



RESEARCH AWARDS

Information for Applicants

The Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneers Fund 2026 Funding Round 5

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Date: January 2026

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Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to assist applicants who have been invited to submit to Yorkshire Cancer Research (the “**Charity**”) for Awards from the Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneers Fund, as defined below. This document, and the guidance within it, relates only to the Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneers Fund (the “**Fund**”) 2026 Funding Round 5 (the “**Funding Round**”).

The application process is in two stages:

- Stage 1: The University of Sheffield’s Internal Outline stage. Approved applications from stage 1 are eligible to proceed to stage 2
- Stage 2: Full application to Yorkshire Cancer Research for external peer review and assessment.

The aim of this document is to provide guidance to applicants who have received stage 1 approval from The University of Sheffield.

The Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneers Fund

About the Fund

Yorkshire Cancer Research has established a unique funding stream that can only be applied for by principal researchers based at the University of Sheffield (the “**University**”). Yorkshire Cancer Research and the University have worked together to develop the Fund, which has been made possible following the success of cancer drugs discovered at the University with funding from the Charity. Proposals submitted to this fund must be for researchers to undertake cancer-related research that will ultimately improve the cancer outcomes for people within the region and beyond. The Fund is expected to help support cancer related research at the University for at least the next decade Any unallocated funding will be carried forward to future rounds. To ensure impartiality, Worldwide Cancer Research will perform the expert review of applications.

The Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneers Fund – 2026 Funding Round 5

Applications to the funding round are invited for Fellowship, Small Grants (Pump Priming) and Doctoral Training Programme (DTP) Awards. Proposals must deliver against one or more of the five themes from the University’s Cancer Research Strategy.

Whilst lead applicants must be based at the University, they may have named external Co-Applicants or second Principal Applicants whose work contributes to the University’s Cancer Research Strategy. This can include, for example, other UK or international higher education institutes, industrial partners, charities, and the public sector (including NHS) partners. The University must be the Host Institution.

Applications submitted to the Funding Round must have gone through the University’s application development and Internal Review Process and be approved by the University prior to making an application to the Fund. For more information on the Internal Review Process please contact Research, Partnerships and Innovation via ycr_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk.

All applicants should refer to the [Internal Outline Application Guidance Notes](#) produced by the University for full details regarding the University Cancer Research Strategy, research themes and types of Awards available.

Key Dates

The key dates for the Funding Round:

Funding Round opens	Weds 25 February 2026
Full Application Deadline	Weds 20 May 2026, 12:00 Noon
Peer Review Process Ends	October 2026
Funding Decisions Communicated to Applicants	January 2027*

*An initial indication of whether the project has been recommended for funding will be provided to applicants in November 2026, prior to formal ratification by the Board of Trustees.

General Considerations

General

- With the exception of External Fellowship Applicants, all Principal Applicants must be currently employed by the University of Sheffield. In practice, this means that applicants must be contracted by the University to work at least 50% of their Full Time Equivalent (FTE) at the University. Applicants who have “Open ended” or “Fixed Term” contracts are eligible to apply, however, they must either submit a letter of support from the University stating that their contract would continue for the duration of the Award, or provide details of the person who would lead the proposal in the event of a personnel change. Those not holding a substantive post should identify a suitable mentor/co-applicant (who holds a substantive post) to be a joint principal applicant. Honorary staff without a contract of employment at the University are not eligible to be a Principal Applicant or Fellowship Mentor on applications but can apply as Co-applicants.
- External Fellowship Applicants must demonstrate they have sponsorship and agreement from the respective Head of School that a University of Sheffield contract will be provided on successfully being awarded a Fellowship Award. A letter of support must be submitted confirming this agreement.
- All proposals must have a measurable output delivering the ambition of one or more of the University of Sheffield Cancer Research Strategy Themes.
- The Charity will only cover Directly Incurred costs. Indirect costs cannot be charged against the Award. Please consider all Directly Incurred costs anticipated throughout the lifetime of the Award.
- Sponsorship of clinical trial(s) must be confirmed prior to submitting your application.
- *Please note that any clinical trial proposals funded from the YCR Sheffield Pioneers scheme will **not be eligible to apply** for National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) [portfolio status](#). Thus, please ensure that you request additional funding in the application to replace any support you may have expected from the NIHR Clinical Research Network Portfolio (i.e. costs associated with recruitment, consent and research nurse involvement, data collection, additional tests/procedures, plus Excess treatment Costs).*
 - [AcoRD information](#)
 - [SoECAT guidance](#)
- Proposals must provide information on any Intellectual Property (IP) consideration of the host organisation that may impact the Award Terms as outlined in the supporting information provided to applicants.
- Once awarded, Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneer Fund Awards are not transferable to other institutions.
- Any communication regarding the administration of the Funding Round and peer review processes, after the submission of full applications, should be made to Yorkshire Cancer Research (research@ycr.org.uk).

Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)

Applicants should consider opportunities to actively encourage patient and public involvement and engagement (PPIE) in all aspects of their research development and throughout the ongoing activity. Applicants should involve a lay representative in reviewing their application and engage them in aspects of design and delivery within the environment and, where appropriate, with relevant resources requested to support this activity.

Applicants should consider appropriate channels of dissemination to ensure the research is shared appropriately with the target audience.

More information is available on the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#) website.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University and the Charity wish to ensure that research is accessible and relevant to a wide population. As such all proposals are encouraged to ensure inclusion and engagement with populations often underrepresented in research such as minority ethnic populations and deprived communities. Where proposals involve the recruitment of individuals, the application should describe measures to increase participation by populations often underrepresented in research. This may mean considering the eligibility criteria, proposed recruitment sites, consent process and community engagement activity.

Where appropriate, funded proposals will be expected to report on the demographics of the recruited population for the Charity to understand if participant recruitment is reflective of the Yorkshire (or UK) population and/or the specific cancer being studied.

Privacy and Use of Personal Data

For full details on how we use your information please view the [privacy policy](#) on our website. Personal data within the applications will be used by Yorkshire Cancer Research for the purposes of processing and analysing the applications that are submitted. Application information will be shared with Worldwide Cancer Research (Charity number SC022918) who in turn will share the information with external reviewers to assess the suitability of the proposals. Named individuals will only be contacted in relation to their named role within the application unless they have opted for additional contact from Yorkshire Cancer Research.

Email addresses and phone numbers will be used for contacting applicants and co-applicants about their submitted application. Contact details for the Head of School (or equivalent) and Financial Authority will be kept and used to administer the Award and to ensure compliance with the Award terms ([Award conditions and Policies for Awards](#)), should the application be funded. Contact details for the lay representative will only be used to verify their input in the application process.

Further to applications being shared with Worldwide Cancer Research for review purposes, the applications for successful Awards may be shared with other organisations - usually **after** our funding decisions have been made, **under the following strict circumstances:**

1. With another Charity if we are considering co-funding the application with them;
2. With Cancer Alliances and Clinical Research Networks to discuss coordination of cancer research activities regionally and resourcing and support issues for conducting the work;
3. Annual reporting to [AMRC](#) and [Europe PMC](#).

For applications that are funded, we will retain records of the initial application in accordance with our internal policies that may be updated from time to time. These records are necessary for assessing the impact of funded Awards, financial review, and protection of our intellectual property interests.

For applications that are not funded within the Funding Round, we will retain the applications in order to assess any related applications in the future that might either be a resubmission of an application and/or be related to a previous application.

Application Process

Full applications to the Fund will be submitted to the Charity using one of our three online forms. You should have been advised about which application form to complete by the University. It is important that you complete the correct form for your proposal. If you are unsure, please contact ycr_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk.

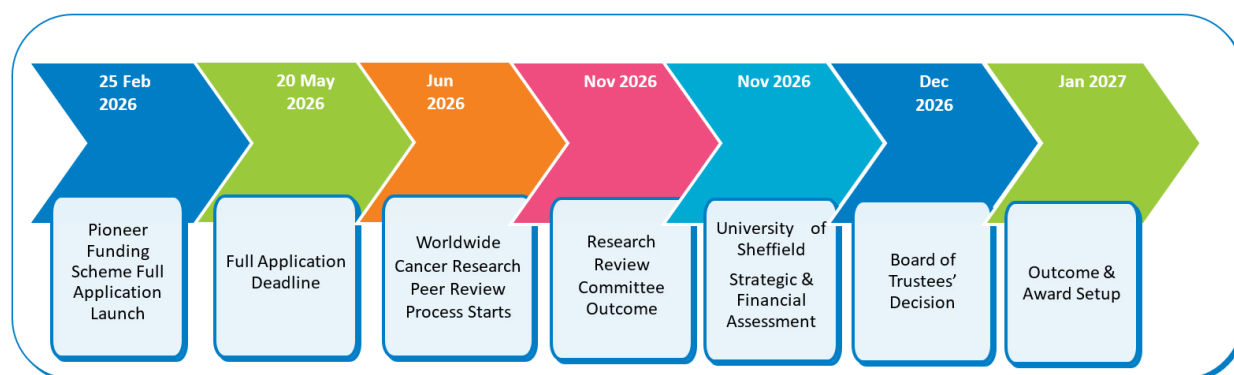
- **Clinical application form** (this could be a Small Grant (Pump Priming) or Fellowship Award)
- **Non-clinical application form** (this could be a Small Grant (Pump Priming) or Fellowship Award)
- **Doctoral Training Programme application form**

Information about completing the application form can be found in the Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneers Fund - 2026 Funding Round Application Form Guidance below.

For any queries about the Funding Round or the outline application process, please email: ycr_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk in the first instance. All post-full-submission queries should be directed solely to Yorkshire Cancer Research at: research@ycr.org.uk.

The processes, outlined below, have been constructed in line with the guidance set out in the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) "[Principles of Expert Review](#)".

The following chart gives an overview of the key stages that will be used in processing applications and making decisions:



External Peer Review and Research Review Committee (RRC)

The Charity will be using an external organisation, Worldwide Cancer Research, to undertake the peer review of applications submitted to the 2026 Round.

Please note that Worldwide Cancer Research will **not** have access to Outline applications, the Outline review comments or recommendations from the internal review at the University of Sheffield. If you think it will help to explain your application form, you can briefly mention any changes you have made in response to the internal review in the description form. A fuller response to the reviewers' comments can be uploaded in the supporting documents section and referred to in the description form. This should be a succinct outline of how the reviewers' comments shaped the proposal, and NOT a full rebuttal of the feedback.

Applicants have the opportunity to list reviewers they think should be excluded from the peer review process. This will be taken into consideration by Worldwide Cancer Research when choosing peer reviewers.

Maintaining confidentiality is essential for safeguarding the exchange of scientific opinions and assessments. Given concerns regarding confidentiality and intellectual property in the sharing, viewing and use of data inputted into generative AI tools, reviewers are not permitted to input content from confidential funding applications into

such tools, nor use them to develop review reports.

Depending on the number of submissions, Worldwide Cancer Research may perform a preliminary Triage step according to the following criteria:

(i) If the University approves the submission of **fifteen or fewer** applications, then **ALL** applications will proceed to full external peer review by Worldwide Cancer Research.

(ii) If the University approves the submission of **more than fifteen** applications then Worldwide Cancer Research will perform a preliminary triage to determine which proposals should proceed to full review.

Where preliminary triage is required, a panel comprising three expert reviewers will be convened from the Research Review Committee (RRC hereafter) of Worldwide Cancer Research to review relevant applications appropriate to their expertise. The RRC is an independent panel of specifically invited cancer experts who will review the output from the Peer Review and rank the applications based on **scientific merit**.

To proceed to full review, an application must be deemed to be of good, excellent or outstanding research quality and scientific merit by at least two out of three RRC reviewers. Conversely, if two or more reviewers deem an application to be non-fundable, then said application will be triaged out. Applications that are triaged out will receive expert reviewers' comments that will, in due course, be fed back to unsuccessful applicants via Yorkshire Cancer Research.

Please note that after the preliminary triage, the wider RRC members will have access to the applications, triage recommendations and reviews. This provides a mechanism for independent scrutiny and, importantly, an opportunity for members of the RRC - not involved in the preliminary triage process - to request to 'save' an application, where there are substantive grounds to doing so. In such situations, the RRC member recommends a proposal is not triaged out to the Chair of the RRC, whose decision in this matter is final. Where approved to continue, 'saved' applications can thereafter be reviewed by expert reviewers nominated by the 'saving' RRC member.

Applications will thereafter be subject to expert external review based on the principles set down by the AMRC by Worldwide Cancer Research against their review criteria. External peer review will be performed by relevant international experts in appropriate fields. The results of the External Peer Review will be collated and submitted to the Worldwide Cancer Research RRC. The number of reviews sought will depend on the amount of financial support requested and the proposal length. **Reviewers will be asked to consider the following criteria: relevance, originality, experimental design, applicants' track record and achievability of the proposal.** For further details on preliminary triage and full external review processes, please direct queries to research@ycr.org.uk.

Once their peer review process is complete, Worldwide Cancer Research will provide a ranked list of fundable applications to both Yorkshire Cancer Research and the University. Thereafter, the University will review the ranked list of fundable applications and confirm to the Charity which applications it wishes to be funded.

The final decision on which applications will be funded, lies with the University of Sheffield Internal Review Panel and relevant Faculty VPs/Heads of Schools. It is anticipated that the Internal Review Panel will simply support the funding of any application deemed fundable by external peer review, providing there are sufficient funds available to do so. Allocation of funds will simply be a case of authorising Awards on the basis of their rank order until no more can be funded OR all fundable applications have been supported.

In the eventuality that more applications are deemed fundable than the available funding reserves permit, the Internal Review Panel may consider deferring the start of funding of some fundable projects until such time as sufficient royalties have accrued to support them. However, this contingency will be done with careful consideration of the potential impact on future rounds, as well as discussions with the University Cancer Research Executive, the Cancer Research Oversight Board (chaired by the Vice-President of the University Faculty of Health), and Yorkshire Cancer Research. Ultimately, the decision lies with the Internal Review Panel and their decision is final.

All recommendations will need to be formally ratified by Yorkshire Cancer Research Board of Trustees at their next available meeting, however where this may incur additional delays, applicants may be given an initial

indication of the recommendation in advance of the Board meeting.

Granting of Awards by the Board of Trustees

Subject to funds being available, the Yorkshire Cancer Research Board of Trustees will meet to grant the Awards to the successful applications. The Trustees' granting of the Awards is final and there is no appeal process.

The Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneers Fund - 2026 Application Form Guidance

Only proposals approved by the University may be entered into the Funding Round.

You are required to select the correct online application form from three options. You should have been advised about which application form to complete by the University in an Outline Application Outcome email. It is important that you complete the correct form for your proposal. The application forms are:

- **Clinical application form** (this could be a Small Grant (Pump Priming) or Fellowship Award)
- **Non-clinical application form** (this could be a Small Grant (Pump Priming) or Fellowship Award)
- **Doctoral Training Programme application form**

If you are unsure which application form you should complete, please contact yrc_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk.

All required fields must be completed prior to submission by the **20th May 2026 Noon** deadline. No applications will be accepted after the deadline.

All mandatory fields must be completed, and declarations signed by the Principal Applicant(s), Head of School (or their delegate if the Head of School is a Principal Applicant/Co-applicant/Mentor on this application) and Financial Authority prior to submission. Once submitted the document can be accessed but **not** amended. Please allow sufficient time to complete and review your application as no submissions to the Fund will be accepted after the deadline has expired. All named individuals must be made aware of and accept the Award terms ([Award Conditions and Policies for Awards](#)), the [Ethics Statement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Please email research@yrc.org.uk if you have any questions.

Summary Page

Information to help in the completion of the application can be viewed via the 'View Instructions' link.

The **Application** tab provides a quick link to the different pages of the application and lets you know the status of your application. Each page has a **Save progress** button which can be used at any time, and we advise you to save your progress regularly. The **Previous page** and **Next page** buttons can be used to navigate backwards or forwards through the application at the top and bottom of each page. When you leave a page, the progress will be automatically saved and if any mandatory information is incomplete a warning will appear.

At any time, you can return to the main **Summary page** to navigate to sections directly. The tabs at the top allow you to print or download the current version of the application form. When downloading the PDF you will be given two options:

- The **Form Only** option will only have the fields that you have filled in within the application form
- The **Complete Application** option will contain any documents you have uploaded with your application. (The 'more options' tab will also allow you to include the **guidance notes** used in the application form).

A blank Word version of the application form can also be downloaded if you wish to work offline before copying and pasting into the form. This can be downloaded via the 'View Instructions' link.

The **Participant** tab allows you to invite other individuals to contribute, review and/or provide the required sign-off for your application. Here you must add all participants including the Finance Authority, Head of School, Lay Representative, University Administration (if applicable) and any Co-Applicants including the joint Principal Applicant 2 (if applicable). Please note: the invitation will be valid for 14 days, after this time the Principal Applicant will need to re-invite the Participant(s) if they have not responded.

Co-Applicants including the joint Principal Applicant 2 (if applicable) are asked to collaborate via the portal; they will need to register, unless they have already done so. Once registered they can review the application and add their CV information directly to the portal. If you wish any individual to have editing privileges, want to check if individuals are already registered or wish to submit a CV directly, you must contact us at research@yrc.org.uk.

*****Important*** You will not be able to submit the application until Principal Applicant(s), the Finance Authority and Head of School have signed the declaration forms.** In addition, all Co-Applicants are required

to select the **Finish Contribution** button next to their name in the **Participants** tab. Failure to do so will impact the ability of the Principal Applicant to submit the application. By participating with the application all invited Co-Applicants are agreeing that they accept all the Award terms ([Award Conditions and Policies for Awards](#)), the [Ethics Statement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

Each page within the application has a '**Page Comments**' box, this can be expanded by clicking on the '+' sign at the top of the page. This free text box provides a field to communicate with collaborators via the application. **Please be aware that this will be visible to any individuals who have access to the application, and you may wish to delete any comments prior to submission.**

Section 1 – About You

Please review the data in this section and supply further information as required. Any personal data included in the application will be used as outlined in our [Privacy policy](#). If there are two Principal Applicants, one Principal Applicant (PA1) will need to initiate the application, confirm there is a second Principal Applicant (PA2) by completing the PA2 details in this section, and add PA2 to the **Participant** tab as a Co-Applicant. Note that if two Principal Applicants are listed both must sign the declaration before the application can be submitted. Applicants may only be the Principal Applicant on one Small Grant or Fellowship Award application irrespective of duration and value. Please note, however, that Principal Applicants applying for DTP or Small Grants (Pump Priming) Awards with a substantive contract with the University may also act as a mentor/supervisor for one fellowship applicant (as a co-Lead applicant). *If you are not acting as a Principal Applicant then you may act as a mentor/supervisor for two fellowship applications (as a co-Lead applicant).* There is no limit on the number of applications where you act as a co-applicant. The Host institution must be the University of Sheffield.

A lay representative should be consulted in the process of developing your application where practical (this is an expectation for all clinical applications). This representative may be asked to provide applicants with non-technical commentary on the application, in particular the proposal summary (see below). The applicants need to ensure that the lay representative has given permission for their details and email address (in Section 4) to be made available to Yorkshire Cancer Research if they have not personally registered on the portal.

Section 2 – Summary and Strategic Need

For applicants using the Clinical or Non-clinical application forms, you must select the appropriate Award type for your application (Small Grant (Pump Priming) or Fellowship Award) as this will determine the questions you need to complete in the subsequent sections.

We recommend that the **Lay Summary** is reviewed by a lay person to ensure its suitability for a non-scientific audience.

For the **Strategic Need** you should define the specific research need that the application seeks to address, taking into account the local cancer-related landscape, and the anticipated benefits that this work will yield.

Applicants who are resubmitting a proposal to the SPF are required to upload a document outlining how you have responded to the reviewers' comments (no more than 2 pages). If you need a copy of the feedback for your previous application, please email research@ycr.org.uk to request this.

Section 3 – Impact and Benefit

Applicants should consider how this proposal intends to deliver the University of Sheffield Cancer Research Strategy.

- Theme 1: Cancer prevention and early diagnosis
- Theme 2: Digital health, big data, advanced diagnostic technologies and rethinking the delivery of cancer care
- Theme 3: Translational and precision cancer medicine

- Theme 4: Improving the outcomes for cancer patients
- Theme 5: Enhancing patient experience and voice

Proposals should have a vision and plan to provide a step-change in research excellence and must address at least one of the following when outlining the impact of the research:

For Clinical and Non-clinical Applications:

- How the research informs or impacts upon prevention, early diagnosis, better treatments and improved survival rates to prevent cancer-related morbidity and mortality.
- How the proposed work will improve the quality of life and/or patient experience of individuals (and/or their families) living with a cancer diagnosis.
- How the research addresses issues relating to health disparities (particularly in our region).
- How the research will develop cancer research capacity in Sheffield.
- If relevant, how the Fellowship will help develop, establish or progress your career.

You will be asked to consider how the impact you describe will be measured, captured and evaluated.

For Applicants using the Clinical or Non-clinical application forms, you will also be asked to provide a **Benefit to Patient and the Public** summary outlining the ultimate patient benefit anticipated from your proposal, when this will be achieved and what further work is required to realise it. For proposals that will involve recruitment of participants, you will be expected to comment on the anticipated social and ethnic diversity of the population you expect to be recruited into any predetermined trials or studies within the proposal. You will also be asked to include a brief description of measures utilised to increase participation by populations often underrepresented in research such as ethnic minorities and deprived communities. This may mean considering the eligibility criteria, proposed recruitment sites, and community engagement activity.

Section 4 – Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement

Where possible and practical the involvement of patients and members of the public should be an important aspect in the design, execution and analysis of the proposal. Please provide information on where you have patient and public involvement in the development of the proposal and where they will continue to be involved throughout the proposed activities. Where it is not possible to involve patients in these aspects of the proposal then please provide an explanation of why this is not possible. Instead, applicants are encouraged to provide information on wider public engagement activities that they plan to undertake.

Section 5 – Proposal Description

Please note that in order for the correct proposal description form to show in this section, applicants must have selected the correct ‘Type of Application’ in Section 2 (this applies only to applicants using the Clinical or Non-clinical application forms).

Please download, complete, and then upload the relevant Award Description form to provide detailed information on the background, proposal description and references.

Please complete the background and detailed proposal description within the page limit indicated, including figures and tables but excluding references (please retain all headers and footers within Proposal Description documents).

In the **Background** we ask for the rationale behind the proposal (with appropriate references). Please follow the guidelines provided on the forms for areas that are expected to be covered within the proposal. For multidisciplinary approaches, you should clearly state the roles of each group and the corresponding expertise that they bring to the proposed research and how this helps to realise the proposed aims.

In the main **Full Description** section you will be asked to outline the work that will be undertaken within the Award, indicating objectives and milestones as appropriate. For Small Grant (Pump Priming) applications, please outline how the work will lead onto larger pieces of research as relevant to the University’s Cancer Research Strategy.

Reviewers often request clarity and information on milestones, cost justifications and power calculations for

sample sizes, where appropriate, so please consider this when completing the **Project Description**. Please provide and describe milestones for your project and note you will also be required to upload a Gantt chart separately (see below).

If appropriate, you may also wish to include a statistical plan to support your application.

For any embedded and interrelated research proposed, please include a clear outline of your methodology, rationale, primary and secondary outcomes.

Reviewers will be asked to consider the following criteria: relevance, originality, experimental design, applicants' track record and achievability of the proposal.

Please **upload a separate Gantt chart** with a timeline of the key **milestones** and indicate if any of these could be Stop/Go decisions impacting subsequent phases of the Award.

Please include a CONSORT flow chart for any clinical trial work proposed as part of the project. Information and resources on CONSORT can be accessed at <https://www.consort-spirit.org/>

For applicants using the Clinical or Non-clinical application forms: The summary page will list the number of documents you have uploaded in this section. Please note four (non-clinical) or three (clinical) is the maximum number of documents needed in this section, but not all applications will need all documents. As long as the required documents relevant to the Award you are applying for have been uploaded, you will be able to submit your application.

Fellowship Award specific requirements

Fellowship applicants should outline how their proposed work contributes to the University Cancer Research Strategy and should outline a programme of training and development to support them as they develop their independent research area/transition to group leader.

Within the Proposal description you will need to include a training and development plan and outline how the Fellowship fits into your longer-term career plans. Your training and development plan should consider activities that will underpin your learning and future career ambitions. This could include developing new collaborations (nationally and internationally) and/or skills (i.e. in policy or commercialisation) via tailored placements in external organisations, coaching and mentoring as well as any training courses you will undertake.

In addition to the proposal description Fellowship applicants will need to upload the following mandatory documents. **It is the applicant's responsibility to liaise with the supervisor/mentor and the Head of School to ensure that the required tasks are completed in advance of the deadline, and to allow for the necessary time for the application to be approved by the University prior to submission.**

Guidance on the format of these uploads is also provided below.

- Personal Statement (limited to two sides of A4, please follow the guidance below)
- Supervisor/Mentor Letter of Support (headed paper, limited to one side of A4)
- Head of School Letter of Support (headed paper, limited to one side of A4)
- A supporting statement following your interview at the University of Sheffield - this should have been provided when you received your Outline application decision. Please contact ycr_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk if you don't have this.
- Clinical applicants only: a letter confirming that their time commitment for clinical work will continue to be funded throughout the fellowship

Personal Statement

Summarise your achievements to date and your overarching goals and motivation for the fellowship and include, where appropriate, reference to the following (guidance on the [Résumé for Research](#) is available on the UKRI website):

- **Generation of Knowledge:** explain how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas and hypotheses. Highlight the funding you have won and any Awards that you have received. You can include a small selection of outputs (open data sets, software, publications, commercial, entrepreneurial or industrial products, clinical practice developments, educational products, policy publications, evidence synthesis pieces and conference publications) with a brief description of why they are of

particular relevance.

- **Development of Individuals:** highlight expertise you provided which was critical to the success of a team or team members including project management, collaborative contributions, and team support. It can include your teaching activities, workshops and the supervision of students and colleagues. You should also include the establishment of collaborations, from institutional (maybe interdisciplinary) to international.
- **Contribution to wider Research Community and Research Culture:** What activities have you engaged in to progress the research community? This includes professional commitments such as editing, reviewing, refereeing, committee work and your contributions to the evaluation of researchers and research projects. You should also include the organisation of events that have benefited your research community. You should highlight contributions to increasing research integrity, and improving research culture (gender equality, diversity, mobility of researchers, reward and recognition of researchers' activities). This section can be used to mention appointments to positions of responsibility such as committee membership, and recognition by invitation within your sector.
- **Contribution to broader society:** Societal engagement and knowledge exchange, including with industry, the public sector and the broader public. This includes the inclusion of patients in processes and clinical trials as well as efforts to collaborate with particular societal or patient groups. It can be used to highlight efforts to advise policy-makers at local, national or international level and provide information through the press and on social media.

Supervisor/Mentor Letter of Support

All Fellowship applicants will need an agreed supervisor/mentor who is a permanent member of staff at the University of Sheffield. The supervisor/mentor should have experience and a strong interest in the applicant's field of research but should not normally be the applicant's current supervisor. A secondary mentor can be included, and this is encouraged in interdisciplinary areas. Your mentor/supervisor will need to provide a letter of support (on headed paper, limited to one side of A4) which should demonstrate that the mentor has considered the individual applicant's needs and long-term career prospects carefully, and ensure fellows are kept appropriately research active and focussed on their career-development.

Head of School Letter of Support

You are required to submit a letter of support from your host Head of School. This will need to guarantee that you will be offered a contract of employment at the University of Sheffield for the duration of the fellowship, that any necessary resources and laboratory/office space that are required would be supported. Fellowship applicants are encouraged to liaise with putative host departments well in advance of their submission, so that appropriate discussions and processes can be undertaken, with a view to framing this aspect of the applicant's bid and Letters of Support.–For members of staff currently on substantive contracts (who will relinquish current role responsibilities in order to take up the proposed Fellowship), the Head of School will need to confirm that the applicant will be supported in returning to their post on completion of the Fellowship Award.

Supporting Statement Following Interview

A supporting statement should have been provided to all Fellowship applicants, following your interview at the University of Sheffield. You are required to submit this statement with your application. Please contact ycr_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk if you don't have this.

Research Involving Animals

You will be asked whether your proposal includes the use of animals. Proposals that include the use of animals will be asked to provide information to demonstrate that the research will be carried out in accordance with animal welfare standards consistent with the principles of UK legislation.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools

To help us better understand how AI is used by applicants, you will be asked whether generative AI tools have

been used in developing your application. If generative AI has been used, you will be asked to list the AI source and where possible the name and specific model/s and software used and specify how the content was generated (such as listing the prompt used). **Please note that this information is for internal use and is not visible to reviewers.**

Section 6 – Proposal Costings

Costs should not increase by more than 10% between the outline and Full application stages unless specifically requested by the Internal Review Panel. The University Internal Review Panel may request that applications which have significantly changed from Outline (other than in response to reviewer comments) are resubmitted in the subsequent round.

Note that inviting your finance authority to participate in the application will also give them access to edit any costings in this section (section six only).

In order to protect the Charity's cash-flow and secure best value, the Charity provides **fixed cost Awards** that do not allow any additional costs for inflation of staff costs, consumables or third-party services over what has been requested.

It is therefore the responsibility of the applicant to estimate any such cost increases during the lifetime of the Award and then manage within those costs. The applicant will be expected to provide sufficient detail that demonstrates how they will manage the Award funding and accommodate the expected cost increases that may or may not occur during the lifetime of the proposal.

The Principal Applicant(s) will be expected to provide regular updates to the Charity on the financial position of the Award and explain any unexpected variances.

Any underspend that occurs or is likely to occur will be discussed with the Principal Applicant and may be deducted from the Award at the absolute discretion of the Charity.

For costs from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), overheads, estates and indirect costs will not be considered for funding in any application in accordance with AMRC guidelines on Full Economic Costing (FEC). The AMRC provides further information here: <https://www.amrc.org.uk/position-statement-on-supporting-research-in-universities>.

Non-HEI co-applicants should only include direct costs related to the proposal (Directly Incurred Costs are considered actual costs that are explicitly identifiable as arising from the conduct of a proposal such as staff salaries, equipment, materials, travel).

Please be aware any proposal funded in the Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneers Fund will **not be eligible for NIHR portfolio status**. Thus, please consider if you need to request additional funding in the application to replace any support you may have expected from the NIHR CRN.

Further information on costs that would be funded through the portfolio status which will need to be covered can be found within the [Attributing the costs of Health and social care research and Development](#) (AcoRD) guidance and via [NIHR](#).

As costs will not be covered, the submission of a SoECAT is not essential. For larger studies/clinical trials a SoECAT can help to give reviewers a transparent view of what will be included.

Salary Costs

Salary costs for applicants or additional staff may only be included if they are a Directly Incurred cost requested for the Award. This can include costs for overseas collaborators working directly on the project. Applicants or staff whose salary is already paid from other sources (e.g. by the University, Organisation, or another grant) may not be included in the Award (please refer to FAQs for guidance on exceptions to this rule). For each role, please indicate their %FTE and include annual increase due to inflation. Salaries should not include Apprenticeship fees.

Each cost (salary and non-salary) must be added to the budget table using the existing field or added via the 'Add New Item' button. When adding/altering items in the individual fields you must 'Save Progress' before the budget table will update all the calculations. When you use the 'Add New Item' button you must choose salary

or non-salary from the drop-down menu. If you add a total amount this will automatically be distributed equally across the year of Award displayed. The cells can then be modified individually. The default number of years on the budget table is four. Only use the number of years required for the proposal, extra years can be added using the [Add another period group](#) tab provided.

The '**Add additional post**' functionality asks you to provide information on the individual posts indicated in the budget table. Please fill in the information requested to populate the table if you already have a candidate to be considered for a specific role.

Non-Salary Costs

A breakdown of individual non-salary costs must be provided for any single item over £10,000 and any quotes uploaded in a PDF format under **Non-salary proposal cost quotes**. Any equipment quotes should be inclusive of VAT and installation costs. Any maintenance costs should not exceed the duration of the Award. Quotes are not required for costs over £10,000 that are made up of multiple smaller items (e.g. consumables) unless any individual item costs over £10,000.

Reasonable travel costs associated with a named collaborator can be included where they are essential for proposal delivery.

Applicants should include the extra expense required to increase the social and ethnic diversity of individuals being recruited to trials as well as any associated Clinical Research Nurse costs, where required. Applicants should include the extra expense required to increase the **social and ethnic diversity** of individuals being recruited, taking into consideration the [INCLUDE framework](#).

Full consideration of production and development costs of all marketing materials or online presence required for the success of the proposal must be appropriately budgeted for, and consistent with the host institutions' purchasing policies.

Reasonable attendance at and travel to conferences and publication costs can be included in the application form under the relevant field. Consideration for any **Public Patient Involvement and Engagement** costs should be made with reference to the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#).

Section 7 – Team and Award Details

Proposal Team - Provide a brief commentary on why the proposed research group, or associated partners and collaborators are best placed to help realise the ambitions of the associated University Cancer Research Strategy theme. The University is committed to building a diverse and inclusive research community. In this context, please describe how you will attract and support diverse research students and staff, and include a discussion of issues relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

All named applicants and staff associated with any Award are expected to be aware of and adhere to the [Ethics Statement](#), [Privacy Policy](#) and [Conditions and Policies](#) associated with the Award. All Co-Applicants are expected to provide a CV: within the portal they can input their own CV directly into the **My CV** area. CVs will not be visible to other applicants. If Co-Applicants need to review the application online, they will be required to register to access the applications. Co-Applicants will be given read-only access for Section 1 About You and Section 6 Costings. Please contact us at research@ycr.org.uk if you require assistance with editing permissions. Upon completion of their contribution, they must select the **Finish Contribution** button on the **Summary Page**, failure to do this will prevent submission of the application.

Please ensure you provide information on qualifications and examples of success in similar proposals for all applicants and additional staff (where the candidate is known).

Proposal Details

Please answer the questions as directed on the application form. Where you have not been in contact with relevant bodies that may be impacted by the research you will be required to provide a brief justification of why. **Please provide information on any IP consideration** of the host organisation that may impact the Conditions of the Award as outlined in the supporting information provided to applicants.

Section 8 – Public Engagement and Charity Promotion Opportunities

Yorkshire Cancer Research encourages all Award holders to help us create brand awareness of the Charity, particularly when promoting the work funded by us and being undertaken by the University. The aim is to ensure that Yorkshire Cancer Research is recognisable and known for the work funded in Yorkshire, as this helps us raise money to ensure we can fund as many proposals as possible across the region. Please indicate where you believe you and your team would be able to support initiatives to engage with patients and the public.

Section 9 – Reviewers Details

Please detail any person(s) you feel would be unable to provide an impartial review for your application (up to a maximum of 4) and cite your reasons for this potential conflict. Reasons may be, for example, 'main scientific competitor', 'commercial sensitivity' or similar.

Sections 10 to 13 – Declaration of Acceptance of Award Conditions and Policies for Awards

Only the Principal Applicant(s), the Head of School (or equivalent) and Financial Authority need to sign the acceptance of the [Ethics Statement](#), [Privacy Policy](#), [Award Conditions and Policies for Awards](#). By providing the list of Co-Applicants you are indicating that they too have read and accepted the above.

Please be sure that the declaration from the Head of School (or equivalent) and Finance Authority is completed only when you are ready to submit as you are not permitted to edit the text after they have signed-off on the proposal. Only once all the required individuals have signed off the proposal will you be able to submit the application for consideration. Please leave yourself sufficient time to get the required sign off prior to the deadline. The Financial Authority declaration will also serve as the application submission approval for the University.

Application Submission

Only once all mandatory sections are complete, all Co-Applicants have finalised their submission and any Principal Applicant(s), Head of School (or equivalent) and Financial Authority have signed their declarations will a 'Submit' button appear. Once submitted, you cannot further edit or amend your application.

If there are any questions arising during the completion or submission of the application form please contact us at research@ycr.org.uk.

Frequently Asked Questions

A) General

Are applicants based outside the University of Sheffield eligible to be listed on Awards?

Yes, researchers at institutions across the UK are eligible to apply as Co-Applicants.

Except for fellowship applications, all Principal Applicants must be currently employed by the University of Sheffield. Applicants who have “Open ended” or “Fixed Term” contracts are eligible to apply, however, they must either submit a letter of support from the University stating that their contract would continue for the duration of the Award, or provide details of the person who would lead the proposal in the event of a personnel change. Those not holding a substantive post should identify a suitable mentor/co-applicant (who holds a substantive post) to be a joint principal applicant.

Can external applicants apply for Fellowships through the Yorkshire Cancer Research Sheffield Pioneers Fund?

Yes, external applicants can apply for fellowships through this funding scheme but they must identify a mentor/supervisor (fellowship-stage dependent) at the university who holds a substantive contract at the University of Sheffield to act as a Co-Lead-PI. Indeed, establishing a suitable academic to guide, mentor and advise such applicants is an essential part of the process, and central to candidates leveraging the most from these Fellowship opportunities, both during the fellowship and shaping their downstream career paths. For more details on the internal application process please contact ycr_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk.

Can I apply for an Award if I only work at reduced FTE at the University of Sheffield?

Yes, you can apply for an Award if you work only on a part-time basis. However, Principal Applicants will be expected to have a contract with the University of Sheffield for the majority of their working hours, irrespective of the FTE, and should outline what percentage of their time they will dedicate to the Award. If potential applicants have any concerns or queries relating to scheme eligibility, please contact ycr_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk for further clarification.

Can I resubmit an application that has been unsuccessful in a previous Funding Round?

Only applications that have been approved by the University can be considered for these funds. The University can approve resubmissions that have been invited by Yorkshire Cancer Research. Applications that are submitted to the Full stage may only be resubmitted once. For information on this process please contact ycr_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk

How do I gain approval from the University of Sheffield to submit an application?

Please contact ycr_schemes@sheffield.ac.uk for further information on the University Internal Review Process.

Can there be more than one Principal Applicant?

Yes, you may have two Principal Applicants. Due to the functionality of Flexi-grant, one Principal Applicant (PA1) will need to initiate the form in Flexi-grant and complete details for principal applicant 2 (PA2) in section 1. They will also need to add PA2 as a co-applicant on the ‘Participants’ tab. Both Principal Applicants will need to confirm acceptance of the Ethics Statement, Award Conditions and Policies for Awards and both Principal Applications will be noted on any subsequent Award letters.

What happens if the lead applicant leaves the university?

Sheffield Pioneers Awards are not transferable to another institution. Fellowship Awardees would be required to relinquish their Award if they leave the university. Other Awards may be transferred to another eligible TUoS employee if appropriate.

What do you mean by Capacity Building?

Capacity Building is defined as enhancing the abilities of individuals, organisations and systems to undertake and disseminate high quality research efficiently and effectively.

The goal of capacity building in the context of the Cancer Research Strategy at the University is to facilitate individuals and teams to develop the knowledge and skills to be externally competitive, and to create an organisational culture and capabilities that, in the longer-term, enables the university to be a recognised leader in cancer research (both nationally and internationally).

When evidencing capacity building aligned to the University Cancer Strategy, you should consider the following within your application and articulate what the enhanced impact will be:

- Development of skills and knowledge at the individual and team level
- Development of internal and external collaborations and partnerships (existing and new)
- Dissemination of research outputs (publications, research tools, intellectual property, policy documents, media activity, software)
- Investment in infrastructure
- Developing a sustainable pipeline of staff to deliver on the University Cancer Research Strategy

This can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- building on existing strengths and assets (including organisational infrastructure, research networks and communities of practice).
- enhancing your, and the University's, ability to conduct high quality cancer research,
- partnering with other experts (internal or external) to build research skills through mentoring and joint processes of analysis and reflection.
- improving the skills of your research team, as well as their access to research information and resources - for example, by including in the application specific training programmes or internal/external placements.
- developing and enhancing research skills and knowledge to address the research question or health problem.

For this scheme, we **do not** consider the follow as capacity building:

- Stand-alone pieces of work that do not align with the University Cancer Research Strategy
- Individual time-limited, project level databases
- Shortfalls in existing internal/external research or Knowledge Exchange funding

B) Application specific FAQs

I am one of the Co-Applicants on the proposal and my salary is paid by my University. Can I cost in my time on the proposal?

As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities we only pay for Directly Incurred costs of the project. If you will be working directly on the project undertaking the research and are not on a tenured contract, then you may apply for an appropriate FTE toward your salary. An individual's funding from all sources should not exceed 100% FTE at any point.

Can I include travel costs for collaborations?

Yes, you may include reasonable costs for collaborations necessary for the proposal. These may include travel, accommodation and subsistence costs as long as these costs are essential for the delivery of the proposal.

Can I include travel costs for attending conferences?

Yes, travel and conference costs should be factored into the total amount you are claiming under the **Conference Expenses** in the **Proposal costings** on Section 6. All invoices must be provided when claiming against the Award.

Can I include publication costs?

Yes, reasonable publication costs should be factored into the total amount you are claiming. Charges of

up to £3,000 for each journal article is anticipated. The number of publications will depend on the research undertaken. All invoices must be provided when claiming against the Award.

My invited Co-Applicants cannot access the system to submit their CV.

If you have invited a colleague to collaborate on the project using the participation tab but the link is not working, you may need to 'revoke' their invitation and 're-invite' them. If the issues continue, please try an alternative email address. We recommend that you make sure all co-applicants can access the system and submit their contributions in good time, as you will not be able to submit the application unless all identified Co-Applicants have clicked the **Finish contribution** button. Please note: the invitation will be valid for **14 days**, after this time the Principal Applicant will need to re-invite the Participant(s) if they have not responded. If you experience any issues, please contact us at research@ycr.org.uk.

Why do I need patient/lay input in the application? Who should I ask to be my patient or lay representative? What will they need to do?

Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) is crucial to ensuring that your proposed research takes into account how best to interact with cancer patients or the public. PPIE will almost certainly improve your application and we strongly encourage you to seek out as much PPIE to help you develop and refine your research proposal and consider how the information will be disseminated. You may have local cancer support groups, institutional or other local PPIE panels to draw on.

Engagement activities can generate significant benefit to everyone involved, including researchers, institutions and the public. This includes greater research impact, improved research quality, the generation of new research questions, building of trust between researchers, institutions and society, increased accountability and transparency in research and increased visibility of the research and the researcher.

In addition to the proposal summary, the patient or lay representative may also wish to comment on the need for, and impacts of, the proposal.

Can I include travel costs for PPIE representatives?

Yes, you may include reasonable costs for your PPIE representatives to support the proposal. These may include reasonable reimbursements for their time, travel, accommodation and subsistence costs as long as these costs are essential for the delivery of the proposal. More information is available on the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#) website.

Can I copy and paste into the online forms?

Yes, you will be able to copy and paste text into the online form from other sources however you may not be able to copy pictures of diagrams. Please be aware of the word count, as only the maximum number of words will be pasted.

Blank Word versions of the three types of Application Forms are available if you wish to use this during the development of your application. This may be a useful way to share and edit changes with Co-Applicants etc. **NB** Please ensure that the downloaded version of the Word document you are using is indeed the latest version.

Are electronic signatures required?

No, as you need to login using a secure password, you do not need to provide an electronic signature. By selecting the '**I accept**' box you have provided a unique identifier that acts as a signature in this instance.

My application is ready by the deadline, but my Head of School (or equivalent) and/or the University Finance Authority have yet to sign the declaration. Can I still submit the application?

No, you need to allow yourself enough time to ensure that the proper authorisation can be obtained to support your application. You can '**re-send**' the invite to the Head of School (or equivalent) and Financial

Authority.

I have signed the declarations, but I want to amend my application is there anything I can do?

Yes, the application can be edited prior to submission. If you have submitted the application, it can be 'rolled back' prior to the deadline if you contact research@ycr.org.uk. You will need to ensure you have institutional authorisation and all the required declarations must be signed before you submit the application.

What if I need to revise the application after the submission deadline and who do I contact if I have any queries?

Revisions are not usually allowed after the submission deadline, but applicants may contact research@ycr.org.uk to discuss it with us.

C) Peer review and application outcomes

How will my application be assessed?

For details of how your application will be assessed, please refer to pages 6-7 of this document.

Why is my application being reviewed by Worldwide Cancer Research?

As the University and the Charity are both recipients of substantial royalties that support these funding schemes, for transparency, it was decided to use an independent 3rd party agency to perform the expert review of applications. This ensures that impartial, expert review can be conducted on bids submitted to the ring-fenced funding schemes. Worldwide Cancer Research have considerable expertise at reviewing diverse cancer research proposals.

Yorkshire Cancer Research Strategy focuses on the delivery of interventional research focused on preventions, early detection and improving cancer treatments. Their existing panel of experts and network of reviewers reflect these areas of strategic interest. As the areas of research eligible in the Sheffield Pioneers Funding Round are somewhat wider and based on the University of Sheffield Cancer Research Strategy, the decision was taken to outsource the peer review process to an AMRC affiliated partner to ensure that the applications were reviewed by appropriate experts in relevant fields.

How do you use the information about excluded reviewers?

All applications will be reviewed by members of a Research Review Committee as well as external reviewers. In choosing the external reviewers, Worldwide Cancer Research will ensure that the excluded reviewers will not be chosen to review the application.

My application was deemed fundable by Worldwide Cancer Research. What happens next?

Yorkshire Cancer Research will communicate the ranked list of fundable and non-fundable applications determined by external peer review to the University.

It is anticipated that the University will simply support the funding of any application deemed fundable by external peer review, providing there are sufficient funds available to do so. Allocation of funds will simply be a case of authorising Awards based on their rank order until no more can be funded OR all fundable applications have been supported.

In the eventuality that more Awards are deemed fundable than the available funding reserves permit, the University may consider deferring the start of funding the fundable project/s until such time as sufficient royalties have accrued to support them. However, this contingency will be done with careful consideration of the potential impact on future rounds, as well as discussions with the University Cancer Research Executive and Cancer Research Oversight Board (chaired by the Vice-President of the University Faculty of Health).

Applications deemed as fundable by Yorkshire Cancer Research and approved to be funded by the University Internal Review Panel will be relayed to Yorkshire Cancer Research for subsequent approval by the Charity's Board of Trustees. Once approved, successful applicants will be notified of outcomes by January 2027) with Awards able to go live from March 2027.

When will I find out if my proposal has been funded?

Applications that are triaged out by the Worldwide Cancer Research, Research Review Committee are expected to be informed of this decision by September 2026. Applications that are not triaged out will be given an initial indication of whether the proposal has been recommended for funding in November 2026, prior to formal ratification by the Board of Trustees. Final funding decisions will be made at the Board of Trustees meeting in December 2026 and you will be informed of the outcome in mid-January 2027.

If my application is funded, why is it not be eligible for NIHR CRN portfolio adoption?

Only trials funded through national open competition are eligible for NIHR CRN portfolio adoption. This Funding Round is only open to applications from the University of Sheffield and, as such, is excluded from consideration of adoption to the NIHR CRN portfolio. Please note, however, that applications to the YCR 2026 Funding Round '*100 Years of Pioneering Cancer Research in Yorkshire*' which includes the 'More Life To Live' scheme ARE eligible for adoption onto the NIHR CRN portfolio.