

Programme Continuity Grants – Guidance for applicants

Introduction

Blood Cancer UK is the UK's specialist blood cancer research charity dedicated to improving the lives of people living with and beyond blood cancer. Around 40,000 people of all ages, from children to adults, are diagnosed with blood cancers and related disorders every year in the UK. It is a complex disease area made up of over 100 individual diseases. Some affect thousands of people, such as common forms of leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma. Others affect only a handful. But together, blood cancers are the fifth most common form of cancer and the third largest cause of cancer death in the UK.

The charity's research is targeted at understanding more about blood cancer, finding causes, improving diagnosis and treatments, and running ground-breaking clinical trials for patients. We champion patients' needs by influencing relevant decision makers and influencers and seek to raise awareness of the issues faced by patients. We also provide information, support and assistance to patients at every stage of their journey.

Remit

Programme Continuity Grants provide a reduced level of support – up to £300,000 for up to three years – for Specialist Programme grant holders. The purpose of this funding scheme is to allow successful applicants to retain benefits of past Blood Cancer UK investment and maintain a strong blood cancer research focus, while maximising investment from other funders.

Applicants may use the scheme to maintain core elements of their Blood Cancer UK-funded research programme, including but not limited to retaining key research personnel.

Although the funding envelope and duration is similar to that of a traditional project grant, applicants will be given significant flexibility to identify their resourcing priorities, and applications need not be restricted in scope to a single line of investigation, or to a traditional balance of resource between staffing and consumables. However, successful applicants must provide clear evidence that the award is either adequate to deliver the objectives of the grant on its own, or that it can do so in combination with other available funds.

Eligibility

Only current or recent Specialist Programme grant holders can apply for a Programme Continuity Grant. Applicants must discuss their proposal with the Blood Cancer UK research team before starting an application. You will not be able to begin an application on our online application system – Grant Tracker – until you do so.

Online application system

All applications must be submitted via Grant Tracker which is used for submission, peer review, award and monitoring of all grant applications. Please follow the instructions carefully to complete and submit an application. The application can be stored and edited at any time prior to submission. There is guidance on how to use Grant Tracker on our website. The application deadline is **4:00pm on the date advertised**. No applications will be accepted after the deadline. Applicants should allow enough time for submission of their applications before the deadline to ensure all the required approvals are obtained.

For any enquiries about completing the application form or submitting your application, please contact the research team by emailing research@Bloodcancer.org.uk or phoning 020 7504 2200.

Application form

Project summary

Project title: The project title should be descriptive and succinct

Synopsis: The synopsis should be a scientific abstract of the proposed research. This should include the background, hypothesis and objectives as well as brief details of the proposed methodology. Applicants should also outline the proposed outcomes and impact, and the benefits to people living with blood cancer. This section has a word limit of 200 words.

Institution: The name of the lead applicant's institution.

Department: The name of the lead applicant's department.

Address: The address of the host institution.

Proposed start date: The Grant must be activated by the grant holder within three months from the start date indicated on the Grant Award Letter. Applicants should allow enough time to recruit staff members and to gain any required approvals. Ensure the proposed start date is accurate as it will help with Blood Cancer UK's financial planning.

Proposed duration: The duration of the research in months. The duration should be up to 36 months.

Previously submitted to Blood Cancer UK? Indicate whether the application is a new submission, continuation of a current or recently closed award, or a resubmission.

Start date of previous grant: Indicate the start date of the previous specialist programme that this application follows-on from.

Applicants: List the co-applicants named on the previous specialist programme grant.

Title: Indicate the title of the previous specialist programme grant.

Grant number: Indicate the grant number of the previous specialist programme grant.

Objectives

Up to five objectives/aims of the proposed research can be included. Include one objective per box. Each objective has a word limit of 80 words. These will be used, if your application is successful, in your annual report forms.

Please note that the application form can only be validated if three objectives are included. If the application does not have three objectives, include text in the third objectives box to indicate that the application has one or two objectives.

Project details

This section has a total word limit of 6,000 words. Figures, tables and illustrations cannot be included in the text at present. They should be submitted in the Attachments section and referenced in the main proposal text.

Research report: Describe the major achievements resulting from the previous funding period. For programme continuity funding, assessment of the past record of the applicant will have a significant bearing on the funding decision. Applicants may choose how much of the word count to attribute to the research report, versus the research proposal, but we suggest an upper limit of 3,000 words.

Research proposal: With reference to each grant objective, describe the experimental approaches including analyses to be used, with supporting published and unpublished results, while outlining the key milestones. The expected outputs of the project and their significance should be described.

Outline any key risks to delivering the research, and what steps will be put in place to help mitigate or resolve them.

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

Additional details

Justification for support: Provide a detailed justification for the costs requested in the 'Finance & Costs' section, clearly outlining how these relate to each objective and to the proposed timescales. State the roles of the staff member(s), co-applicants, co-investigators and collaborators and how these relate to the delivery of each objective. This should include the day-to-day management of the research.

Since Programme Continuity Grants cannot provide financial support at the level of a standard programme grant, it is particularly important that applications demonstrate that the award is either adequate to deliver the objectives of the grant on its own, or that it can do so in combination with other available funds. Please provide details where other funding will provide support or added value to the project, and state what future sources of funding you intend to pursue if you are successful in your application. If you have funding for research that is closely related but distinct to the current application, please explain how it differs.

Research integrity: Statistical analyses – If relevant (particularly for high volume data), provide a full description of statistical analyses to be used, including number of samples in each analysis, the associated level of statistical power, and any potential limitations or biases.

Cell lines – If the proposed work includes cell lines, include details of how these will be maintained according to good practice, how any newly obtained cell lines will be authenticated and how any newly generated cell lines will be made available to others. All researchers using cell culture must incorporate a specific cell line authentication protocol into their experimental framework, following the best practice for cell culture procedures ([UKCCCR Guidelines](#)).

Data sharing – Blood Cancer UK expects valuable data, reagents and software arising from Blood Cancer UK-funded research to be made available to the scientific community with as few restrictions as possible so as to maximise the value of the research and for eventual patient and public benefit. Such data must be shared in a timely and responsible manner, making use of online open repositories, public databases and community-led reagent stores.

References: Include references to the research outlined in the application.

Ethics

The application must state whether or not reference is necessary to appropriate Ethical Committees for approval, and if so, when such application will be made. This must be obtained prior to the start of a successful grant and Blood Cancer UK notified of approval. The reference numbers of relevant project and personal licenses should be quoted.

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

Grant holders should make use of the [ARRIVE](#) guidelines when designing their experiments, and ensure that they report in vivo studies in accordance with the ARRIVE guidelines as far as possible.

Lay section

The word limit for each section is 200 words.

This entire section should be in plain English using non-technical language and avoiding unexplained acronyms and/or abbreviations. This section is intended for a lay audience and it is important that the description of the proposed research is accessible.

Lay title: The title should be descriptive and succinct using non-technical language.

Lay statement: Provide a summary of the proposed research. The summary should be an abstract of the proposed research.

For further information on writing a clear lay summary, please see the INVOLVE [GUIDELINES](#)

Background: Outline what the background is to this application. Is it a continuation of your existing research or is it a new area?

Research need: Why is this research needed?

Research Questions and Aims/Objectives: What is the research questions(s) being addressed and why? What are the aims and objectives?

Impact and Benefits: What will the impact be of this research to people affected by blood cancer? If successful, when will the benefits of your research reach patients?

Research Landscape: How does this piece of research complement the wider relevant research landscape? Is there a gap that this research aims to address?

Next steps: If the research is successful, what are the next steps after this research project? What further research will be needed?

Main applicant

The principal investigator (PI) of the research proposal. The PI has overall responsibility for the delivery and reporting of the grant. Applicants who hold time-limited posts should state the duration of the appointment. The PI must ensure that the terms and conditions of the award are met. The PI must be based at a UK university, hospital or other recognised higher research institution.

The pre-populated details are those we have stored for you. Please ensure that they are accurate. To amend them, save and close the application and visit the 'Manage My Details' section.

Main applicant's CV

The pre-populated details are those we have stored for you. Please ensure that they are accurate. To amend them, save and close the application and visit the 'Manage My Details' section.

Co-applicants

A co-applicant is an investigator who will contribute equal time and intellectual input to the project as the Main Applicant, and who will have equal status on the grant.

Add details of all co-applicants who will be involved with the project. You will be able to select individuals who already have a Grant Tracker account with us. Individuals who do not have an account with us will be asked to register and will be sent details via an automated email.

Co-investigator

A co-investigator is an investigator who will provide significant intellectual input, as well as overseeing some aspects of the experimental work.

If the co-investigator you are adding is also going to be paid from the grant, then please tick the 'staff member' box. This will automatically add their name(s) into the staff section on the finance pages.

Collaborators

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

Please note, collaborators added on this page will be provided with details on how to access the system to view the application PDF. They will not however have access to edit the application form.

Administrators

The pre-award administrator role is for someone in addition to the Head of Research Office equivalent or the PI, to help with input of aspects of the application, e.g. finances or text. They will not be able to validate or submit the application (that can only be done by the PI) and their role is only relevant during the pre-submission stage. The individual to be the pre-award administrator should register with Grant Tracker.

Finance & costs

Staff members: Programme Continuity Grants are expected to support full-time or part-time staff members. Full-time PhD students and clinical staff are not normally permitted to be members of staff on project grants. Eligible staff include postdoctoral research assistants, research assistants and technicians. Salaries are expected to be costed by the host institution's research office according to an applicable pay model. Salary enhancements or other locally agreed supplements are not eligible.

Blood Cancer UK recognises that senior postdoctoral and technical staff are a vital resource that can be hard to fund and that many applicants may wish to prioritise. However, funding committees require substantial insight into the quality of named individuals to feel comfortable making a funding recommendation. Senior positions should be supported by the submission of a full CV and a supporting statement from the PI that clearly sets out the role that the individual has played in the success of the programme, their proposed career path and the reason for continuing to support their post through grant funding at this stage (this can be included in the 'Justification for Support' section).

Applicants should also consider submitting a supporting statement from their host institution setting out their future commitment to supporting the individual(s) if grant funding is provided.

Applicants must attach copies of salary scales. Add your figures to each box: basic salary, NI, Superannuation, London allowance (if applicable) and inflation.

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

Equipment: We assume that there is a basic level of equipment provision by the host institution. Applicants can include small item(s) of essential equipment (costing less than £25,000 in total) which are needed for the proposed research.

Items of equipment greater than £5,000 must include a written estimate of cost. Written confirmation is also required if an item of equipment is to be co-funded by the host

institution. The equipment must not be disposed of during the period of the grant without Blood Cancer UK's prior written approval.

Blood Cancer UK does not provide funds for computers and/or software unless essential to the proposed research. A justification must be provided if computers and/or software are costed. The cost for a computer must not exceed £700. The cost for specific software must also be included.

Animals: Include all costs related to the use of animals including costs for purchase, maintenance and experimental procedures listed separately. Animal costs must be accompanied by accurate numbers and costs together with a full justification of usage in the Ethics and use of animals section of the application.

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

Grant holders should make use of the [ARRIVE](#) guidelines when designing their experiments, and ensure that they report in vivo studies in accordance with the ARRIVE guidelines as far as possible.

Recurrent costs: Details of recurrent costs should be detailed here and fully justified in the 'Additional details: Justification for support' section of the proposal. Please specify major items of consumables with accompanying details; for example, if 'Microarrays' is an item, please enter the number and type of array in the 'detail' box.

Stipends and fees for further study and payments to other funding bodies are not acceptable costs. Travel costs, such as a collaborative research visit are eligible only if integral to the project.

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

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

- Directly-incurred costs – direct costs of the research, such as:
 - Research staff
 - Recurrent costs and costs directly attributable to the project
 - Equipment specific to the needs of the research
- Directly-allocated costs – shared costs, based on estimates and do not represent actual costs on a project-by-project basis, such as:
 - Investigators: the time spent by the Principal Investigator, Co-Applicants and Co-Investigators
 - Estates
 - Shared resources, such as administrative and clerical staff and equipment

- Indirect costs – necessary for underpinning research but cannot be allocated to individual projects, and cover computing and information support, central services, general maintenance and other infrastructure costs

Applicants must justify all aspects of funding requested; detailing responsibilities of any staff employed on the award.

Publications: Blood Cancer UK grant holders are expected to acknowledge Blood Cancer UK in all publications. Publication costs are not eligible to be included as a cost in your application. Blood Cancer UK is a partner in the Charities Open Access Fund (COAF) and open access costs (article processing charges) should be applied for from the COAF university block grant. If the university is not an eligible institution or has used the block grant, grant holders can request from Blood Cancer UK that grant underspend is used to cover the cost.

If the journal is not compliant with our [open access policy](#), grant holders can request from Blood Cancer UK that grant underspend is used to cover the cost with a justification for publishing in a non-compliant journal.

Travel: Travel for conferences to present research outputs directly from the award is an allowable cost for the staff member(s) employed on the grant. Costs include standard travel, accommodation and conference fees. Blood Cancer UK grant holders are expected to acknowledge Blood Cancer UK in all presentations and/or posters. The maximum allowance is £750 per year (pro rata). For example, for a 3-year award, the maximum allowance would be £2,250 and can be spread over years two and three or all in year three. Travel costs for conferences must be a separate budget line in the recurrent costs section.

In order to access the travel budget, grant holders must inform Blood Cancer UK prior to attending the conference and provide a copy of the accepted abstract.

Ineligible costs: Ineligible costs include:

- Costs relating to staff recruitment and relocation costs
- Apprenticeship levy
- PhD student tuition fees
- Personal license fees and a Home Office license
- Funding to provide maintenance and/or insurance of equipment
- Office stationery costs unless required for the project and justified accordingly
- Indemnity insurance
- Training courses (including Home Office animal license courses)

Signatories

Please add the details of the signatories required to sign-off the application. The Head of Department and Finance Officer details should be completed. Once the application has been submitted, the signatories will be asked to approve the application online. A workflow diagram can be found on our website.

Other funding

Currently Submitted Elsewhere: If this application is currently being submitted elsewhere, please add the organisation and date of decision.

Previously Submitted Elsewhere: If this application been submitted elsewhere in the past year, list the organisation and result of the submission.

Currently supported: If your related research is currently being supported by another organisation, please list the topic, supporting organisation, value and tenure.

Patentable or commercially exploitable results: If appropriate, please provide information on the IP potential of your research, if there is any existing IP associated with your project and how this will be managed.

IP is defined as patents, copyright, trademarks, trade names, service marks, domain names copyrights, moral rights, rights in and to databases (including rights to prevent the extraction or reutilisation of information from a database), design rights, topography rights and all rights or forms of protection of a similar nature or having equivalent or the similar effect to any of them which may subsist anywhere in the world, whether or not any of them are registered and including applications for registration of any of them.

Where appropriate, explain how you will engage with your Technology Transfer/Enterprise Office.

Grants

In the last five years, please list all the grants awarded to the Principal Investigator that were not awarded by Blood Cancer UK and grants that were awarded by Blood Cancer UK.

Major Disease Area Classifications

Please select one classification from the list. This will help Blood Cancer UK categorise the applications we receive.

Focus Classifications

Please select one classification from the list. This will help Blood Cancer UK categorise the applications we receive.

CSO Classifications

Please select up to four classifications from the list. This will help Blood Cancer UK categorise the applications we receive.

Attachments

Please note that only text can be added to the background & proposal section of the application form. However, files can be attached to the application. These will be saved in a separate zipped file and referenced in the application form on the 'Attachments' page.

Some file types can be embedded at the end of the application file.

Documents that can't be embedded and will therefore be attached include .docX, .xls, .xlsx, PNG, PDF.

Documents that will be embedded include JPEG, GIF, .doc (please note these can also be attached, if preferred, please select via the tick box prompt).

The following must be attached to the application:

- GANTT chart
- University salary scales
- CV(s) of named staff members
- If appropriate, collaborator(s)' letters of support
- If appropriate, written cost estimates for equipment
- If appropriate, any other relevant documents

End

You have now completed the application form. Please save and close if you need to work on the application at a later date.

To submit your application, please click 'validate' then 'save' and 'close'. If you are sure you are happy with the application form, then click 'submit'.

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