

Trailfinders Prostate Cancer UK Senior Clinical Fellowship in Medical Oncology Guidance notes 2026/27

Introduction

Across the sector there has been a worrying decline in the number of clinical academics, a trend which is also seen within the prostate cancer research community. Medical academics make up a far smaller proportion of the medical workforce than has historically been the case, with further declines expected unless we do something to turn this tide. Clinical academics play a critical role in bridging the gap between the lab and the clinic, supporting a critical step in the research pipeline and in driving better health outcomes.

With thanks to the generous support of The Mike Gooley Trailfinders Charity, we are offering a unique and prestigious opportunity to fund an outstanding clinical leader in the field of prostate cancer medical oncology. We are seeking proposals from ambitious individuals aiming to become a sector-leading **Trailfinders Prostate Cancer UK Professor in Prostate Cancer**.

Scheme remit

This prestigious fellowship will provide £2 million over 5 years to an outstanding clinically qualified researcher specialising in medical oncology. Candidates must have a PhD and post-doctoral experience and be looking to transition to research leadership and onto a Professorial position within the 5-year window of fellowship support.

This Trailfinders Prostate Cancer UK fellowship should be underpinned by an ambitious and internationally competitive programme of research, aligned with our [research strategy](#), delivering high quality, high impact outputs which will enable the recipient to transition into research leadership and ultimately deliver life-changing breakthroughs for prostate cancer

patients. Our expectation is that the employing institution, together with its clinical/academic partner, will also contribute significant support and financial commitment towards the recipient to further underpin the research proposal.

The intention is to appoint an individual who is on the trajectory to become a future leading International figure in medical oncology, who will be a driving force for clinical academic research for years to come.

We will not accept applications that:

- Are from academic/medical institutions outside of the UK
- Do not already have an identified candidate for the fellowship
- Have no evidence of support and financial commitment from the host institution
- Are intended solely or primarily to fund the purchase of equipment
- Are from commercial organisations
- Do not align with the remit of our [Research Strategy](#)

Eligibility criteria for candidate

This is a senior appointment for a clinically qualified individual to undertake their research based within an academic/medical institution in the UK. Candidates must have a PhD with post-doctoral experience, and a demonstrable track record of outstanding research achievements and leadership qualities. In line with the donor's requirements, applicants must work in the field of Medical Oncology.

Candidates can either have recently been appointed at Professorial level (within the last 12 months) or be seeking to rapidly transition into a Professorial post within the 5 years of funding. Applications from recently appointed Professors must outline the transformative added value this fellowship would have on their career. Candidates who have been in a Professorial post for longer than 12 months will not be eligible. We recognise the varied career paths of clinical researchers and are happy to provide guidance to prospective applicants.

Specifically, we are looking for competitive candidates who:

- Are based in the UK, or who intend to relocate to the UK to be based at a recognised institution within the UK (you will need to have identified an appropriate UK institution before applying). Where a candidate's primary employer is (or will be) an NHS Trust, then they must have an honorary contract with a suitable academic institution in the UK. Conversely where the employer is a University, then they must have written

- support from their proposed NHS partner detailing proposed and future job plans.
- Are eligible to practice medicine in the UK and hold GMC registration (or will hold this, if currently practicing outside the UK), and have either obtained or be close to obtaining a Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT).
 - Are able to demonstrate an impressive career trajectory over the last 5-10 years, with significant experience commensurate to transitioning to a leadership position. This may be demonstrated through, amongst other things, research outputs (publications, presentations etc.), grant funding, personal awards, application/publication peer review, committee membership, participating in consensus groups, conference/meeting organisation, training/mentoring etc.
 - Have previous experience of planning and delivering innovative and impactful research that has achieved national and international recognition.
 - Has embellished a multidisciplinary, team science approach to research adopting the highest standards of research culture.
 - Have a strong network of national and international collaborators (academic and/or commercial) and an ambition to expand this further during the fellowship.
 - Have experience of co-production, engagement and involving patients in their research.
 - Have evidence of successfully supporting, training, mentoring and developing the next generation of researchers. Evidence of practice that demonstrates equity, diversity and inclusivity will be important.

The successful candidate will act as an ambassador globally for prostate cancer research in the UK, and for Prostate Cancer UK, and play a key role in nurturing the next generation of researchers within a positive research culture.

By the end of the fellowship, we anticipate that the successful candidate should also have:

- A confirmed Professorial position within their host institution with longer-term support and commitment from the academic institution and NHS partner (including as a minimum open ended salary cover).
- Produced a number of high-profile and impactful research outputs relating to their programme of research.
- Secured significant leveraged funding to expand and continue their research programme beyond the 5-year fellowship.
- Grown their network of UK and international researchers as demonstrated through publications, joint grant funding etc.

- Established a reputation as an International leader in prostate cancer medical oncology.
- Established or grown their own research group, with a strong commitment towards supporting career development.

Requirements for the Host Institution

Applications must be submitted jointly by the candidate and the proposed host institution, with the host institution being a recognised academic institution or NHS Trust within the UK. Where a candidate's primary employer is an NHS Trust, they must have an honorary contract with a suitable academic institution. If your application is recommended for funding, we will issue the contract to the host institution who must agree to the [terms of award](#) and will be responsible for the conduct and governance of the fellowship award.

Applications will only be accepted where there is clear evidence of support and commitment from the host institution (with a letter of support from a suitably senior representative), including a substantial financial commitment to the candidate throughout the fellowship, infrastructure provision and career development support, including written confirmation of a permanent Professorial position for the candidate beyond the end of the award. University based applications must also include written support from their NHS partner detailing proposed joint job plans for the tenure of the fellowship and beyond.

We expect the host institution to:

- Employ the candidate for the duration of the fellowship.
- Provide clear guidance and a transparent clinical academic job plan for the candidate to advance towards a permanent Professorial post by the end of the 5-year fellowship.
- Provide the necessary infrastructure and an appropriate research culture and working environment, including but not limited to office/lab space, support staff, access to necessary equipment etc.
- Contribute additional financial support to the candidate to expand the scope of the programme of research during the lifetime of the fellowship and beyond.
- Provide career support, training and mentorship to the candidate during the fellowship to support their transition into leadership. This should also include training and career support for members of the candidate's team.
- Confirm acceptance of the title 'Trailfinders Prostate Cancer UK Chair' for the candidate (if awarded the fellowship).

Scientific Remit

Our Research Strategy

Prostate Cancer UK has an ambitious aim: to stop prostate cancer from being a killer. Our [Research Strategy](#) sets 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.

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 and disease prognosis)
- **Better Treatment**
(for both localised & advanced disease, including improved prediction of which treatment(s) will be effective for an individual)
- **Smarter Use of Data**

We strongly advise that you carefully read through our [Research Strategy](#) for further details on these priority areas before applying. Proposals must clearly state how the planned research aims to improve the health and wellbeing of men affected by prostate cancer.

Budget Remit

Through this unique initiative we are intending to award £2 million of funding over a 5-year period to 1 successful candidate. It may be possible for this fellowship to be held part-time to accommodate personal circumstances (at a minimum of 75%FTE, taking the fellowship up to a maximum duration of 6.5 years). Clarity and justification for part-time working requests should be provided within your application and the proposed time commitments must have the support of the host institution.

As mentioned above, we expect this funding to be supplemented by additional institutional and leveraged grant funding. Collectively, this fellowship, alongside the institutional and leveraged funding, should create a package of funding to cover the candidate's salary, research staff, support posts and associated research costs and collaboration/development opportunities.

Funds that are requested in the application must be in accordance with our [Finance Guidance](#) (unless otherwise specified in this document). Value for money will be a consideration, so care should be taken to ensure that costs have been properly justified with respect to how they are essential or value adding to the research programme that has been proposed.

Candidate's salary

It is permissible to include the candidate's salary within the grant budget where this is not being covered by other means (e.g. by the host institution or through external leveraged funding). However, the expectation is for the host institution to provide salary support for the candidate via a professorial post at the end of the fellowship, if not before. We are only requiring top-level figures at this stage, with a more detailed budget breakdown required for shortlisted candidates. We appreciate that individual circumstances may differ and we would be happy to discuss potential options before the submission deadline.

It is a valid and welcome demonstration of institutional support for the host institution to meet the candidate's whole salary, or a large proportion of it, to enable more of the £2 million award to support the proposed research programme (covering team and research costs). If it's not possible for the host institution to support the candidate's salary from the start of the fellowship, a tapered salary approach could be considered during the lifetime of the fellowship so as to gradually transition the candidate's salary from the fellowship over to the host institution.

Research & Support Staff

Please consider how this funding might be able to help to establish or grow the candidate's research team through supporting additional posts and provide opportunities to bring in and develop additional early career researchers into prostate cancer research.

Research Costs

A reasonable allocation of funding may be included to support the proposed programme of research. This just needs to be top-level for the Expression of Interest proposal and if shortlisted we will expect a more detailed budget breakdown within the full proposal. Given the nature of this award we will allow for some degree of flexibility in how the funding is used, but any significant deviation in spend must be first approved by Prostate Cancer UK and must comply with our finance guidance, the terms of the grant contract and with our research policies (e.g. around the use of animals and stem cells in research etc.). All spend against the fellowship budget must be robustly justified.

Costs to support collaboration/development opportunities

It is permissible to include a modest amount of funding within the fellowship budget to support establishing and forging collaborations that will position the candidate as a global leader in this field (national & international, academic & commercial), for instance travel costs, conference attendance, hosting scientific meetings etc. For these costs you may include more than the specified limits within our finance guidance, however the amount included must be proportionate and robustly justified.

Please also consider the inclusion of costs towards training and development opportunities that will help the candidate transition towards a leadership position. It is also permissible to include costs to support the training and career development of more junior members of the candidate's team.

Application process & timeline

Call open for Expressions of Interest:	16 March 2026
Application Deadline:	1pm on Monday 20 April 2026
EOI Assessment:	Expressions of Interest will undergo an eligibility check followed by review by a bespoke scientific committee of leading clinical academics from the UK and abroad. Applicants will be informed whether they have been shortlisted in May
Full Application Submission:	Shortlisted candidates will be invited to submit a detailed full proposal by 1pm on 26 June
Full Application Assessment & Interview:	Full applications will be reviewed and interviewed by our scientific committee with interviews taking place end of July / early August (exact date and timings TBC)
Decision and Notification:	Applicants will be notified of final funding decisions shortly after the interviews in August .

We recognise that the outcome of this application is important to you, and we will inform all candidates of the outcome as soon as possible. We appreciate your patience during this time.

Successful candidates 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.

Assessment criteria

Applications will first be checked by the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK to ensure that all sections of the form have been completed correctly and that all of the above eligibility criteria have been met. Any submissions not meeting these core eligibility criteria will be rejected without committee review.

Our committee will then review the expression of interest proposals considering the track record of the candidate to date and their suitability for a fellowship of this nature, the relevance and importance of the proposed programme of research, as well as the strength of the commitment and support from the host institution during and beyond the fellowship.

For candidates shortlisted to the full stage, a more in-depth assessment will be conducted by our committee (including an interview stage), looking more closely at the proposed programme of research, the career trajectory of the candidate and the support of their host institution (further details of assessment criteria for the full stage will be detailed in the guidance materials provided to shortlisted candidates).

Ultimately, proposals will be judged on whether the committee believes that the programme outlined, support from the institution and the candidates track record to date will ensure that the recipient will transition to a position of global leadership as a 'Trailfinders Prostate Cancer UK Chair' by the end of the Fellowship.

Completing & submitting an Expression of Interest application

The deadline for submitting an Expression of Interest application is 1pm on Monday 20 April 2026.

Unlike our other funding schemes, we will not be using our online Grant Management System for this initiative. Please therefore use the corresponding [Microsoft Word application form](#).

Once you have completed all sections of the application form (in the MS Word template) please email the form to research@prostatecanceruk.org, along with the accompanying letters of support. All applications must be received by the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK before the submission deadline and you will receive an email response from the team to confirm receipt of your application.

Application form guidance

Cover page

Please include your name and that of your host institution in the summary table on the cover page for your submission. You should also include a title for your proposed programme of research and your proposed duration for the fellowship (the default expectation is that the fellowship will last for 5 years, unless you intend to take up the fellowship on a part-time basis in which case the maximum duration for the fellowship would be 6.5 years).

Please note an application reference number will be created for you after your submission, so don't fill in this field in the summary table.

Applicant CV

Education, Employment, Publications & Grants

Please provide details of your education and employment history in the corresponding tables in your application form. You should also provide your 15 most significant/relevant publications and research grants to date. For publications, please list these and provide in Vancouver format. For your research grants, for each entry please ensure you include your role (e.g. Lead Applicant), the grant reference, the name of the funding organisation, the amount awarded, the title of the project, and the project start and end dates.

You will need to include your ORCID ID and a link to your ORCID page. Please ensure that you have populated your ORCID record and set visibility to 'public'. For more details, please visit the [ORCID website](#).

Evidencing your contributions to the field

Please provide a top-level description of your key achievements, skills and contributions to the research sector to date (aside from grants and publications). You only need to provide an overview at the Expression of Interest stage and you will be asked to submit a more detailed narrative CV if shortlisted to the next stage.

You may wish to consider how you have contributed towards:

- the generation of knowledge (e.g. new ideas, tools or techniques)
- the development of others in the field (e.g. management, teaching, mentoring, coaching etc)

- the wider research community (e.g. reviewing, committee membership, editing, conference/scientific meeting organisation etc)
- broader society in a research capacity (e.g. public engagement, school outreach, knowledge exchange, engagement with industry etc.)

Research network & Letters of support

Please describe your current research network, including any past or ongoing academic and/or commercial collaborations relating to your area of research.

You may also provide up to 5 letters of support from current/past employers, colleagues or collaborators where this may support your application (single side of A4 each, please combine into a single document). This is separate to the letters of support from your host academic institution and NHS Trust requested under the 'Host Institution Support' section.

Working Pattern

We would typically expect the successful candidate to take up this fellowship full time over a 5-year period. However, please do specify if you will instead intend to carry out the fellowship on a part-time basis, and if so, we're looking to understand your requirement and reasoning for this.

As a minimum we would still expect 75%FTE towards the fellowship (taking the fellowship up to a maximum duration of 6.5 years) and the proposed time commitments must have the support of the host institution.

Please only disclose personal information that you would be comfortable being seen by our committee members. For the same reason please do not disclose any information that is about a third-party including name, circumstances, or information that allows them to be identified.

If you would like to provide any further details to your reasons for applying on a part-time basis that you would prefer not to share with our committee then please contact the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK to discuss further in confidence.

Additional Information

There is also an opportunity for you to provide any further details if you and/or your research activities have been impacted in any way due to any breaks in active research or periods of part-time working.

This question is optional but will help give committee members greater context around your career path to date. Please note, where this is applicable, we're not looking to capture the details of what happened but ask that you focus on the consequences and impact on your career, or your ability to deliver your research. This can include but is not limited to:

- Change in personal circumstances such as inability or reduced ability to work due to illness or additional caring responsibilities.
- Pause on experiments/research plans/access to facilities (e.g. being furloughed during the COVID-19 pandemic).
- Delays in publishing/submitting a key paper(s) or other outputs and markers, e.g. panel membership, presentation invitations, conference participation, promotions.
- If you have not been impacted by any situation, please detail "N/A".

We ask that you only disclose personal information that you would be comfortable being seen by our committee members. For the same reason please do not disclose any information that is about a third-party including name, circumstances, or information that allows them to be identified.

Our committee members will be asked to consider this information as part of their assessment to prevent applicants from being penalised for things beyond their control. For example, the applicant's individual circumstances will be noted when assessing track records, impact on publications and any delays or setbacks in the progress of their research.

Summary of Research Programme

All proposals should be centred around a strong, central research theme and placed in the context of current knowledge and the potential benefit for men affected by prostate cancer. You are expected to identify an important research question, or questions, that build(s) upon your current expertise and experience, and propose a programme of work to achieve significant outputs and impact by the end of the 5 years of the fellowship.

Full details of the proposed programme of research will be required at the full stage if you are shortlisted. Within this Expression of Interest, please provide a top-level overview of your proposed research focus and what you'd like to achieve during the 5 years of the fellowship (and supported by some top-level background/supporting information for context and justification).

Scientific abstract

Briefly outline your proposed programme of research, including background and expected outcomes. Please do not include any confidential or commercially sensitive information in this section. Your abstract may be sent to potential reviewers to establish their ability to review the proposal, and if funded, the abstract will also be shared with the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), International Cancer Research Partnership (ICRP) and any other organisation as specified in the grant terms and conditions.

Background to the programme of research

Please provide a brief summary of the top level, relevant background information necessary to understand the wider context of your proposed research programme. It is advised that you place your proposal into a patient-centred context rather than focusing on scientific questions alone. You can also include up to 10 full references referred to in this 'Background' section under the corresponding question in the application form (references should be entered in Vancouver format).

Supporting preliminary data is not required at this stage and will be requested if your proposal is shortlisted to the full stage.

Overview of your proposed research programme

Please provide an overview of the proposed programme of work, including the central theme and hypothesis/hypotheses you will be focussing on. You should clearly describe how this area of research will form a unique niche for your research focus and that of your team. This section should give reviewers a clear understanding of your research priorities and focus for the 5 years of the Fellowship, along with planned timeframes and anticipated outputs, outcomes and impact.

Host Institution Support

The host institution must be a recognised academic institution or NHS Trust within the UK. A named individual and a letter of support must be provided from both your academic institution and associated NHS Trust. Named representatives should be of sufficient authority within the organisation, for instance Head of Department, Head of School or someone more senior.

Letters of support from your host academic institution and partnering NHS Trust

Please submit a letter of support from each of your host academic institution and NHS Trust (from the individuals named within your proposal) to accompany this expression of interest

(Max. 2 Letters of support, 2 sides of A4 each. Please combine into a single document).
Between these two letters they should cover the following:

- The named individual's connection to you and their view on your career and outputs to date.
- How you will be supported during this Fellowship, in terms of facilities, staff posts, salary and/or research funding etc., including how any freed-up funds would be repurposed to increase the research capacity of the Fellowship.
- How you will be supported beyond the length of the Fellowship, including the proposed onward job plan and how you will be supported towards promotion to Professorial level during or by the end of the Fellowship.
(it is an expectation of award that the Host Institution will provide commitment to the ongoing employment of the applicant at professorial level beyond the duration of the award).
- The academic institution's strategy for prostate cancer research, and how this appointment will strengthen that strategy.

The Impact of this Fellowship

In this section you should consider how the impact this fellowship would have on your career as well as the potential longer-term impact on men affected by prostate cancer.

The Impact of this Fellowship for your career

Please include an overview as to how this fellowship will support your career trajectory towards becoming a senior leader in the field of medical oncology. Further details will be requested if shortlisted to the full stage so please keep this top-level and succinct at this stage. In your response you may wish to consider:

- Why the timing is right for you to apply for this fellowship.
- Your future career plans (short, medium & long term) and how this fellowship will accelerate your career towards becoming a senior leader in medical oncology.
- Your longer-term research vision beyond the timeframe of this fellowship.
- The make-up of the team and collaborative network you intend to establish/grow.
- How you intend to support and provide leadership to others in the sector, most notably providing career support, guidance and inspiration for early career researchers.
- How you plan to be an ambassador for the UK prostate cancer research community, and for Prostate Cancer UK, both nationally and internationally

The impact of this Fellowship for men

What will be the impact of your proposed programme of research (both in the short and long term)? 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 fellowship. Please consider how your research could (eventually) benefit men affected by prostate cancer and an understanding of the steps that need to be taken to translate any positive findings towards clinical benefit.

Budget

Please ensure you have read our [Finance Guidance](#), as well as the 'Budget Remit' section of this document for details on eligible costs and any associated limits to assist you with completing this section of this application form. In this section, please provide a top-level breakdown of how the £2m funding provided via this fellowship would be utilised (broken down for each year and under the following headings: Applicant Salary, Other Salary Costs, Research costs & Travel & Training costs).

This is to provide a top-level overview at this stage. A more detailed budget will be request at the full stage, if you are shortlisted.

Applicant Salary

Please detail whether you will be requesting for any of your salary to be covered via this fellowship. If so, please state the %FTE you be requesting from the outset (and if not 100% FTE how the remainder of your salary will be covered).

Justification of Budget & Additional Financial Support

Please provide a justification of the costs that you expect to incur, including the number/level/discipline of any additional salaries, the inclusion of any costly equipment or other significant expenditure deemed essential for your proposed programme of research etc. Please also describe the additional financial support that will be provided by the Host Institution and through other leveraged funding towards your proposed programme of research.

Declarations

We would like to know how you heard about this funding opportunity so as to improve our communications for future funding opportunities in the future.

Please also declare whether you are awaiting the outcome of any other funding applications which might overlap and/or impact with what is being proposed here (both in terms of scientifically as well as your career progression). If you are awaiting the outcome of other funding proposals, please provide details of the funding body, grant/fellowship title, budget, dates outcome expected and comment on the overlap with this proposal.

Declarations

We require both the candidate and the named representative from the host institution to complete the declarations section by providing an electronic signature in the corresponding declarations within the form.

For the candidate, this is to confirm that the information provided within the application form is accurate and up to date and that our [Terms and Conditions](#) of award* have been read and would be agreed to were funding to be awarded.

For the representative from the host institution, this is to confirm that they have read the application and are supportive of the candidate being considered for this fellowship, and if the fellowship is awarded, that they confirm that the work will be accommodated and administered in the Department/Institution in accordance with our [Terms and Conditions](#) of award*.

**NB/ our Terms and Conditions of award are subject to change from time to time.*

Contact Us

If you have any queries with regards to your eligibility or application, please contact the Prostate Cancer UK Research Team at research@prostatecanceruk.org.