



**PROSTATE
CANCER UK**

Research Innovation Awards: Guidance Notes 2019/20

Research Strategy

Prostate Cancer UK has an ambitious 10 year Research Strategy, setting out how we will invest in the most innovative research to create a step change in our knowledge of prostate cancer. We have to be smarter in how we detect and treat prostate cancer at every stage, and we need to develop personalised approaches for every man to achieve the best outcome. Ultimately, we want to see fewer men dying from prostate cancer!

We have identified three key areas where there are substantive gaps in our knowledge or expertise and we would welcome innovative research proposals targeted towards:

- **Better Diagnosis**
(including risk stratification & disease prognosis)
- **Better Treatment**
(for both localised & advanced disease, including improved prediction of which treatment(s) will be effective for an individual)
- **Prevention**

We strongly advise that you carefully read through our [Research Strategy](#) for further details on these priority areas before applying.

Research Innovation Awards – Eligibility

All proposals must align with our research strategy (see above) and must clearly demonstrate the innovative nature of the research and how it will lead to improved health and well-being of men affected by, or at high risk of, prostate cancer.

The application process and assessment of your proposal will reflect our increased focus on innovation and potential impact and you should make every effort to detail how your proposal meets those criteria.

This call is for bold, innovative research that has the real potential to impact the way prostate cancer is diagnosed, treated or even prevented. As such, we want to see novel game changing research!

There are no financial restrictions as to what you can request – you should simply apply for what you need. However, please note that value for money will be a consideration in making final funding decisions, and so we would advise applicants to ensure that the amount they are requesting is a realistic reflection of what is needed. As a gauge, the overall budget for Research Innovation Awards last year was approximately £3 million. If you have any concerns that your proposal could consume a substantial proportion of the budget for this scheme, then please speak with the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK in advance of submitting your application to discuss eligibility.

We would expect projects to be between 1 to 5 years in duration; however again you should apply for however long you need. Projects that are shorter or longer than 1-5 years are still eligible; however, you should discuss this further with the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK before applying.

This scheme will fund both fundamental and clinical research (and all stages in between); however, research at all stages will be expected to have a focus on eventual benefit to men. Applicants will be expected to set out a logical and realistic path of work that will need to happen at the end of the award in order to deliver that benefit to men.

We will also consider applications that bring innovative ideas from other cancer types and other diseases to be tested or translated for prostate cancer and we encourage applicants to build teams that include experts from other disciplines and other countries where that will improve the project.

To apply to this call, the following criteria must also be met:

- Awards are available to established researchers working within a recognised academic or clinical institution in the UK (including N. Ireland). Applicants should have a strong track record in their field, and we welcome proposals from academics not currently working on prostate cancer (however, in such cases an expert from the prostate cancer research community should be named as a Co-Applicant on the proposal).
- Lead Applicants will normally hold tenured or tenure-track academic appointments, or for clinical applicants, they should hold an honorary academic contract at a recognised academic institution.
- Lecturers on fixed term contracts or post-doctoral researchers holding competitively-awarded external fellowships can be Lead Applicants, as long as their contract extends at least 6 months beyond the duration of the project **or** the host institution has undertaken to award a permanent position at the end of the fixed term.
- Lead Applicants who are already in receipt of funding from Prostate Cancer UK are still eligible to apply to this scheme. Applicants should however make a clear case as to why they are the most appropriate person to lead the project and provide reassurance that they will have sufficient time to oversee the delivery of the project. We will check whether the proposed time commitments towards the project would be feasible (for example, a 0.5 FTE commitment from someone already committing 1.0 FTE on an existing grant would clearly not be feasible).

- Lead Applicants must have a minimum of 5 years' post-doctoral experience. Lead Applicants with between 5 and 10 years' post-doctoral experience must have a senior academic (usually the research group head) named on the proposal as a Joint Lead Applicant or Co-Applicant.

We are keen to grow good post-doctoral researchers towards independence, and we recognise that experienced post-doctoral researchers who have the expertise and experience required to lead a research project may not yet have their salary met by core institutional or fellowship funding. Therefore, it is permissible for a Lead Applicant with between 5 and 10 years' post-doctoral experience to include their salary within the application budget. In this instance, they must truly be leading the research, and a detailed justification must be provided explaining how the salary support, and the research funding applied for, will support the individual in their career progression by achieving independence by the end of the project. A statement should also be provided by an appropriate authority at the host institution (if shortlisted to the Second Stage) detailing how the individual will be supported by the institute at the end of the project (if awarded).

We will not be prepared to meet the salary of a post-doctoral Lead Applicant more than once and we would expect a post-doctoral Lead Applicants to spend a minimum of 80%FTE on the funded project. Any subsequent successful fellowship applications should result in their salary being removed from this grant at the point that the fellowship is taken up.

- Projects can include a period of research outside the UK where there is a Co-Applicant or Collaborator based overseas. However, research must be conducted predominantly in the UK and Prostate Cancer UK will not make any direct payments to non-UK institutions or pay invoices in any currency other than UK pounds.
- Funds requested in your proposal must be in accordance with our [Finance Eligibility Guidelines](#).

Please note that we will NOT accept applications that:

- Do not fit our Research Strategy
- Are intended solely or primarily to purchase substantial equipment and/or infrastructure
- Are led and submitted by researchers based entirely or primarily outside the UK
- Are submitted by commercial organisations
- Are incomplete or have been completed incorrectly

If you are unsure about the eligibility of your proposal, or if you have any queries about completing the application form, you must contact the Research Team **in advance** of the submission deadline and **no later than Friday 16 August 2019** in order for you to submit by the deadline of **noon on Monday 9 September 2019** (email: research@prostatecanceruk.org).

Once the deadline has passed, you will no longer be able to submit your proposal and there will be no opportunity to debate individual circumstances. Applications which are incomplete, which do not meet the requirements detailed above and which are deemed to be outside of our [research strategy](#) will be rejected without being sent for further review.

Assessment Process

The application process will consist of 2 phases, an initial Expression of Interest (EOI) followed by a more detailed Second Stage for the shortlisted proposals.

The submission deadline for EOI applications is **12pm (noon) on Monday 9 September 2019**.

Applications received by the above deadline will first be validated by the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK to eliminate those which do not meet the basic eligibility criteria and remit of this call (stipulated above). The remaining applications will then be considered by our Research Advisory Committee, who shall decide which proposals should be shortlisted to the Second Stage. Any applicants not shortlisted to the Second Stage will be notified at this point.

Shortlisted applicants will be issued with a Second Stage application form via our on-line system the **week commencing 28 October 2019**. Feedback will follow shortly afterwards and applicants must submit their Second Stage application form by **12pm (noon) on Monday 13 January 2020**.

All Second Stage applications will be peer reviewed by at least three independent referees in accordance with the guidelines set out by the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC).

After external peer review, Second Stage applicants will be offered the opportunity to respond to the referees' comments. The referees' comments shall be made available to applicants in a non-identifiable format via the online system the **week commencing 2 March 2020**, and responses must be submitted by **12pm (noon) on Monday 16 March 2020**. Further information about responding to the referees' comments will be provided to applicants at the appropriate time.

Applications will then be assessed by our Research Advisory Committee in April 2020. Clinical applications will also be assessed by our Patient and Public Involvement Representatives (a lay review panel consisting of people affected by prostate cancer). Once the final funding decisions have been confirmed applicants will be informed of the outcome by email **by the end of May 2020**.

We recognise that the outcome of your application is important to you and your staff and we will inform you of the outcome as soon as possible. However, we would like to remind applicants that contacting the Research Team during this time will not speed up the process. We appreciate your patience.

Once notified of our intention to award, we will begin the contracting process immediately (subject to any conditions of award). If applicable, the budgets for successful applicants will be checked to ensure that costs associated with the research have been correctly attributed (in accordance with the [Department of Health's cost attribution guidelines – AcoRD](#)). It is our expectation that contracting should be completed within one month of notification of award (or once any conditions of award have been addressed and/or any financial assessment completed). In any instance, successful projects should commence within six months of completion of contracting.

Successful applicants must not disclose any details of their proposal publicly until contracting has completed and a communication strategy has been agreed upon with Prostate Cancer UK.

Making your application

Applications MUST be made by the Principal Investigator and using our online [Grant Management System](#).

You must fill out **all sections of the application form** (notes below) and any Joint-Lead Applicant (if applicable) and all Co-Applicants must confirm their involvement in the proposal **and** must also approve the application before it can be submitted. Any Collaborators on the proposal are not required to complete an online declaration at this stage.

Expressions of Interest do not require approval from Heads of Department or Finance Officers. This will be required if your application is shortlisted to the Second Stage.

The Expression of Interest application form consists of 7 sections, each of which are outlined below:

Lead Applicant details

The Lead Applicant must be the Principal Investigator who will lead the research and be responsible for delivering the project.

Information in this section is automatically populated from your contact record (except for publications). Please ensure that your CV and Basic Information are up to date via the 'Manage My Details' section in the left-hand menu. Please note that this section is not accessible directly from the application form, and so to update your personal details you must first 'Save & Close' your application and then click on the 'Manage My Details' link in the left-hand menu.

Please note the following:

- You will need to include your [ORCID ID](#), please add this to the corresponding section under 'Basic Information' via 'Manage My Details'
- Your 10 most significant/relevant publications for this application must be entered in the 'Publications' section of the Lead Applicant Details page.

Personnel

Joint Lead Applicant:

We would ordinarily expect a project to be led by a single Lead Applicant; however, in exceptional circumstances you may include ONE Joint Lead Applicant.

If you wish to include a Joint Lead Applicant on the proposal, you must provide sufficient explanation (under 'Role Description') to justify the need for a Joint Lead Applicant, as well as which aspects of the proposal each person will be leading on and why they are appropriate to lead on that aspect of the project. If the Joint Lead Applicant is to be an experienced post-doctoral researcher, then you must also justify why they are suitable to be a Joint Lead Applicant.

To include a Joint Lead Applicant onto the proposal, click on 'Add Joint Lead Applicant', input their name within the corresponding search fields and either select the contact if already on our database or otherwise input their details. Once added, an email will be sent to the potential applicant inviting them to take part in this application.

The Joint Lead Applicant **must** accept this invitation to confirm their participation on the proposal.

The Joint Lead Applicant must confirm their participation AND approve the application BEFORE the proposal can be 'submitted'.

Co-Applicants:

Please include details of all Co-Applicants to be involved in the project. It is our expectation that all Co-Applicants must have an active role in the proposed project (any other personnel should be listed as a Collaborator).

To add their information, click on 'Add Co-Applicant', input their name within the corresponding search fields and either select the contact if already on our database or otherwise input their details. Once added, an email will be sent to the potential Co-Applicant inviting them to take part in this application. Repeat this procedure for all Co-Applicants on the proposal.

All Co-Applicants must confirm their participation AND approve the application BEFORE the proposal can be 'submitted'.

You **must** then detail how **each** Co-Applicant will be involved in the project. To do so, click on 'Add Co-Applicant Role', select the relevant name from the dropdown list provided and input their role in the corresponding section. Please repeat this for all Co-Applicants on this proposal.

Collaborators:

To include a Collaborator onto the proposal, click on 'Add Collaborator' and follow the same procedures as with adding a Co-Applicant (detailed above). Repeat this procedure for all Collaborators on the proposal.

Collaborators are not required to confirm their participation at this stage.

You **must** then detail how **each** Collaborator will be involved in the project, as with the Co-Applicants.

Excluded Reviewers:

Prostate Cancer UK recognises that there are certain situations in which approaching a particular reviewer may not be appropriate. Applicants may only request exclusions when there is a serious conflict of interest or commercial sensitivity. Please provide details of anyone you wish to be excluded from the assessment of your proposal (up to 3 people). For those people you do not wish to be approached to review the proposal, you must also provide a valid reason in the text box provided (in no more than 200 words).

Please note that Prostate Cancer UK is under no obligation to take up applicants' exclusions for reviewers and will not enter into discussion with applicants on this matter.

Project Summary

Provide a concise scientific title as well as a lay title for your project, and include the duration of the research project (in months). It is our expectation that projects should be between 12 and 60 months in duration. Projects shorter or longer than this are still eligible; however, you should contact the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK to discuss whether your project is still appropriate for this scheme.

Within this section you must indicate which one (or more) of the Prostate Cancer UK priority areas your project shall address (please refer to our [Research Strategy](#) for further details), explaining why your research meets the selected priority area(s) (in no more than 100 words).

You must then select up to 6 keywords from the list provided which best describe the project, and provide a brief scientific abstract (in no more than 300 words), outlining the background to the application, the proposed aims of the research to be undertaken and the expected outcomes. All proposals must clearly state how the planned research aims to improve the health and wellbeing of men affected by, or at high risk of, prostate cancer.

Please be aware that your abstract may be sent to potential peer reviewers to establish their ability to review the proposal, and if funded, the abstract from the Second Stage Application will also be shared with the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) and the International Cancer Research Partnership (ICRP) and any other organisation as specified in the grant terms and conditions.

Therefore, please do not include any confidential or commercially sensitive information in this section.

Project Description

Please outline your proposal by answering **all** of the questions within this section:

What is innovative about your application? (up to 300 words)

As highlighted above, we want to see innovative research which has high potential to make a real impact on the lives of men with, or at high risk of developing, prostate cancer. You should therefore make a clear case as to what is innovative about your application (in no more than 300 words). Prostate Cancer UK will only fund novel and innovative research, and so this question is of great importance. You should also explain why such a study is needed now and how it will differ from or complement any planned, ongoing, or recently completed studies.

Projects that are NOT deemed to be sufficiently innovative by our Research Advisory Committee will be rejected before the Second Stage.

Brief summary of the background to the project (up to 300 words)

Please provide a brief summary of the top level, relevant background information necessary to understand the wider context of your proposal. You should describe both your own and others' results that provide a basis for doing this research now, as well as any ongoing work that may impact either positively or negatively on your proposed study. It is advised that you place your proposal into a patient-centred context rather than focussing on scientific questions alone.

Key hypotheses, objectives and milestones (up to 300 words)

Please briefly detail the key hypotheses, objectives & milestones to your project. All proposals should articulate a strong, central research question and place it in the context of current knowledge and the potential benefit for men affected by prostate cancer. This scheme is aimed to support hypothesis-driven research. Proposals that are not sufficiently hypothesis-driven are likely to be rejected in all but exceptional circumstances. Please speak to the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK if you have any queries about eligibility.

This section is meant to provide an 'at a glance' summary of your project plan. Please keep it succinct and to the point.

Project Description (up to 500 words)

Please describe what you propose to do in no more than 500 words. This section should provide a clear and succinct summary of the proposed project (applicants shortlisted to the Second Stage will have the opportunity to elaborate further on their project design).

Optional attachments

You may attach no more than 5 sides of A4 of additional information to support your proposal. This should include supporting and preliminary data, in addition to any figures, diagrams and/or letters of support. Please upload as a word or pdf file only. Anything in excess of 5 sides of A4 will be removed from your proposal and will not be considered.

What will be the impact of your proposed project (both in the short and long term)?

(up to 200 words)

We wish to understand the potential impact of your research both in the short and longer term. Our ultimate aim is to deliver clinical impact as quickly as possible to improve the lives of men affected by, or at high risk of, prostate cancer. Your response should focus on the impact to these men rather than just academic outputs.

What would need to happen after this grant (if successful) to realise the long-term impact for men described above? (up to 200 words)

We wish to understand how your research fits into the wider research landscape and the potential impact of your work across a timescale longer than this project to assess your plans for achieving impact.

We are aware that several additional steps and significant follow on funding may be required in order to deliver longer term impact. Please provide brief details of those subsequent steps and how you intend to fund them (including proposed funders and funding schemes, if relevant, or describe any plans to fund future work through commercial licencing or exploitation).

Our ultimate aim is to deliver clinical impact as quickly as possible to improve the lives of men affected by prostate cancer. Your response should focus on the impact to these men rather than pure academic outputs.

Patient & Public Involvement (up to 200 words)

Prostate Cancer UK is supportive of the active involvement of patients and the public in research activities as it can ensure that the research remains patient focused. You should describe whether men with prostate cancer, or their relatives/partners etc., will be involved in the design, planning or management of this research, and if so, what their role will be. Please note, we do not consider the recruitment of patients to take part in a study as involvement in research.

For more information on involving patient representatives in your research, please visit [our website](#). Prostate Cancer UK has established a Patient Representative Network, consisting of patient representatives with an interest in being involved in research and who may be able to help you with your proposals. To be put in touch with members of our Patient Representative Network to support your research, please visit [our website](#) and complete the request form.

Are you in receipt of, or have you applied for, other funding for the proposed work?

(up to 200 words)

Please provide details of any other funding received, or applied for, on the topic of this application. In the case of funding already received, it is important to explain how this proposal differs from, and complements, ongoing work and how it forms a discrete project in its own right. For recent funding applications, it is acceptable to have submitted the same project to another funder; however, please give an indication as to when you will know the outcome of the other submission(s) - you must inform the Research Team of the outcome as soon as it is known. In both instances, please provide the name of the funding body(ies) and the amount awarded/applied for.

References

You may include up to 20 full references which have been referenced within the Project Description section (in Vancouver format).

Finances

Please refer to our [Finance Eligibility Guidelines](#) for further details regarding cost eligibility. We do not require a full breakdown of costs at this stage (this will be requested if shortlisted to the Second Stage). However, you should give a reasonable estimate of costs under the following headings:

- Salary costs (please specify each post individually)
- Research expenses
- Animal purchase costs
- Animal maintenance costs
- Other costs

Please note that where applicable applications should be costed in line with the [AcoRD framework](#) for attributing the costs of clinical research, and our standard terms and conditions regarding eligibility of certain costs apply. We do not consider costs associated with the apprenticeship levy to be a directly incurred cost related specifically to the proposed research, and as such this should not be included within the proposed budget.

Please also provide a brief justification of the costs that you expect to incur. If the amount requested does not cover the full study costs (e.g. where the work would be part funded by another grant) please also provide brief details as to how the remaining costs of the study will be met (in no more than 300 words).

Declaration – Candidate

Declaration from the Lead Applicant is required to confirm that all of the information provided within the application is accurate and correct (to the best of your knowledge) and that you have read and accept our [Terms and Conditions](#) of award (approving the application will imply that the approver agrees to abide by our terms and conditions if a grant is awarded).

Submitting your application

Once you have completed all sections of the form you must go to the 'Validation' tab in the left-hand menu of the online application. This will highlight any sections which still need completing, or that exceed the stipulated word limits or which require confirmation and/or approval from others.

Please note that all mandatory sections of the form must be completed (within the stipulated word limits), and the Joint Lead Applicant (if applicable) and all Co-Applicants must confirm their involvement and approve the proposal before the application can be submitted. You will be unable to submit your application until these have been resolved.

When all sections are complete and all necessary approvals have been made, the application is ready to be submitted. You must 'Save and Close' the application and this will then take you back to the application details page. The Submit button on the right-hand side should now be activated, and you can click this to submit your proposal. Once submitted you should receive an automated email confirming your submission. Please note you may also download a PDF of the submitted application via the 'View/Print' button on the right-hand side of the screen.

Please be aware that Expressions of Interest do not require approval from Heads of Department or Finance Officers. This will be required if your application is shortlisted to the Second Stage.

Key dates

- **22 July 2019:** Call open for Expressions of Interest
- **9 September 2019 (12pm noon):** Deadline for submission of Expression of Interest
- **28 October 2019 (w/c):** Applicants notified of outcome. Shortlisted applicants invited to submit a Second Stage application form
- **13 January 2020 (12pm noon):** Deadline for Second Stage application submission
- **2 March 2020 (w/c):** Applicants invited to submit a rebuttal to reviewer comments
- **16 March 2020 (12pm noon):** Deadline for rebuttal submission
- **25 May 2020 (w/c):** Applicants notified of outcome of Second Stage application

Contact Us

If you have any queries regarding your application, please contact the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK via email: research@prostatecanceruk.org