



Oesophageal Cancer Fund

***Research Grant  
Application  
Guidance***

Oesophageal Cancer Fund  
Research Scientific Committee



Oesophageal  
Cancer Fund

# Contents

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<b>A] Scientific Committee, Funding Schemes, Eligibility &amp; Contact Details</b>	3-4
1. Introduction	
2. Research Scientific Advisory Committee	
3. Programme Grants	
4. Project Grants	
5. Small Grants	
6. Eligibility	
7. Contact Information	
<b>B] Completing the Application Form</b>	4-8
1. General	
2. Completing an Application Form	
<b>C] The Research Proposal</b>	8-9
1. Format	
2. Appendices & Supporting Documentation	
<b>D] Submission</b>	9
<b>E] Receipt &amp; Processing of Applications</b>	10
1. Acknowledgement of Applications	
2. Processing of Applications	
<b>F] Review Procedures</b>	
<b>G] Confidentiality</b>	
<b>H] Feedback</b>	
<b>I] Revision / Resubmission of an Application</b>	
<b>J] Award of a Research Grant</b>	
<b>K] Terms &amp; Conditions for Research Grants</b>	
<b>Checklist before submission</b>	11

### **A] SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE, FUNDING SCHEMES, ELIGIBILITY & CONTACT DETAILS**

#### **1. Introduction**

The vision of the Oesophageal Cancer Fund (OCF) is to improve patient and public awareness and treatment for oesophageal cancer, leading to earlier diagnosis and improved outcomes across the spectrum of the disease. The OCF has four main purposes, each of which describes what we will do to achieve our vision:

- To support world-class research and improve our understanding of oesophageal cancer and find out how better to prevent, diagnose and treat oesophageal cancer;
- To ensure that research findings, supported by OCF, are used to improve the lives of all oesophageal cancer patients and their families;
- To help people to understand oesophageal cancer, raise awareness of symptoms and the need for prompt investigation, the progress we are making and the choices each person can make;
- To work in partnership with other stakeholders and funding bodies to achieve the greatest impact in the fight against oesophageal cancer.

The OCF will only consider research proposals that deal with oesophageal cancer and that deal with a definite research objective. Clinical research can be aimed at any aspect of the disease spectrum, including epidemiology, prevention, diagnosis, assessment and staging, and management of oesophageal cancer. For example, public health awareness and epidemiological studies are welcomed as are studies which investigate symptom palliation and quality of life. National collaborative studies are preferred as these complement the National profile of the OCF fundraising profile. Preference will be given to applications which clearly demonstrate processes for working in conjunction with other funding bodies. The OCF considers its role to complement rather than substitute for other streams of funding.

These guidelines are designed to help you prepare a grant application to the Scientific Advisory Committee of the OCF and to explain our procedures for processing your application. Please complete your application in conjunction with these guidelines and adhere to our Terms & Conditions.

In general, it is not the policy of the OCF to fund projects involving animal research. If you feel it necessary to include a research project using animals, within your application, please submit a separate report justifying this.

#### **2. Research Scientific Advisory Committee**

The Research Scientific Advisory Committee (RSAC) considers programme and project grant applications in clinical and translational research in the field of oesophageal cancer. Applications are judged on the basis of scientific excellence, innovation and potential impact on policy and practice.

When the RSAC advertises for research applications the deadline for receipt of completed applications will usually be 6 weeks later. The RSAC will then meet to review the applications and draw up a short list for submission to the peer review process. The RSAC will then meet again to incorporate the peer reviews into the final adjudication of the applications. The aim is to announce the successful application(s) within 4 months of the closing date for submissions.

#### **3. Programme Grants**

Programme grants provide long-term (3 year, up to €500,000) support for broad, multidisciplinary research where the aim is to answer an interrelated set of questions with a common theme. In addition to the usual scientific considerations, strategic issues are also likely to bear on the decision to award a programme grant. Programme grants, which meaningfully address national collaboration across multiple sites and disciplines in order to accurately reflect the spectrum of oesophageal cancer and interested parties, will be considered favourably. Programme leaders will be outstanding individuals with an established scientific track record in the field of oesophageal cancer. Programme grants which demonstrate ability to attract funding from other grant awarding bodies will be entertained.

The RSAC will consider continuance of programme grants on an annual basis and this decision will be based on receiving satisfactory annual reports from the programme leader.

#### **4. Project Grants**

Project grants provide support for a defined piece of work with objectives that can be achieved within the time specified. Applications are considered for up to two years of funding (up to €100,000), however, applications for shorter time periods will be considered if appropriate to a particular project. In some instances, support may be awarded for a short pilot study but in general an application will be strengthened by completion of a pilot study before submitting proposals. Such pilot studies may be better positioned within the Small Grants application process. Projects that offer added value to existing programme grants will be favoured.

In exceptional circumstances applications for extensions to current grants are also considered by the RSAC. The OCF does not limit the number of applications from an individual each year but would expect the projects to be related within a larger body of work.

#### **5. Small Grants**

The Small Grants Scheme aims to provide support for applications from junior investigators and / or feasibility / pilot studies. Funding is available for up to a total of €40,000 for durations of up to 18 months. As with project grants, small grants provide support for a defined piece of work with objectives that can be achieved in the time specified. Individuals who hold OCF programme or project grant funding are not themselves eligible to apply for small grant funding. Instead they are advised to encourage junior investigators in their research team to apply. In such situations, a clear justification of how the proposed research differs from that already supported and why it cannot be carried out within the confines of that funding, must be provided within the application.

#### **6. Eligibility**

Applications will be accepted from clinicians, scientists or health care workers in Irish universities, medical schools, hospitals and research institutions. Cross border and International research will be supported but the lead researcher should be based in the Republic of Ireland.

The OCF welcomes applications proposing joint support for research with other funding bodies.

#### **7. Contact Information**

If you have any queries regarding your application please contact the OCF by email in the first instance: [info@lollipopday.ie](mailto:info@lollipopday.ie) Please include your contact number(s) with your email and indicate if you would like a member of the RSAC to contact you to discuss your application.

## **B] COMPLETING THE APPLICATION FORM**

### **1. General**

The research submission should consist of the completed application form, a separate research proposal, the full CV of the lead investigator and a one page CV for all co-applicants and research staff named on the application form.

The application form is divided into several sections and can be obtained by emailing the OCF at [info@lollipopday.ie](mailto:info@lollipopday.ie) Please complete the form and submit it along with your covering letter and research proposal via email, paper copies will not be accepted. The application form itself should not exceed the nine pages in total.

Please refer to the checklist to ensure your application is complete before submission. Incorrectly submitted application packs will be returned to the sender without being considered by the RSAC.

### **2. Completing an Application Form**

There are four sections to this form to be completed.

#### **Section 1: Admin Authority**

This section must identify the appropriate administrative authority in the host institution. If your application involves multiple administrative authorities add all of these to the application. The administrative authority identified as Primary will be the Institution / Organisation that will receive the financial payments of the award from the OCF should the application be successful.

- The name of the applicant will be considered to be the lead investigator.
- Co-investigators should be identified separately from named research staff to be involved with the application.
- A CV is to be included for each named person on the application form.
- Only the information requested in the following sections is required.

### **(1) Lead Investigator**

- **Qualifications:** Enter the date of the award, title and the awarding body of up to six qualifications. Please list your most recent qualification first.
- **Current post:** Please ensure that you list your current post, full job title and date of commencement.
- **Previous positions held:** Please list all previous positions held, with your job title, location and name of the group leader you worked for where the position involved a research component.
- **Publications:** Please provide the number of your peer reviewed full publications broken down into the number of first author, last author and total publications. Please list up to 15 key peer reviewed publications from within the last five years that are relevant to the application. Publications should be in chronological order with the most recent first. Applicants must give the citation in full.

### **(2) Co-investigator**

A co-investigator is a researcher who will provide significant intellectual input into the research and will be responsible for the day to day running of some aspects of the work. The OCF recognises the significance of co-investigator status by naming co-investigators on grant award letters and by requiring co-investigators to agree to participate in the annual review process.

A co-investigator may be identified as a Joint Principal Investigator but this should be justified by the applicants and there is still a need to identify a single Principal Applicant. The CV of the co-investigators should include: Qualifications, Current Post, Previous positions held and publications using the same guidance as under the section for lead investigator. Please do not include full CVs or publication lists as these will be returned for amendment before the application is processed.

### **(3) Named Research Staff**

An up to date CV and recent publication list must be included for any senior staff member to be appointed (post-doctoral or clinical) if these are known at the time of the application. Please note that only the qualifications, current post, previous positions held and recent publications are required as in the other sections above.

### **(4) Collaborations**

A collaborator is an individual who is named in the application and who has agreed to supply research materials, specific expertise or access to patients, but will not be involved in the day to day running of the project. CVs are not required for collaborators. Collaborators are required to submit a signed letter of support and the applicant must provide a clear explanation of the role of the collaborator within the research proposal.

## **Section 2: Research proposal outline**

### **2.1 Research Proposal Title**

The title should accurately reflect the content of the proposal but must not be longer than 250 characters (including spaces).

### **2.2 Proposed Start Date**

The proposed start date must be the first day of any given month and within six months of the RSAC committee meeting date. Adequate time must be allowed for the necessary review and award procedures to be completed.

### **2.3 Duration of Project**

Depending on the grant being applied for (programme, project, small project) this will be between 12 and 36 months.

### **2.4 Research Goals**

If your application is successful this information may be published. For this reason you should not include information that you do not wish to be made public such as commercially sensitive data.

## **2.5 Type of Application**

The following types of application can be made:

- **New application**
- **Revised application:** revised applications are only accepted when specifically requested by the OCF RSAC.
- **Extension:** The PI can request an extension of the funding for an existing award.

## **2.6 Research Abstract**

The research abstract should provide a succinct summary of the proposal but should not exceed 400 words. It must be structured to give; (1) A brief background to the proposal; (2) the relevance to oesophageal cancer patients; (3) the specific aims of the research (including information on hypothesis and outcomes); and (4) an outline plan of research (including information on the proposed methods).

The research abstract may be made public by the OCF. For this reason you should not include information that you do not wish to be made public such as commercially sensitive data.

## **Section 3: Financial Details**

OCF will pay the directly incurred costs of research. OCF will not pay either directly allocated or indirect costs on research awards. Awards are made on the understanding that the host institution will meet directly allocated and indirect costs including lighting, heating, central support salaries, costs of equipment maintenance, telephones, photocopying, postage etc, use of library facilities, and general office and laboratory equipment. Access charges for use of a specific piece of equipment may be acceptable. All applicants are required to complete an Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) Full Economic Costing (FEC) information form.

### **3.1 Financial Details – Staff**

Grant applications may include requests for the salaries of staff at post-doctoral, clinical or technical levels or on administrative scales.

If it is anticipated that staffing requirements will change during the grant the financial implications of this must be included and full justification included.

Please indicate for each salary requested the duration of the post within the project. All staff details and costs must be agreed with the research services office of the host institution where the worker will be employed. The pay scale and commencement point in operation at the institution should be included with the application. The salary costs being requested should include the incremental increases associated with the relevant pay scales. Please enter the exact salary for each year within the project for each post. Staff posts that are for only part of the year should be entered as a percentage full time equivalent e.g. a 6 month full time post should be entered as 50% full time equivalent.

Please enter a total for staff salaries requested for each year of the project.

### **3.2 Financial Administration Contact Details**

Contact information should be provided for the staffing administrator responsible for supplying the salary costing information.

### **3.3 Running Expenses**

Please provide a detailed breakdown of running expenses anticipated for the first year of the project. If the application is for an award longer than 12 months in duration the subsequent running costs will be calculated on the basis of the first year's costs. If it is anticipated that there will be a significant variation in running costs in subsequent years of the award please make these clear at this point.

Running expenses may include contributions for the central use of facilities or charges for the use of specialised equipment where these are required for the research project. Requests for travel expenses to attend conferences and meetings should not be included as part of the grant application, even if this is for the presentation of the results. Costs of travel forming an integral part of the project can be included.

### **3.4 Equipment**

OCF assumes a basic level of equipment provision by the host institution and applications should be limited to items required specifically for the research proposed.

A full justification for the equipment request must be included. The equipment requirements for the full duration of the project must be included since further requests will not be considered in subsequent years of the award. Equipment requests on project grants should not normally exceed €30,000.

### **3.5 HSE Support Costs**

If the proposed research involves patients and / or will be conducted within the confines of the HSE it is expected that the HSE will support the research by meeting associated patient care costs. Applicants have a duty to inform the relevant HSE research offices within the host institutions of the possible support and service implications of any proposed research at the earliest opportunity and must indicate within the research proposal that the relevant providers have been notified and provide an update on the status of such discussions within the application.

Where appropriate please include an indication of how existing services such as multidisciplinary teams and cancer networks will interface and support the project within the relevant institutions.

## **Section 4: Additional Research Information**

### **4.1 Animal Studies**

Please clearly state if any aspect of the proposed research uses animals. In general it is not the policy of the OCF to support research involving animals so any intended animal use would need to be justified clearly and a statement provided to demonstrate that the proposed research complies with existing regulations concerning animal research.

### **4.2 Human Studies**

In all studies involving patients, patient tissues or patient information, the necessary approval must be obtained before the funding of the research, if awarded, can be released. It is the responsibility of the applicant and their host institutions(s) to ensure compliance with all legal requirements and ethics approval.

The OCF accepts that research funding arrangements must generally be put in place before ethical committee approval can be sought and finalised. However, no funding will be released until an original letter of confirmation of approval has been provided. Applicants are advised to take this into account when determining the start date for their award.

### **4.3 Commercial Outputs**

OCF is a medical charity and is obliged to ensure that OCF funded research is used and disseminated so that the understanding, diagnosis and treatment of oesophageal cancer is maximised for the benefit of oesophageal cancer patients and the general population. If it is anticipated that any commercial interests will interfere with this information flow process it must be clearly stated and justified.

### **4.4 Other OCF Support**

If the applicant, principal investigator or co-investigators has already held, or currently holds, an OCF grant award please provide details.

A statement should be included explaining how the new application would fit in with any of the identified or existing OCF support.

### **4.5 Submission History of this Application**

If this application or a similar application has been submitted to another organisation please enter details here. The OCF does not discriminate against applications that are also being considered elsewhere, however, failure to disclose details of such applications will be considered a breach of OCF Terms & Conditions. Should funding be offered by more than one agency the applicant will be invited to choose which grant to accept. The OCF will not duplicate the support provided by another funding body.

The OCF encourages applicants for programme grants to identify funding partners for separate aspects of the programme. Each funding domain must be clearly identified and overlap will be discouraged. There are occasions where

traditional funding organisations are unwilling to fund certain aspects of a programme or project grant application and the OCF may consider support in such circumstances. Please clearly communicate your vision for this collaborative process here and include any information about and from these organisations which helps clarify their exact roles and relationships in connection with this application.

#### **4.6 Awards from Other Organisations**

Details should be given of any other awards from other research organisations either currently awaiting decision or already held by either yourself or any co-investigator.

#### **4.7 Information About the Application Co-ordinator**

If not applying for funding for your own salary, please ensure that you list the source of the funding for your post. For source of funding please enter the funding body e.g. HSE, University, etc and the type of support, e.g. Senior Lecturer, University Chair, Consultant etc. If you are not applying for personal support as part of this application your position MUST be secure for the duration of the proposed award period. If you are a clinician please state your weekly research percentage time.

#### **4.8 Peer Review**

If your project is potentially suitable for funding the OCF RSAC will request a peer review before a final decision is made. In addition to the panel of experts nominated by the OCF we may seek peer review from experts nominated by you. Please nominate up to three reviewers and supply full contact details for each reviewer. Usually you would have sought their consent before nominating them.

## **C] THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

### **1. Format**

No forms are provided for the research proposal itself. The research proposal should adhere to the suggested format below. Text should be single line spaced and you should use Arial point 11 in black. All pages should be numbered and the surname and initials of the principal applicant should be included in a header or footer.

- Programme Grant applications should not exceed 7,000 words (excluding the reference list, figures, figure legends, and justification for support).
- Project Grant applications should not exceed 2,500 words (excluding the reference list, figures and figure legends).
- Small Grant applications should not exceed 1,700 words (excluding the reference list, figures and figure legends).
- In fairness to our referees and committee reviewers, applications that exceed their limit significantly will be returned for revision.

Please try to organise the proposal under the headings detailed below.

#### **1.1 Purpose**

State briefly the objectives of the proposed research and the significance of the results that may be obtained (e.g. eventual clinical application, impact on policy and practice) and their relevance to oesophageal cancer. State your hypothesis and the aims of your research.

#### **1.2 Background**

- Review the current literature and knowledge base relevant to your project and clearly demonstrate the need to undertake your programme / project.
- Provide a succinct summary of your teams' current and other published work relating to the purpose of the proposed new research.

#### **1.3 Detailed Research Plan**

The plan of the study or programme of work should be described with details of the techniques and analysis which will be used to test the proposed hypotheses. Applications where there is a major administrative component to the methodology e.g. clinical audit, cancer registration, epidemiology and public health will need to be quite specific in detailing the processes to be set up and their administration. In such cases please provide evidence of previous experience, within the project or programme team, in running projects on similar scales of administration and data management.

Where possible, preliminary data in support of the proposed new research should be included. Reference should be made to the applicants published work where the relevant techniques or methods have been applied, or an indication of the availability of the appropriate expertise should be included. Any research findings or methods that have yet to be published must be incorporated into the body of the text. Manuscripts not accepted for publication may not be appended.

Whenever appropriate applicants should include within the proposal how individuals have been involved with the development of the study and will continue to be involved as the research progresses. Copies of patient information sheets and consent forms should be included.

#### **1.4 Timescale & Potential Problems**

Please give an indication of the milestones and time-scales for the various components of the plan. Any potential logistic or scientific problems should be identified and solutions or alternative plans proposed. Applications involving large databases and data management must identify the appropriate expertise within the research team to construct and deliver the study requirements within the specified timescales.

#### **1.5 Justification for Support Requested**

Applicants should fully justify each individual cost listed in section 3 of the application form (staff costs, running expenses and equipment) as appropriate, giving details of the levels requested. If additional costs are anticipated in the second or subsequent years of the grant, then these should be noted here.

For programme grants requesting multiple staff, it should be clear from the justification how staff will be deployed across the different components of the research programme over time.

For each piece of equipment the following should be stated: (1) description or title; (2) the manufacturer's name; (3) price quoted excluding VAT; (4) installation, delivery costs and any import or other tax that might be levied. Please note that maintenance costs for equipment funded within the grant award can be included as running costs and should be entered within the running costs section and detailed for each year of the proposed research.

#### **1.6 References**

Please give the citation in full, including title of paper and all authors.

#### **2. Appendices & Supporting Documentation**

Applicants may submit appendix material in support of an application. Appendices should not exceed 4 pages for project grants and 8 pages for programme grants. Reprints of papers which have been peer reviewed and accepted for publication are not required within an application unless the data or the methodology is directly applicable to the proposal and has not yet been published.

#### **3. Ethics committee & regulatory approval**

Applicants should include ethics committee and regulatory approval for any research proposed. Please refer to section 4.2 above.

### **D] SUBMISSION**

On completion, applicants are advised to contact their administration authority before submitting the application to the OCF. The applicant should include written authorisation for the application to go ahead from the appropriate administrative authority for the host institution.

The application should be submitted by email to the OCF RSAC at [info@lollipopday.ie](mailto:info@lollipopday.ie) The OCF accepts no responsibility for accepting applications which arrive after the submission deadline or do not adhere to the guidelines and format suggested within this document.

### **E] RECEIPT & PROCESSING OF APPLICATIONS**

#### **1. Acknowledgement of Applications**

Receipt of the application will be acknowledged in writing (email, fax or letter) within two weeks of the closing date for submission.

## **2. Processing of Applications**

If there is a problem with the application, or if any of the required attachments are missing, the application will be returned to you, in which case you must return it properly completed, before the closing date for submission. If it is not possible to include any documents please state and explain this clearly within the submission. No grant will be awarded until all the required documentation has been received.

### **F] REVIEW PROCEDURES**

The OCF is committed to the application of peer review in the assessment of the research it funds. All applications will be reviewed by experts in the field. In-house expertise, represented by the membership of the RSAC, is in most cases supplemented by written assessments by external reviewers. These reports will not be routinely made available to the applicant. If the RSAC considers that a successful application will be strengthened by the peer report it will be made available. External reviewers' reports will be taken into account when considering applications but other factors relating to the OCF's portfolio and priorities will also influence the Committee's decision. In all cases the RSAC's decisions are final.

### **G] CONFIDENTIALITY**

The OCF requests its reviewers to consider all applications in confidence but if an applicant has any concerns regarding confidentiality of any data or proposals this should be indicated clearly in a covering letter. If necessary the OCF will contact the applicant to discuss any steps that need to be taken to preserve the confidentiality of the application.

### **H] FEEDBACK**

While the OCF aims to provide feedback on applications, applicants are reminded that the decisions of the RSAC are final. Applicants are asked to note that feedback on an application will only be provided by the RSAC. To ensure the impartiality of the review process committee members cannot discuss committee decisions with applicants and applicants must not approach a committee member directly. The impartiality of the process is of the highest importance and the OCF reserves the right not to consider applications from individuals who compromise its integrity.

### **I] REVISION / RESUBMISSION OF AN APPLICATION**

The OCF does not generally accept resubmitted applications, unless this is recommended and requested by the RSAC.

### **J] AWARD OF A RESEARCH GRANT**

Once an application for financial support has been approved a grant will only be awarded when the OCF is satisfied that all the necessary conditions have been met.

Before any grant can be awarded the OCF may require that a satisfactory arrangement between the host institution and the OCF is in place for the administration of the monies provided. The OCF does not require an arrangement for intellectual property and commercial exploitation of OCF funded research.

### **K] TERMS & CONDITIONS FOR RESEARCH GRANTS**

Please take time to study the Terms & Conditions under which the OCF grants are awarded. Along with the Grant Award Letter these form the contract between the OCF, the host institution and the grant holder and must be adhered to by all parties.



Oesophageal  
Cancer Fund

# Checklist before submission

## 1. Covering letter

## 2. Application Form

### Section 1: Admin Authority

*CV for each researcher*  
*Collaborators letters of Support*

### Section 2: Proposal Outline

### Section 3: Financial Details

*Pay scale and commencement point details*

### Section 4: Additional Research Information

## 3. Research Proposal

*Purpose / Hypothesis / Aims*

*Background – Literature and Team*

*Detailed Research Plan*

*Patient Information and Consent Forms*

*Timescales*

*Funding Justification*

*References*

*Appendices / Supporting Documents*

*Ethics Committee and Regulatory Approval*

Please make sure that all the necessary relevant documents are completed before you submit your application.