



National Research Grant Round 2025

Application Guidelines

PhD Scholarship

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1. Introduction

1.1 Document purpose

The aim of the Cancer Society's National Grant Round is to fund high-quality research across the cancer continuum (including prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and supportive care). These guidelines are for those who wish to apply for a PhD Scholarship.

1.2 About the Cancer Society of New Zealand

The Cancer Society's mission is to improve community wellbeing by reducing the incidence and impact of cancer. Our activities include:

- supporting and funding research within New Zealand across the cancer continuum;
- providing supportive care and information to people affected by cancer, their families/whānau and carers;
- promoting education about cancer for health professionals and publicising progress made in research and treatment;
- delivering health promotion programmes focused on cancer prevention;
- leading advocacy across the cancer continuum; and
- working collaboratively with organisations who share similar goals to the Cancer Society.

The Cancer Society is reliant on funding support from the communities in which it works.

The Cancer Society is committed to equity and has an Equity Charter that guides all our mahi. To read our Equity Charter, please go to <https://www.cancer.org.nz/about-us/who-we-are/equity-charter/>

1.3 Contact information

Please contact the Cancer Society's Research Manager, Dr Nicole Stanton, with any questions during the grant application process at research@cancer.org.nz or 021915975.

2. Scope

The Cancer Society will consider any research grant application that is relevant to cancer outcomes across the continuum. Applications peripheral to cancer research will not be considered.

3. Eligibility

Description	Maximum value of award	Maximum grant duration
PhD scholarships provide funding for students to undertake advanced research in the field of cancer, leading to a Doctorate in Philosophy from a New Zealand University/Wānanga.	\$135,000 (\$35,000 p.a. stipend + up to \$10,000 p.a. towards university fees/research expenses/travel/thesis publication)	36 months

The Cancer Society PhD scholarship is open to New Zealand citizens or permanent residents of New Zealand who are eligible for registration as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at a New Zealand University or Wānanga.

Priority will be given to PhD scholarship applications in areas where grant opportunities are limited.

PhD students may undertake teaching or clinical duties relevant to their research, with their supervisor's approval.

Grantees may request permission for study leave according to the criteria of their institution.

Additional income may be derived, provided that this does not interfere with the course of study.

Overseas tenure is not normally permitted.

4. Application process and timelines

All grants will be awarded by open competition (for all individuals who meet the eligibility criteria to apply for funding). Applications will be assessed by the Cancer Society’s National Scientific Advisory Committee (NSAC). The final funding decision will be made by the Cancer Society’s National Board. Applications will be assessed through several stages:

25 March 2025	PhD Applications Open
30 June 2025	Deadline for PhD Applications (1 pm, submitted via the grant portal)
August 2025	The NSAC meet to review the applications and make a recommendation to the Cancer Society’s National Board.
September 2025	The Cancer Society’s National Board considers the NSAC’s recommendation and makes a final funding decision.
October 2025	Applicants notified of outcome

The Cancer Society may refuse to consider an application if it considers actions of the applicant to be contrary to the interests of the Cancer Society or may bring the Cancer Society into disrepute.

4.1 Submission

The application form should be completed and submitted by the applicant via the [Cancer Society Grant Portal](#) by **1 pm on 30 June 2025**.

4.2 Reporting

Applicants successful in receiving funding through the Grant Round will be required to submit annual progress reports and a final report. Reports will include a lay person’s summary which may be used to inform the public about the work we support, an update on the project’s timelines and milestones; whether they are met, partially met, or delayed, and an explanation for any delays. The Cancer Society recommends writing lay summaries at the **reading age of twelve years old**. Annual reports in Te Reo Māori must also provide the English translation. As part of the annual report, the supervisor must report on the student’s progress. Funding for the subsequent year will only be released upon receipt of a satisfactory annual report.

4.3 Privacy provisions

The information requested in an application will be used for assessing that application and, in a non-identifiable form, some information will be used for Cancer Society statistical purposes. All research applications will be stored in a secure place. Security and confidentiality will be preserved for any application declined. Personal information contained in the application may be made available to external referees and members of the Cancer Society National Scientific Advisory Committee reviewing the application. When an application is successful, the Cancer Society reserves the right to publish the applicant's name, details of the Host Institution, lay summary and funding awarded. The Cancer Society's Privacy Policy is provided online [here](#).

5. Assessment criteria

All applicants should demonstrate that their proposed research meets the following requirements:

- **Suitability of the applicant:** The applicant has the ability to carry out the proposed work, has a strong academic record, is motivated, and has a strong potential for a career in cancer research. Priority will be given to applicants in areas where grant opportunities are limited.
- **Training environment:** There is a strong commitment from supervisors, mentors and the Host Institution. Opportunities for training and career development have been actively identified and supported.
- **Rationale for research:** The proposal addresses important research questions and is likely to result in benefit for people affected by cancer or advancement in the scientific understanding of cancer.
- **Research design:** The objectives and deliverables are clear; the research design is appropriate.
- **Contribution to the goals of the Cancer Society:** The expected outcomes of the proposed research will add value and contribute to the goals of the Cancer Society. For further information on the strategic goals of the Cancer Society, please refer to the [Research Strategy](#).
- **Equity:** There is clear identification of how the research will contribute to equitable cancer outcomes across the continuum. For further information on the equity goals of the Cancer Society, please refer to the [Equity Charter](#).
- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** The proposal should demonstrate commitment and application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and responsiveness to Māori. Refer to this document: [Te Tiriti o Waitangi in Health Research in Aotearoa](#) to inform and discuss how your proposed work will include the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

6. Letters of Support

Letters of support must be provided with this application from the supervisor(s) and any other relevant persons, using our template which can be found [here](#). The supervisor(s) must confirm that the PhD applicant's project is appropriately resourced for the duration of the project.

7. Research ethics approval

All areas must be fully and accurately completed for this section to be accepted. List the full name of the accredited Ethics Committee(s) from which you are seeking approval. If ethical approval is not required, detailed reasons must be given.

General guidelines to applicants:

- It is the responsibility of the Host Institution to evaluate the ethics involved in any research on human or animal experiments or utilising personal information. However, the Cancer Society wishes to be fully informed on the ethical arrangements covering any work for which it supplies funds.
- The applicant must supply a copy of any submission for ethical approval that is awaiting approval and evidence of approval must be supplied to the Cancer Society before any research procedures involving animal or human materials, or personal information may commence.
- Research ethical approval(s) must come from an accredited Ethics Committee(s). Please refer to the HRC Research Ethics Guidelines for details on how to apply and a list of accredited Ethics Committees- <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/hrc-research-ethics-guidelines>
- If appropriate, more than one Ethics Committee approval may be necessary, for example, if the research geographically covers an area serviced by more than one committee or if human and animal studies will be undertaken. All committees applied to for approval should be listed.
- Where a dispute arises over the ethics of experimentation, the Cancer Society reserves the right to refer the matter to the Health Research Council Committee on Ethics and Research for arbitration.

Guidelines for applicants on research involving animals:

- Animals used for research purposes shall be lawfully acquired. They shall be kept and used in strict compliance with the relevant laws and by-laws.
- Any research project involving animals must be approved by a properly constituted Animal Ethical Advisory Committee and conform to the guidelines for Institutional Animal Ethics Committees, of the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee.
- An Act of Parliament (October 1984) established the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee, to advise the Minister of Agriculture. Further information on how to apply for Animal Ethics approval can be found here: <http://www.mpi.govt.nz/protection-and-response/animal-welfare/overview/national-animal-ethics-advisory-committee/>

Guidelines for applicants on research involving human subjects:

All research supported by the Cancer Society on human subjects must conform to the code of ethical principles established by the Health Research Council of New Zealand. In addition, research funded by

the Cancer Society must conform to the below principles¹:

- The applicant and any other researchers involved must be satisfied by forethought, by study of the literature, and by consultation that the proposed research is likely to contribute to the understanding of the matter being investigated.
- The Investigator must be satisfied that the research on human subjects is based as far as possible on the results of experiments conducted “in vitro” or on animals.
- The Investigator must be satisfied that adequate facilities will be used for the solution of the problem being investigated.
- The Investigator must be satisfied that the research will not impose unreasonable discomfort or hazard upon the subject. In order to ensure the safety of the subject in an untoward event, the Investigator must ensure that appropriately qualified persons are present during experiments and that proper facilities are at hand to ensure the safety of the subject in any emergency.
- The Investigator must modify appropriately or discontinue the research if it becomes apparent that the procedure is likely to cause unreasonable risk to the subject.
- Before the research project is undertaken, the Investigator must obtain the free informed consent of the subject or their guardian in writing and in the presence of a witness. The consent must be obtained without the exertion of pressure on the subject and without being dependent on any obligation of the subject toward the Investigator.
- The Investigator should be satisfied that the subject, or the guardian, has been informed, in terms capable of being understood, of the nature and purpose of the proposed research, the methods to be employed, and the possible risks and discomfort that may be involved.
- Special care must be taken in the case of subjects at particular risk, for example, children, the mentally infirm, the unconscious patient, and pregnant and nursing women. Children should never be the subjects of research which could appropriately be undertaken in adults and, in the case of unconscious patients, the written consent of the next of kin must always be obtained.
- The subject, or the guardian, shall be free at any time to withdraw consent for further participation in the research and must be made aware of their right in this respect. Such withdrawal does not in any way prejudice the subject’s further management and treatment as a patient.
- New therapeutic or experimental procedures which are at the stage of early evaluation, and which might have long-term effects should not be undertaken unless full provision has been made for long-term care and observation of the subject.

¹ Grants may be terminated at any time and without notice should the Cancer Society find that these principles have not been observed.

8. Contract information and institutional approval

Please ensure the appropriate individuals have signed the [Institutional Approval Form](#) confirming their support, before it is submitted to the Cancer Society:

- Applicant/ PhD candidate - The individual who will undertake the PhD research.
- Supervisor - The supervisor is the staff member at the Host Institution who accepts scientific responsibility for the conduct of the research supported by the Cancer Society. They are responsible to the Head of their institution and through them to the Cancer Society, for the direction of the research and for the associated expenditure.
- Head of Department - In the case of university-employed applicants, the Head of the appropriate Academic Department should sign the Agreement. When applicants are employed by a hospital, the Head of the appropriate Clinical Department should sign. If the applicant is a Head of Department, they should also sign this section.
- Authorised official on behalf of the Host Institution - The Host Institution is the university, hospital, or other institution which undertakes to provide facilities and accept overall responsibility for the conduct of the research and the administration of grant funds. The official authorised to sign for the Host Institution will be a matter for decision by that Institution. In the case of a university-employed applicant carrying out research on university property, the Vice-Chancellor or their nominee would normally sign. Where the research is to be carried out in a hospital, the Chief Executive or General Manager of the Company would normally sign for the Host Institution.

Successful applicants will be asked to sign a research contract. Our research contract template is available [here](#). Please read this carefully before submitting an application to the Cancer Society. Note, there may be changes to the contract prior to the 2025 Grant Round awards being made. When a matter relating to research arises and the Cancer Society does not have a stated policy the Cancer Society may follow any existing guidelines of the Health Research Council.

9. Grant Portal

Applications must be submitted through the Cancer Society Grant Portal. User guides for the Grant Portal can be found [here](#). Applicants must sign up for an account to access the application form, and the applicant must submit their application themselves using their account.

If you are having any issues accessing or using the portal, please contact Research Manager Dr Nicole Stanton at research@cancer.org.nz.

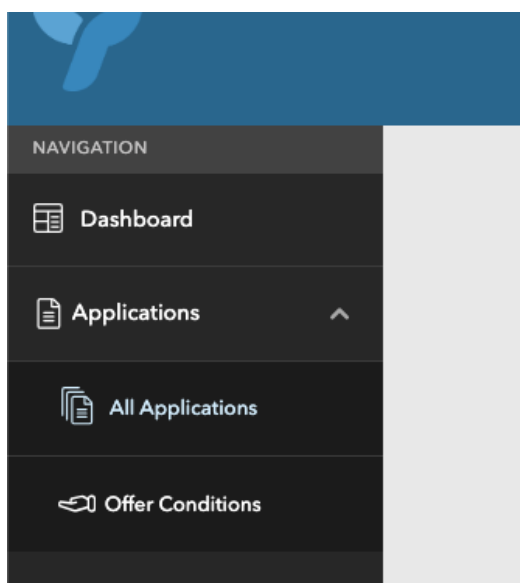
To get institutional approval for your application, we advise that you add your institution's Research Office as a collaborator on your application before it is submitted so it can be reviewed within the portal. Instructions on how to do this are below.

Adding Collaborators to an Application

There are two main ways to collaborate on a Funding Application:

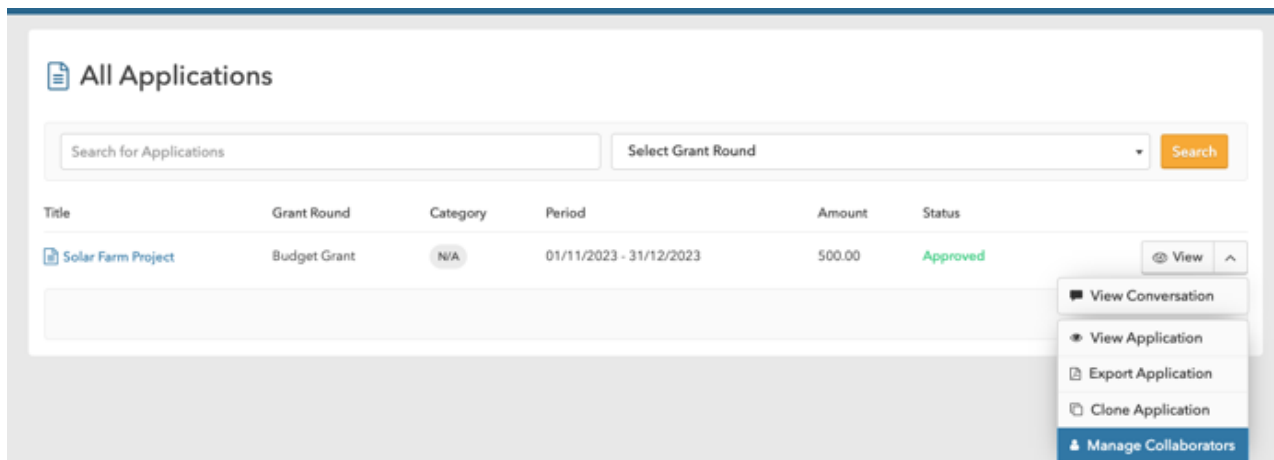
1. Invite a user into your organisation - this is a good option if you want to give the user full and equal access to your organisation and data associated with it, this is detailed [here](#).
2. Invite a user or organisation to be a direct collaborate on a funding application - this is a good option if you just want to give access to a collaborator to a particular funding application.

To do this navigate to your All Applications area and then find the application to which you want to add a collaborator:

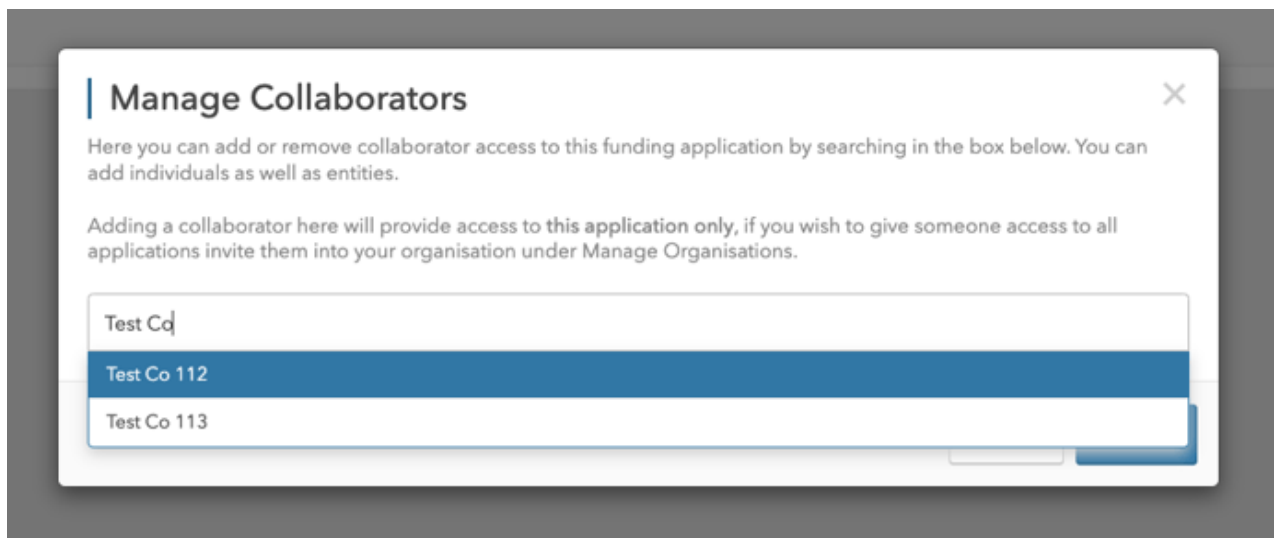


From the dropdown on the right of the application row there is a Manage Collaborators button or

if you View the Application there is also a Manage Collaborators button within that area.



Click on that button to bring up the Manage Collaborators pop up where you can search for people to add as Collaborators.



Select the person/s you want then click Update to confirm the selection. From this point the collaborator will receive a notification in their portal and from there be able to access the Application.

Most Institutional Research Offices should be available in this list, however if you can't find them you can simply enter their email address and it will send them a notification.

If at any point you want to remove a collaborator you can come back to this popup and remove their selection and press Update again. Also note that collaborators cannot add other collaborators, only the owner of the Application can manage these.

A note on word limits for each section of the application form

Lay summary: 150 words

Career Plans: 500 words

Academic Support: 500 words

Aims & Objectives: 100 words

Rationale: 200 words

Research Design: 300 words

Contribution to the Goals of the Cancer Society: 200 words

Equity: 150 words

Te Tiriti o Waitangi: 150 words

Available Funding Opportunities (if applicable): 200 words