



ACED PATHWAY AWARD APPLICATION GUIDELINES

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1. ACED EARLY CAREER PATHWAY AWARD

ACED Early Career Pathway Awards act as a springboard for early-career researchers establishing independence by funding exceptional science and driving forward a transformational change in how and when cancer is detected through collaborative research. This postdoctoral award aims to help researchers expand their multidisciplinary skills, providing opportunities to obtain mentorship with eminent researchers in the field, and to obtain preliminary data for future independent fellowship applications. **Delivery of the research project and successful outcomes are of equal importance as the training and professional development of the candidate.** This is a career development award with a longer-term view to building the recipient's independent research career in early detection research.

Submit completed applications to the local ACED Programme Manager (Section 3: Useful Contacts) in Word format by the deadline date. Previous unsuccessful applicants to this scheme are entitled to reapply but you must clearly demonstrate in your application how it differs to your previous proposal in response to feedback received.

1.1. SUMMARY OF AWARD

Amount: This Award can be used to fund the Applicant's salary (commensurate with current career stage at the host ACED Member Centre) research costs, training and travel expenses (along with appropriate justifications) up to a maximum total of £210,000 / \$270,000. **Salary costs for additional research staff are not eligible for this award.**

Eligibility: Applicants must have completed their PhD by the application deadline date (or equivalent higher research degree, such as a professional doctorate) and the award must be hosted at one of the following institutions: The University of Cambridge, the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute, University College London or The University of Manchester. Before applying, **please check with the local ACED Programme Manager to ensure Co-Mentors are named Alliance Members at their respective institutions.** For UK Applicants, please note that this Award supports individuals requesting their full salary and cannot be considered in conjunction with other sources; this Award should be the Applicant's sole salary source during the award period. Please see Section 1.3 for more details around eligibility.

Scope: The proposal must be within the [scientific remit of the Alliance](#).

Award duration: 24-months full-time. For UK Applicants, Awards can be held part-time as per guidance in section 1.3.

Restrictions: Applicants are **strongly encouraged to develop their multidisciplinary research skills** through this Award, including in a complementary yet distinct research area to their own background, either through collaboration or relevant skills training. Spending time at a different ACED Centre is encouraged but not mandatory.

Applicants must have 2 Co-Mentors who are named Alliance Members based at different ACED Member Centres. **One of the Co-Mentors would be the host of the awardee during the majority of the tenure of the award.** It is highly encouraged that one of the Co-Mentors is in a complementary but distinct research area to widen the Applicant's skillset. Applicants are strongly advised to demonstrate throughout the application process that their chosen Co-Mentors are

fully supportive and will provide active support in training and career development throughout the duration of the award and ideally beyond.

It is strongly encouraged that Applicants consider including visiting placements at different ACED Member Centres (e.g. where one of their Co-Mentors would be based) to their host Centre as part of their professional development, where personal circumstances permit.

Please submit ONE application in a given round to the ACED Member Centre where the award will primarily be hosted. Please liaise with the potential Co-Mentors and the local ACED Programme Managers ahead of submission.

1.2. REMIT OF THE ACED PATHWAY AWARD

What is suitable for the ACED Pathway Award?

The goal of this award is to act as a stepping-stone to an application for an independent career development award or fellowship, by developing the Applicant's skillset and research profile. This would in turn support the Alliance's strategic and capacity-building aims in the development of the next cadre of multidisciplinary early detection researchers. Applications for an ACED Pathway Award will be accepted in any number (or combination) of research areas listed in the ACED scientific strategy as long as the application is relevant to the early detection of **primary** cancer and clearly articulates the cancer-related question you're focusing on.

This award provides 24 months of secured funding support for early career researchers in their pathway to independence in an environment of pioneering early detection research, with a strong focus on mentorship, training, and career support.

Early detection is a diverse research area, spanning from basic biology and technology innovation through to translational and population research. ACED supports work across this pipeline. This could include the development of novel tools, establishing new collaborations and/or original ways of utilising existing technologies and tools in an early detection setting. A clear hypothesis to address an unmet need in the field is essential.

1.3. ELIGIBILITY

Applicants

To be suitable to apply for an ACED Early Career Pathway Award, Applicants should:

- Be a scientist or healthcare worker based at an ACED Member Centre.
- Have completed their PhD examination (or equivalent higher research degree) by the application deadline date.
- Demonstrate the requisite range of skills and experience as outlined in the 'Develop Independence' career stage in [CRUK's Competency Framework](#). Applicants will be asked to demonstrate relevant skills and experience on the application form.
- **Not have previously held an award as named Principal Investigator that has provided costs to a value in excess of £210,000 GBP / \$250,000 USD for a single award** (multiple awards smaller in individual value to this amount are acceptable).

Applicants must have 2 Co-Mentors based at different ACED Member Centres. It is expected that one of the Co-Mentors is in a complementary but distinct research area to widen the Applicant's skillset. Collaboration between US and UK Member Centres is encouraged, but not mandatory.

Applicants must ensure that their host institution will provide sufficient space and access to resources to undertake the proposed research. This should be stated in the Letter of Support from the Co-Mentor based at the Host Institution at which the Applicant is applying to be based at.

The Applicant should be prepared to acknowledge and explain any notable career interruptions (e.g. leave of absence, part-time working, change in discipline, etc.) and will not be penalised with respect to advancement, outputs, or status.

For UK Applicants:

You can apply on a flexible working basis:

- ACED is supportive of Applicants applying on a part-time or flexible working basis as long as this fits with the needs of your ACED Member Centre and your request is approved by them;
- As a general rule for ACED Early Career Pathway Award Applicants, we expect at least 0.5 FTE or 80% of your working hours, whichever is greater, to be spent on academic research;
- If you would like to apply on a part-time basis, we advise you to contact your local ACED Programme Manager and the CRUK ACED Programme Manager (Section 3: Useful Contacts) before starting your application to discuss your proposed parameters for the award and how to include the part-time request in your application.

Please note that this Award supports individuals requesting their full salary and cannot be considered in conjunction with other sources. Clinical fellows and clinician scientists (MD PhD, MBBS/MBChB PhD) are eligible to apply, however **this Award must be the Applicant's sole salary source during the award period. The maximum amount that can be applied for is £210,000 GBP / \$270,000 USD.** Please note that Cambridge University Hospital staff are not eligible for ACED funding.

Host institution approval

To be eligible, the Applicant of the Award must be based at one of the following institutions during the tenure of the Award: The University of Cambridge, OHSU Knight Cancer Institute, University College London or The University of Manchester. Additional collaborators outside these institutions should be named in the 'Collaborative team' section of the application, clearly articulating their contribution to the project. **Please note that external collaborators are not eligible for ACED funding and cannot receive funds as part of this project.** External collaborators have an obligation to share data generated using ACED funding with researchers across the ACED Centres; if you are including external collaborators in your application, please discuss this in the first instance with your local ACED Programme Manager.

The finances being requested for your application **MUST** be approved by the Institution hosting the award prior to submission. Please contact your local ACED Programme Manager (Section 3: Useful contacts) for information on required review and approval of finances at the

chosen host institution. Your proposal should also comply with all appropriate local regulatory, ethical and research governance procedures. **Please be aware that, depending on the Institution, financial approval processes can take up to 10 – 15 working days so must be submitted for approval in advance of the application deadline.**

1.4. WHAT IS FUNDED?

ACED Pathway Awards offer 24 months of funding for the Applicant's salary and associated costs (including lab consumables, data storage/exchange costs, facility access charges etc.) up to a maximum of £210,000 / \$270,000. This award must be the sole source of the applicant's salary at the Institution they are undertaking the award. In addition, the research expenses may also be used for training and the associated costs of travel and organisation of meetings between collaborators named on the application. Unless required for the purpose of carrying out the research project, travel costs for conferences, collaborative meetings etc must not exceed £10,000 GBP / \$12,500 USD per year. **Appropriate justification would be expected as part of the application and any inadmissible or excessive costs would be deducted if the application is successful.**

In general, funds requested from both US and UK Applicants should be directed towards research and training costs. Salary costs for research staff in addition to the Principal Applicant are not eligible for this award.

Support environment

It is expected that those in recipient of the award would be provided with tailored career development opportunities by their Co-Mentors, which should be clearly outlined in their supporting letters.

1.5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Alliance Executive Board will judge your proposal on the following criteria, bearing in mind the training-oriented focus of this award **delivery of the research project and successful outcomes are of equal importance as the training and professional development of the candidate:**

- **Quality and emerging track record of candidate** in the field of early detection, as demonstrated by key achievements, all research outputs (e.g. preprints, training, contribution to consortia, patents, and sharing of key datasets, software, novel assays and reagents in addition to research publications), existing scientific network and engagement.
- **Quality and originality of the proposed research project** with potential longer-term impact in the early detection field. The candidate should have ownership of the project, which should have the capability to lead to further independent funding applications beyond this award.
- **Quality of the training plans** that would expand the candidate's technical and professional skillsets necessary to fill any gaps in their training required to deliver the research project, ideally to develop an area of scientific expertise complementary to their existing knowledge. Panel members are asked to assess the skills and experience

each applicant has stated they already have and their professional development plan during the tenure of the award.

- **Candidate's clear demonstrable career plans** in developing independence in the early detection field, with clearly defined path for immediate career plans or examples of funding schemes to apply for based on outputs from this award.
- **Support provided by Co-Mentors**, why they were selected by the candidate and how their specific expertise will support the proposed research project. There should be demonstrable evidence of strong commitment from both co-mentors for regular interaction and training to support the candidate's development throughout the award and potentially beyond.

Additionally, as part of ACED, CRUK and all UK ACED Member Centre Institutions are **DORA** ([San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#)) signatories. As such, ACED is aligned with DORA principles through our commitment to assess the quality and impact of scientific research through means other than journal impact factors. This means that our reviewers will:

- Consider the value and impact of all research outputs in addition to research publications (e.g., preprints, training delivered, contribution to consortia, community outreach, patents, key datasets, software, novel assays and reagents etc.).
- Recognise that the **content of a scientific paper** and its influence in the field **holds more significance** than publication metrics or where it was published.

2. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

2.1 PROCESS OVERVIEW

ACED Early Career Pathway Award applications involve the following steps:

1. Contact ACED@cancer.org.uk before the 'intent to submit' deadline stated in the advert. US applicants will receive a copy of the application form; UK applicants will receive a link to start their application on Flexi-Grant®. For more information on submitting your applicant via Flexi-Grant®, please see Section 3.
2. Applications will be sent for expert peer review, then triaged and interviewed by a panel of relevant scientific experts chaired by the ACED Director of Training.
3. The Alliance Executive Board will review and make the final funding decision.
4. Applicants will be informed of the outcome and final funding decision.



2.2 SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

When completing Section 3 of the application template, please refer to [CRUK's Competency Framework](#) and specify the 'Develop independence' career stage which outlines the range of skills and experience and the types of examples that ACED might expect for an Early Career Pathway Award.

Please use Section 3 of the application template to provide details on the following aspects (no more than 6 pages in total for this section):

- Your research outputs and impact (maximum length 1 page), highlighting 3-5 key achievements relevant to the application;
- Your future research ambitions and your plans for the duration this award (maximum length 1 page);
- Your specific plans to develop personal and scientific skills and knowledge to drive the development of stated research;
- Your plans to develop your multidisciplinary skills in a complementary yet distinct research area to your own, if applicable;
- Your plans to utilise the resources of ACED to develop stated career plans;
- Brief details on notable career interruptions if applicable (e.g. leave of absence, part-time work, change in discipline, etc.), which will be considered and not penalised for when reviewing your track record, outputs and advancement.

2.3 COLLABORATIVE TEAM

Please use Section 4 of the application template to provide details on the following aspects (no more than 2 pages in total for this section):

- Your current research network and highlight how this network contributes to you achieving your own research goals;
- The collaborations you intend to develop during this award and how they will support your research and professional development, including how your communication, engagement, and multidisciplinary skills in early detection research will be developed.
- How the proposed mentorship provided by both Co-Mentors would contribute to the Applicant's training and development.

2.4 RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Following your intent to submit, please use the template provided to complete your research proposal. Section 5.2 of the application template should not exceed eight standard pages using Arial 10-point font, including figures. References are not included as part of the page restriction. In this section, you should aim to address the content outlined in the table below.

In your research proposal please include:

- How the proposal will help establish your research in the early detection field;

- The vision for your career development and how your proposal would support this;
- The novelty of your idea;
- The multidisciplinary nature of your research proposal and how you will develop multidisciplinary skills during the course of the award;
- The support that would be provided by the Co-Mentors in your career development;
- How would this award support your training, leading to the development of novel high-risk research proposals for independent fellowship applications;
- The strength of your wider collaborative team (beyond the Co-Mentors);
- The downstream translational potential of your idea;
- The clinical need addressed by your idea;
- The contribution to early detection research should the idea be a success;
- Outline any examples of similar and/or competing approaches globally, for the proposed research (e.g. different test to determine the same outcome, different cohorts, etc.);
- If there are commercial collaborators, outline the intellectual engagement and financial investment contributed by the commercial entities, and how this is critical to the proposed research.

Contents of the research proposal

<p>HYPOTHESIS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly describe the hypothesis for your proposed research plans. • Briefly describe the scientific need for your proposed work – why is it necessary to test this hypothesis? If your proposal is for discovery research, this is an opportunity to provide context around the clinical need and how your results could lead to impact for patients. • Describe the significance of the results you plan to obtain. In particular, the relevance of your expected results to detection of cancer – for example, any future clinical applications or impact on policy and practice.
<p>BACKGROUND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarise your current and other published work relating to your research proposal, including the major achievements of your collaborative team over the last 5 years. You might refer to any relevant preprints or datasets in a citable format (e.g. including a unique Digital Object Identifier). • Describe how this knowledge and experience can be integrated to address the goals and hypothesis of the proposed research.

<p>RESEARCH PLAN</p>	<p>We suggest you divide your research plan into objectives. For each objective state:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research question. • Experimental methods, techniques and analyses that you'll use to test your hypothesis. Refer to your own published work where you've used these methods before or indicate the availability of appropriate expertise. Justify the appropriateness of your experimental design including sample size calculations as appropriate. • Any available unpublished research findings or methodologies supporting your research proposal (please include these in the text, not as an appendix). • Explain clearly how you will address the early detection challenge you have identified. Please provide enough information on how you plan to develop your ideas and build a platform for future research, highlighting the key milestones necessary to achieve this. • Briefly describe what the major achievements of your research will be if successful. Clearly articulate how these outputs could be taken forward along the translational pathway towards earlier detection of cancer in patients. • You also have an opportunity in this section to describe how you plan to involve patients and the public in your research, if relevant.
<p>RESEARCH CAREER PLAN</p>	<p>Please provide information on how this award will support your plans to develop your career in early detection research through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific training, including how multidisciplinary skills will be developed • Professional and personal development • Support provided by the Co-Mentors, including a mentorship plan demonstrating how Co-Mentors will provide active career development support throughout the duration of the award • Potential independent fellowship funding routes
<p>COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT</p>	<p>Please provide information on the composition of the wider collaborative research environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual time contributions of those working on the award where possible, stating briefly the added value of the collaboration compared to each researcher working independently. • Address how the Alliance environment is critical in supporting the potential of the proposed research and how this Alliance partnership will enable the proposed research compared to Alliance Member Centres conducting the research independently.
<p>TIMESCALE AND POTENTIAL PROBLEMS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a table to indicate milestones and timescales for each part of the plan. • List potential logistic or scientific problems and suggest solutions or alternative plans.
<p>REFERENCES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give full details of any references, including authors, publication year, title and journal name, volume, page numbers. We won't accept shortened references. • Number your references in the order in which they appear in the text, and list them in the Vancouver style (as outlined by the US National Library of Medicine).

2.5 NOMINATED REVIEWERS

ACED uses national and international peer reviewers to assist in assessing the quality of research applications. It is recognised that applicants may wish to provide input into the review process, but ACED is under no obligation to take up applicants' suggestions and will not enter into discussion with applicants on matters relating to reviewers.

Please list reviewers who would be qualified to assess your application critically. You should not nominate individuals with whom you have a close collaboration or whom you have published in the last 3 years. For more details on our Conflict of Interest Policy, please see [here](#). You can also nominate up to two referees to exclude from the review process, but please justify why. The final selection of expert reviewers will be decided by ACED.

2.6 THE USE OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS

Applicants must:

- Support the highest levels of research integrity.
- Ensure generative AI tools are used in accordance with relevant legal and ethical standards, including data privacy where those standards exist or as they develop.
- Use generative AI tools responsibly to ensure the originality, validity, reliability and integrity of outputs created or modified by generative AI tools. This includes ensuring funding applications contain accurate information and do not contain false or misleading information.
- Correctly and explicitly attribute outputs from generative AI tools in funding applications or research by listing the generative AI source, where practicable, naming the specific model/s used and software, and specifying how content was generated (such as listing the prompt used).
- Adhere to Host Institution policies on the use of generative AI tools, particularly those concerning plagiarism and fabrication.

2.7 ADDITIONAL RESEARCH INFORMATION

Please use the provided template to complete the following sections.

Additional information for all proposals

JUSTIFICATION FOR SUPPORT REQUESTED	Please complete these sections according to the following guidelines. Costs should be divided and reported separately for each UK and US Member Centre(s) in the local currency of the country in which they are incurred in (e.g. GBP (£) for UK and USD (\$) for US).				
	Please provide justification on how the research, travel and training expenses would be utilised during the duration of this award.				
	Description	Additional Information	Costs Year 1	Costs Year 2	Costs Year 3

Data storage (Cambridge)	Storing data from RNAseq and DNaseq data and respective public datasets for subsequent analysis	£0	£3200	£0	Cambridge - £3200
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STATISTICAL DESIGN AND ANALYSIS PLAN

For each research question as appropriate:

- Describe the statistical analysis used;
- Name the variables and describe the values;
- State the numbers of samples you plan to include in each analysis, describing what you can achieve with this number of samples;
- Include (where appropriate) the associated level of statistical power;
- Suggest any potential limitations;
- Clarify other relevant details (e.g. numbers of events in clinical outcomes, length of follow-up for clinical outcomes).

CELL LINES

Only complete if applicable

Please provide details of any cell lines you will use in your research. These should include:

- Details of how you will maintain good cell culture practices throughout your award.
- If new cell lines will be introduced to your lab, please give the source will be authenticated when they enter your lab.
- If new cell lines will be generated, please tell us how these will be made available for others to use.
- Justification for the use of any cell lines that have been misidentified (e.g. Chang liver cells).

You can request funding (under running expenses) to support cell line authentication (e.g. screening for contamination by mycoplasma, STR profiling for human cell lines or DNA fingerprinting for non-human cells). You'll need to validate your cell lines according to the [Guidelines for the use of cell lines in biomedical research](https://doi.org/10.1038/bjc.2014.166) (doi:10.1038/bjc.2014.166), which should be referenced in any publications resulting from the award.

ANIMAL STUDIES

Only complete if applicable

You should complete this section if you are proposing to use animals in your research. You should ensure you are familiar with the relevant [NC3Rs guidelines](#), in particular the [Responsibility in the Use of Animals in Bioscience Research](#) document, the [ARRIVE Guidelines](#), and the [NC3Rs Guidelines: Primate Accommodation, Care and Use](#). When completing this section, you should describe how your proposed research adheres to the expectations set out in these guidelines.

Animal Costs:

- Please include a full breakdown of the purchase costs and husbandry costs (e.g. per mouse per week).

- Please list animal purchase, maintenance and experimental costs separately.

Justification of proposed animal studies

Please briefly justify the use of animals by outlining:

- Why animal research is necessary for your award and details of all species you propose to use;
- Why the species/model you have chosen is the most appropriate physiological model to use for the research objective(s);
- If you are developing any new models, why this is necessary and how you will ensure that these will be disseminated to the research community more broadly;
- The efforts you will take to minimise animal usage.

For your critical experiments, please provide an outline of your experimental design and power calculations. Where details of specific experiments are not known, you may provide an illustrative example. This should include:

- An overview of the experimental approach summarising; primary and secondary experimental outcomes, number of experimental and control groups, the number of experimental units in each experimental group, the total number of experimental units to be measured and the number of times each unit will be measured, number of independent replications of each experiment and how you plan to minimise experimental bias (e.g. randomisation and blinding) or an explanation of why this would not be appropriate.
- An explanation of how effect sizes have been calculated and a justification of their biological relevance
- The power calculations used to determine your sample size (or a principled explanation of an alternative basis for calculations, justifying why you haven't used statistical calculations). Explanations based solely in terms of 'usual practice' or previously published data will not be considered adequate.
- Details of breeding strategies that will be implemented (if applicable).
- A brief description of your planned statistical analyses in relation to the sample size, and list any statistical advice available.
- You may present this in the form of a table or diagram, if appropriate.

Please note that the NC3Rs website includes a number of useful [experimental design resources](#), including the Experimental Design Assistant (EDA), a free online tool to help optimise experimental design. The EDA can be used to create a visual map of your planned experiments (or a few of them) that may be useful in discussions with your team and statistical advisors. If you use the EDA, you are encouraged to submit the EDA report as a PDF upload.

Please note that applications proposing research on specially protected species (cats, dogs, equines or non-human primates) or pigs must undergo an additional independent peer review by the NC3Rs; contact the office as soon as possible (and before the application deadline date) if this is applicable to your proposal.

For any animal studies to be performed outside of the UK, we also require a letter to be included with your completed application from the relevant Applicant leading this work to confirm that the research proposed will adhere to all relevant local regulatory systems, and also that the welfare standards will be consistent with UK standards.

2.6 ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Letter(s) of Support: You must include a letter of support from your Co-Mentors as part of your application, clearly demonstrating their commitment to actively support the Applicant throughout the duration of the award and ideally beyond. The Co-Mentor based at the same institution as the Applicant should confirm there is sufficient space and access to resources. Submit any Letters of Support in PDF format, signed, dated and on headed paper alongside your completed application.

2.7 ETHICAL APPROVAL

If you plan to involve patient tissue or patient information in your research, you'll need to get ethical approval. You do not need ethical approval for Patient Involvement activities, however we do expect best practice to be followed (resource: NIHR National Standards on Patient Involvement in Research). It's **your** and **your Host Institution's responsibility** to make sure you comply with all legal requirements and ethics approval. We understand that you'll generally need to confirm funding arrangements before you can get ethical approval. Therefore, we can make you a provisional offer of funding, but we may not release any money to you until you've sent us written confirmation of ethical approval. Please bear this in mind when you propose a start date for your award. If you need any other regulatory approval, we may also need written confirmation before we release funding. We will review this on a case-by-case basis).

2.8 PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

While we do not mandate inclusion of specific involvement activities as part of your research, if your proposal involves studies utilising patients and the public, their samples or data, we would highly encourage you to include patient and public involvement plans if they can add value to your research proposal.

This could include, but is not limited to, involvement in the development of research questions, planning/design of research, patient recruitment, monitoring progress, evaluation and/or dissemination of research findings. This could also include offering advice as members of a project steering group, commenting on or developing research materials.

You may like to address the following prompt questions when writing about your PPI plans in your application. You are not required to follow this format.

- What is the proposed PPI plan? What is the rationale for the plan?
- How many people are you aiming to involve through the activities set out in your plan? What is their role? How will you recruit them?
- How will you support those who you involve in your research?
- What is the proposed budget required for your PPI plan?

Resources to help you:

You are strongly encouraged to engage with the ACED Patient and Public/Advocacy panel at the earliest stages of preparing your application. Please contact ACED@cancer.org.uk for details.

CRUK also provides additional details and guidance on how to implement patient and public involvement (PPI) plans, including budgeting and cost guidance in the [PPI toolkit for researchers on our website](#). To request login details to access the toolkit, or for any additional questions regarding patient involvement, please email involvement@cancer.org.uk.

[INVOLVE](#): provides briefing notes on how to involve patients at each stage of the research cycle

[NIHR Research Design Service](#): can offer application specific support and advice on appropriate public and patient involvement methods.

[People in Research](#): can be used to advertise involvement opportunities and recruit people.

[NCRI Consumer Liaison Forum](#): Many forum members also act as patient representatives in their local area or for other national bodies such as the Department of Health or Public Health England.

3. COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION IN FLEXI-GRANT® (UK ONLY)

You will need to submit your application online using our Grants Management System, Flexi-Grant® via <https://cancerresearchuk.flexigrant.com/>

As part of your submission, we require the following sections to be completed:

3.1 CONTACT DETAILS

You will be required to complete the contact details on your profile. Please ensure these details are kept up to date, so that we may contact you during the application process if necessary.

Email address is your username on this system.

3.2 ONLINE APPLICANT CV

You will need to complete an online CV as part of your Flexi-Grant® profile. Please ensure that this is kept updated, as it will be automatically included in any submission that you make through Flexi-Grant®. Please ensure your CV highlights your academic and research experience, including degree class, academic supervisors, and any grants or prizes awarded. Please also include a list of **all** your publications and research outputs. You may also refer to any relevant preprints to support your proposal.

For all publications, please include full author list (where this is unmanageable, for example for large consortium papers, it is permitted to list the first 12 authors followed by 'et al.' provided you denote your place in the author list, e.g. [Bloggs J, 15th of 65 authors]). Please also include the publication year, title and journal name, volume, and either page numbers or DOI. Please note ORCID does not pull through the list of authors, these should be entered manually if using ORCID to generate your publication list.

You will also be required to complete a 'Career History' Section as part of the application form, that will provide an opportunity to detail all research positions held since completion of your PhD (if applicable). Please ensure that all Group Leaders are given. When adding supervisor/Group Leader names, please include their title (e.g. Dr, Professor) and their institution.

3.3 DIVERSITY MONITORING

Cancer Research UK is committed to being an inclusive funder and to ensuring the researchers we attract, support, and retain are as diverse as possible. At the start of your application, you will be asked a few questions that will help us to monitor this.

The Lead Applicant should complete the information in this section. We encourage you to complete the form in full, so we receive enough information for data analysis. You have the option to select 'Prefer not to say' in your answers. This information will not form any part of the decision-making processes and will not be used for any purpose other than analysis of our funding activities and sector-wide trends. The form outlines who we may share anonymised, aggregated data with. Answers are treated confidentially and will be stored securely in accordance with UK law and CRUK's [Privacy Policy](#).

3.4 ADDING PARTICIPANTS TO SUPPORT YOUR APPLICATION

The below roles are not members of your Research Team and are not defined as co-applicants. When inviting external supporting roles to contribute to your application you are able to provide instructional content to your participant. In your message, you should make it clear what role each participant will have in your application.

These individual roles may be given specific editing access to certain pages of your application or will require you to upload supporting documents on their behalf. The action required is outlined in the table below.

<p>APPLICATION SUPPORT</p> <p>Someone who'll give you (the Lead Applicant) administrative support</p>	<p>OPTIONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an optional role. Administrative Support Contacts can be invited to assist with the Costs and AMRC sections of your application. • Request your Administrative Support's contribution to your application by clicking on the 'Invite' button located in the 'Participants Tab' on the Summary page. • The designated individual will be invited to log onto Flexi-Grant®.
<p>CO-MENTORS</p> <p>A senior academic who'll provide you with independent support and advice for the duration of your award</p>	<p>REQUIRED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will need to upload signed letters of support from your Co-Mentors in the Supporting Information (Section 4) of your application. • You must have 2 Co-Mentors who are named Alliance Members based at different ACED Member Centres. One of the Co-Mentors would be the host of the awardee during the majority of the tenure of the award.

3.5 SECTION 1: RESEARCH ABSTRACT

The Research Abstract provides a succinct summary of the proposal and may be used by potential reviewers to determine whether or not to review the application. Please include enough information to provide clarity for the expert reviewers.

You also have the option to provide a different Published Research Abstract, which may be placed on Cancer Research UK's website if your application is successful. For this reason, avoid the unnecessary inclusion of commercially sensitive or confidential information in your publishable abstract. Please note that your Research Abstract and Published Research Abstract **do not have to be different** if you are not including any sensitive or confidential information in your Research Abstract.

The Lay Abstract provides a summary of your research proposal that has been written for members of the public rather than researchers or professionals. **You are strongly encouraged to engage with the ACED Patient and Public/Advocacy Panel as early as possible in the preparation of your application. Please contact us at ACED@cancer.org.uk for further details.**

Please ensure you copy and paste your Publishable Research and Lay Abstracts from Section 5.1 of your Research Proposal into Flexi-Grant® to ensure the submissions are the same.

3.6 SECTION 4: SUPPORTING INFORMATION

You will need to upload the following documents to Flexi-Grant® as part of your Pathway Award application:

- Research proposal (Section 3)
- Co-Mentors Letters of Support (Section 4)
- Declaration of potential competing interests form (Section 4)

Declaration of potential competing interests form

Using the template provided on Flexi-Grant, please disclose any potential competing interests or confirm that there are none.

3.7 SECTION 5: COSTS

In this section, please supply the costs that you're requesting from us as part of your award. Please refer to the table below which gives information about how to fill in the costs section, and refer to CRUK's [costs guidance](#).

Please add all and only the costs you're requesting from us under the relevant headings and justify them in the 'Justification for Support Requested' (Section 8) of your research proposal.

EQUIPMENT	<p>Under this heading, please list the costs for all equipment you'd like to request on your award.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please list all your requested equipment for the duration of the award in Year 1. • Any equipment costs <£5,000 should be included as a running expense. <p><i>Please read CRUK's costs guidance for information about eligible equipment costs and justify your costs in the 'Justification for Support Requested' (Section 8) of your research proposal.</i></p>
SALARY AND STAFF POSTS	<p>Please read CRUK's policy relating to funding the salaries of Investigators.</p> <p>Please provide details of your salary costings, ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The salary cost for YEAR ONE is correct at the time that the Award is due to begin. Please do not apply indexation to the salary costs over the subsequent years of the award. Once we have established the amount of the Grant to be paid in the first year, a fixed indexation rate, determined by CRUK in its sole discretion, will be applied to all subsequent years of the award. • The appropriate Host Institution pay scale is utilised (and relevant to the actual starting date of the fellowship). • Details of Grade/Spine Point and % FTE (if appropriate) are provided in the 'Justification for Support Requested' (Section 8) of your research proposal. <p>Please note that CRUK's virement policy allows for any shortfall in salary to be met from unspent running expenses.</p> <p>Salary costs for research staff in addition to the Applicant are not eligible for this Award.</p>
RUNNING EXPENSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please list all general running expenses for your proposed research. Where possible, please group all costs associated with a particular item across all work packages (rather than listing individual items for each work package). For example, microscopy costs; massively-parallel sequencing costs, etc. • Please list all animal costs under 'animal-related costs', with animal purchase, animal maintenance and experimental animal costs under separate subheadings. Please fully justify any animal research in your research proposal. <p><i>Please read CRUK's costs guidance for information about eligible running expenses costs, and justify your costs in the 'Justification for Support Requested' (Section 8) of your research proposal.</i></p>

Please note that the CRUK Office will apply indexation to your application costs according to our policy. In addition, any ineligible costs will be removed – the CRUK Office will contact you in this instance. **As a result, the final costs awarded through an official Grant Award Letter may differ from those of the original costs requested.**

3.8 SECTION 6: AMRC FULL ECONOMIC COST INFORMATION

Please use this section to input the total cost of your proposed research programme. This information won't be included in your final application. **Please consult with your institutional research finance office (or equivalent) prior to completing this section of the application.**

- Full Economics Cost - please enter the total cost of your proposed research
- Charity Contribution - please enter the total amount you're requesting from CRUK

Full economic costing information

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), CRUK monitors the full economic costs (fECs) of the research we support. Unlike some other funding bodies, AMRC charities don't fund the fECs, or a proportion of these. Please provide figures including the standard indexation rate used by your institution to calculate fECs. **Only universities that are using TRAC costing methodology should enter actual values in the form.**

Acceptance of a grant, if awarded, will imply that the institution is prepared to meet the full economic costs from its own sources of funding.

Monitoring the full economic costs of charity-funded research in UK HEIs

Background: AMRC issued updated guidance to its members and to universities regarding its position on changes to costing research applications and the move to a system of estimating fECs in 2004. AMRC member charities do not fund the indirect costs on grants awarded to UK universities as a matter of principle. The move to funding on a percentage basis by other types of funders, such as the research councils, is unlikely to be adopted by the charity sector in the foreseeable future; the reasons for this decision are set out in AMRC's position statement and guidance document.

Following the 2004 Spending Review, the Government recognised the importance of charity funding in universities and announced that a separate stream of funding, administered by HEFCE to English universities, would be introduced from 2006/07 to provide additional support for charitable research. The allocation of the Charity Research Support Fund (CRSF) in England will be based on the amount of income from eligible charities; most AMRC member charities will be eligible for the CRSF. AMRC member charities have agreed that it would be helpful to collect information about the full costs of the research they support, in order to develop a better understanding of the charity contribution, inform future discussions about the CRSF and to assess future sustainability.

Applicants and host institutions should note that the data sought is for monitoring purposes only and will not form part of the peer review or decision-making process that AMRC members use.

Elements of the new cost headings are:

Directly Incurred Costs: these include the direct costs of research and it's assumed these are included in the funds for which you re applying to CRUK for. They may include:

- Staff (e.g. research assistant salaries)
- Consumables and other costs directly attributable to the project
- Equipment
- Travel and subsistence

Directly Allocated Costs: these are shared costs, based on estimates and don't represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis. Previously, these costs came under the 'indirect costs' heading but the following items will now be calculated separately:

Investigators: the time spent by the Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators will be calculated and costed. (Cancer Research UK is unlikely to fund these costs).

Estates: the way these are calculated may vary between institutions. Different categories of space will be costed differently, for example laboratory space will be different to office-based costs. (Cancer Research UK is unlikely to fund these costs).

Other Directly Allocated: these include the costs of shared resources, such as staff and equipment. (Cancer Research UK is unlikely to fund these costs).

Indirect Costs: these costs are necessary for underpinning research but cannot be allocated to individual projects, and cover computing and information support, central services, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs. Indirect costs will be calculated separately by each HEI, according to TRAC methodology. (Cancer Research UK is unlikely to fund these costs).

For further information regarding the AMRC's position on funding universities, please refer to the web pages at: <http://www.amrc.org>

3.9 SECTION 7: TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Please read and comply with the [Cancer Research UK Grant Conditions](#). You must read and agree to the CRUK terms and conditions outlined in this section before submitting your application.

3.10 SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION FOR HOST APPROVAL

Once you have completed each section of your application, each section should appear as 'Complete' and change to a green colour. **When all sections are 'Complete' in both the Application tab and the Participants tab, the 'Submit for Approval' button will appear at the bottom of the Summary Page.**

When you press 'Submit Application' your application will be sent to your Host Institution for approval. **Please allow sufficient time for this process, as CRUK do not receive your application until it has been approved.**

Please note that **you will not have an option to submit your application if any section remains 'Incomplete' or 'Active', as the 'Submit for Approval' button will not appear.**

In this instance, it may be that all sections in the Application tab are complete and so your overall task looks 100% complete, however there may be an outstanding action within the Participants tab. If this is the case, you'll need to contact the invited participant to ask that they press 'Finish Contribution' on their role, so that it finalises their input. Alternatively, if you invited a participant in error, you can 'Revoke' the invitation – this will cancel their request and will no longer prevent you from being able to submit your application for approval.

4. USEFUL CONTACTS

Once you have read these guidelines, please contact ACED@cancer.org.uk if you have any questions or need more information.

	Name	Role	Contact Information
Cancer Research UK	Karolin Kroese	ACED Programme Manager	ACED@cancer.org.uk
Cambridge	Bridget Bannerman	Programme Manager	bpc28@cam.ac.uk
University College London	Daniel Kelberman	Programme Manager	d.kelberman@ucl.ac.uk
OHSU	Zach Miller	Programme Manager	millerz@ohsu.edu
Manchester	Martin Bone	Programme Manager	martin.bone@manchester.ac.uk