Indirect costs – necessary for underpinning research but cannot be allocated to individual projects, such as:

- Computing and information support
- Central services
- General maintenance and other infrastructure costs.

Please now enter the details of the finances required for this grant. Totals will be calculated automatically.

Justification for the support requested in the Finance & Costs pages

Provide a detailed justification for the costs requested in the 'Finance & Costs' section. All costs must be fully justified.

Co-investigators

A co-investigator is an investigator who will provide significant intellectual input, as well as overseeing some aspects of the experimental work. If an individual is to be linked here then they need to have a Grant Tracker account and fill in the CV details in the same way as noted for the Main Applicant, including publications under My Research Outputs. Their details will be included in the application form along with that of the Main Applicant.

Collaborators

A collaborator is an investigator who may provide reagents, advice, or access to research materials, but won't be directly involved in the day-to-day work. This page will display all of the collaborators added for this grant. A letter of support from each collaborator, stating their involvement and commitment to the project, must be attached where indicated on this page.

Please note, collaborators added on this page will be provided with details on how to access the system to view the application PDF.

Administrators

The **pre-award administrator** is someone, in addition to the Head of Research Office equivalent or the Main Applicant, who helps with certain parts of the application, e.g. finances or text. They will not be able to validate or submit the application (that can only be done by the Main Applicant), and their role is only relevant during the pre-submission stage. The pre-award administrator should register on Grant Tracker, but CV details are not required.

Adding a **post award administrator** is mandatory. Should your application be successful this is the person that will be the host institute point of contact for the award documents and for the subsequent claims for payment. Post award administrators should register on Grant Tracker, but CV details are not required.

Signatories

The Head of Department and Finance Officer are the signatories for this section. Both should have Grant Tracker accounts, but CV details are not necessary for this section. Once the application has been submitted by the Main Applicant, the signatories will be asked to approve the application online. A workflow diagram can be found on bloodcancer.org.uk

Major Disease Area Classifications

Please select all classifications relevant to your application from the available list in the online application form in Grant Tracker. This will help Blood Cancer UK categorise the applications we receive.

Focus Classifications

Please select the classifications relevant to your application from the available list in the online application form in Grant Tracker. This will help Blood Cancer UK categorise the applications we receive.

The list of classifications is:

- **Causes** – a project looking to identify the causes of blood cancers, for example epidemiology, impact of radiation, viral triggers.
- **Mechanisms** – generally a basic research project looking at the cellular and genetic mechanisms involved in blood cancer.
- **Prevention –** a project to understand precursor conditions, stratification of people at high risk and the development of interventions to prevent blood cancer.
- **Early Detection and Predicting Outcomes** – a project which may speed up or improve the diagnosis of blood cancer or the prediction of disease progression and outcomes.
- **Treatment** – projects primarily focused on identifying or developing new treatment options or assessing molecules which could lead to new treatments.
- **Training** – this scheme comes under 'Training', and this should be selected.

Blood cancer UK

Common Scientific Outline (CSO) Classifications

Please select up to four classifications relevant to your application from the list available in the online application form in Grant Tracker. This will help Blood Cancer UK categorise the applications we receive.

For further information on the Common Scientific Outline (CSO) classification system please refer to the International Research Partnership Website (ICRP), which groups cancer research grants into six broad areas of scientific interest to allow for better comparison across funders.

Attachments

Mandatory:

- Letter of support from Lead Supervisor
- Project Support Documentation
- Gantt chart
- References
- Letters of support from collaborators
- If relevant - written quotes for requested single items of equipment costing over £10,000.

Strongly recommended if applicable:

- Letters of support from additional supervisors or mentors
- Letters of support from industry partners
- A letter confirming the relevant ethics approvals if available at the time of submission.

End

You have now completed the application form. Please save and close if you need to work on the application at a later date. To submit your application, please click 'validate' then 'save' and 'close'. If you are happy with the application form, then click 'submit'.

Once you have submitted your application, an automated email will be sent firstly to your Finance Officer. Once they have approved the application, a second email will be sent to your Head of Department. It is only upon your Head of Department's approval that the application is finally submitted to Blood Cancer UK. This must be completed by the deadline. You will receive an automated email containing an acknowledgement that we have received your application.

Get in touch

If you need assistance at any point during the application process, please do get in touch with the Blood Cancer UK Research Office at research@bloodcancer.org.uk and one of the team will be more than happy to assist you.