AUSTRALIAN CANCER RESEARCH FOUNDATION

2027 MAJOR GRANT GUIDELINES

as at 2nd November 2026
for LOI information only

Australian Cancer Research Foundation (ACRF) is a private charity that supports cancer research in Australia by funding significant grants to stimulate and assist researchers to achieve major research outcomes and to develop and enhance their international competitiveness. The sources of this funding are fundraising activities conducted by ACRF and other authorised parties representing ACRF.

ACRF has a commitment to achieving the best possible scientific and/or clinical outcomes through high quality basic and translational research. Grant applications are sought in support of this general philosophy.

The Foundation's approach to supporting cancer research is based on the following principles:

a) **The application is first and foremost about the direction and quality of scientific cancer research**

b) We seek to support all aspects of cancer control (i.e. prevention, early detection, treatment and/or management) through research.

c) Our focus is on providing single capital grants for major items of scientific equipment, technology and new research infrastructure. In this way ACRF can best complement existing sources of funding for staff and consumables for cancer research projects available through other cancer research agencies, such as the NHMRC and the MRFF.

d) We support research by groups and institutes with outstanding credentials and/or potential in cancer research, to facilitate new and sustainable programs and to provide platforms that will add to Australia's cancer research capacity. Besides demonstrating the excellence of the project and research capability, applications should demonstrate clarity of research vision and planning, sustainability, strong committed leadership, and experienced management.

e) Pooling the efforts of teams of researchers within or across institutes can often answer research questions more effectively and/or more efficiently. We therefore welcome and encourage joint applications.

f) ACRF is a 'seed' funding body and may not necessarily be able to fund the full amount sought in an application. Our support should therefore be demonstrated to provide opportunities for leveraging of additional funding. We expect that applications for projects and/or programmes will demonstrate the ability to leverage support over and above the amount which the ACRF may be able to provide.

2027 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

ACRF SEEKS APPLICATIONS FOR A MAJOR GRANT TO BE AWARDED IN 2027

In keeping with the mission of the Foundation to promote bold and significant programs that will facilitate major advances in the prevention, early detection, treatment and/or management of cancer ACRF invites applications for a special $10 million Major Grant.

Eligible persons and groups are invited to submit a single detailed written application. The 2027 ACRF Major Grant Application procedure is in four parts:

1) A written Letter of Intent is to be provided that conforms with the format and content specified in the 2027 Major Grants LOI located at:

   https://acrf.com.au/cancer-research-grants/research-grant-guidelines-and-applications

   This LOI must be received by ACRF no later than 5.00pm (Sydney time) on **Tuesday 22 December 2026**.Late LOI's will not be considered.

   Applicants will be advised of whether they will be invited to proceed to a full grant application, by 22 February 2027.

2) A written application is to be provided that conforms with the format and content specified in the 2027 Major Grants Format of Application located at:

   https://acrf.com.au/cancer-research-grants/research-grant-guidelines-and-applications

   This application must be received by ACRF no later than 5.00pm (Sydney time) on **Friday 21 May 2027**.Late applications will not be considered.

3) From the applications submitted a short-list will be invited to interview.

   The short-listed applications will be invited to:
   - Provide a 10-minute video presentation of their application two weeks prior to interview – in case of virtual interviews OR
   - Present their application at the interview and answer any questions raised by the MRAC assessment panel.

   While we hope to conduct interviews in person, if this is not possible due to international and domestic travel restrictions, interviews will be conducted virtually (using ZOOM).

   The focus of the interview is to examine the scientific merit and worthiness of the application.

   The final format of the short-listed interviews will be decided on 25 June 2027.

4) A site visit – preliminary plan for week commencing 23 August 2027

5) Applicants interviewed will have result communicated to them after the ACRF Board meeting in late September.

FUNDING CATEGORIES

ACRF funds cancer research under the following categories:

1. Technology
2. Major equipment
3. Infrastructure including capital works / virtual capabilities (specifically including cloud-based)
4. Highly specialised reagents / specialised software packages etc. that are essential for the operation of the equipment or virtual infrastructure. Limited to 10% of total grant.
5. Salaries of technical experts to operate and optimise use of technologies / equipment. This is limited to $200,000 per annum for the first 3 years. (Please also note complementary funding opportunities in CONDITIONS point 8) which should be identified separately in application.

GENERAL

1. 2027 ACRF Major Grant Applications are sought for up to $10 million (to be provided over three years).
2. The 2027 ACRF Major Grant is open to all institutions involved in cancer research in Australia. The grant is separate to the Annual Grant and the exclusion to successful Annual grant recipients does not apply. Moreover, institutions may apply for the Annual Grant and Major Grant in the same year.
3. The Major Grant has an expectation that:
    - Research (for which technology /equipment / infrastructure is sought) will be novel / innovative / significantly build on existing knowledge / produce significant new impact in its own right.
    - Programs are bold and significant and will facilitate major advances / have real potential to move the dial on better ways to prevent, detect / treat cancer/s
    - Funding will result in substantial knowledge gain and / or likely clinical impact
4. The Major Grant assessment will highly regard:
    - Collaborations – nationally and internationally
    - Research at the forefront on cancer research internationally

      Research which is either new or unique in Australia or globally, or which brings unique new capabilities and potential knowledge/clinical impacts that would not otherwise be possible
5. High risk-high reward visionary research will be considered
6. ACRF encourages applications:
    a) Featuring multi-disciplinary teams working collaboratively.
    b) For collaborative research programs between institutions.

       The lead institution would be responsible for the purchase and deployment of the funded equipment and infrastructure and integration into the funded program. It is expected that the funded equipment would be housed and maintained by participating institutions.

c) Demonstrating equitable access / availability to cancer researchers in Australia Recognising that ACRF funded equipment and research infrastructure is expected to be made available on an equitable financial and priority basis to all cancer researchers in Australia, a clear statement of the practical basis of such equitable access, including any arrangements for the local subsidy of access costs (direct or indirect through the institution for support as an in kind contribution to the cost of the proposed equipment), should be given in the application, and should be disclosed to all potential users if the application is funded.

d) Supporting diversity and inclusion, for example through gender balance and by involving cancer researchers from diverse research disciplines and at a variety of career stages.

e) Evidencing talent development for cancer researchers. Examples may include plans for training, mentoring of early career researchers, and succession planning. ACRF welcomes the inclusion of one or more selected early or mid-career representatives on the interview presentation panel

7. When assessing grant applications, the following criteria are considered in addition to other information sought:

    - Research Excellence - cancer research program proposed is novel and exciting, how it is potentially impactful and how it will add value.
    - Platform – how use of the technology/ equipment applied for will benefit the program
    - Vision & Planning – necessary skills, expertise in place, track record of the CIs in cancer research and in applying technology
    - Fit with Cancer - idea, approach or capacity that is at the forefront of cancer research nationally / internationally
    - Collaborative Gain – new, existing and emerging collaborations that will benefit the program and galvanise cancer research
    - Synergies/Amplified Outcomes - how the proposed grant leads to synergy with other programs, or how it may amplify the outcomes of other programs
    - Management and Governance - institutional commitment in place to ensure success and sustainability
    - Budget
    - Opportunity to leverage funds - money obtained in the last 5 years and expected leverage if the grant is awarded
    - Proposed plans for the recognition and profiling of ACRF

Please ensure these are explicitly addressed.

8. The application may form a separate centre or be distributed in which case one entity should be designated as the lead with commensurate accountability and interinstitutional agreements should ensure clarity of responsibilities.

CONDITIONS

1) Recommendations to the ACRF's Board by our Medical Research Advisory Committee (MRAC) are made on the basis of scientific merit and potential.

The MRAC members, appointed by the Board of the Foundation, are established scientists of exceptional national, and in many cases international, repute.

2) Procedures are generally similar to those employed by the NHMRC and may include assessment of applications by referees and independent expert assessors, as well as electronic or face-to-face interviews (depending on the circumstances) of selected short-listed applicants and, if deemed valuable by ACRF, a site visit.
3) Conflicts of interest for MRAC members are identified and managed. MRAC members are not involved in the review of grant applications for which they have a significant conflict of interest.
4) ACRF will not consider applications seeking funding for research services or the costs associated with running clinical trials.
5) Applications from cancer research consortiums are encouraged.
6) Particular circumstances may arise where it is appropriate for ACRF to make a grant conditional upon its receiving, by way of a royalty or otherwise, funds generated from any commercial exploitation which can be attributed to the particular grant awarded by ACRF (See the Intellectual Property statement below).
7) Successful applicants will enter into an agreement with ACRF, some of the conditions for inclusion being:
    a) 2027 ACRF Major Grant value up to $10 million
    b) Maximum payment of up to $3.33 million per year for 3 years.
    c) The Recipient having an immediate need for the funds to pay for the Facilities and/or the equipment at time of agreed grant instalment
    d) Appropriate documentation required to support the payment of grant funds
    e) The Recipient entering into a binding procurement / construction contract for the Facilities by no later than 18 months from the date of the Agreement; and
    f) Payment of the first instalment of the Grant being made by no later than 18 months from the date of the Agreement
    g) Payment of any further instalments of the Grant being made by no later than 48 months from the date of the Agreement; and
    h) Annual reporting to ACRF, in lay and scientific language, on research outcomes for 7 years post equipment/facility being operational
    i) Providing various forms of recognition to, and promotion of, ACRF including hosting an official opening function attended by a prominent Australian and which is designed to enhance the profile of the ACRF, associated media profiling. Where applications are received from consortiums, these provisions will be required across all member / organisations involved.
    j) Aiding ACRF with communications, provision of further information (lay and technical), images and video footage leading up to grant announcement, PR/media and end of year communication to ACRF supporters
    k) Aiding ACRF in ongoing fundraising appeals and marketing activities including provision of information (lay and technical), images, video footage and access to cancer researchers for webinars / lab tours.
8) Several complementary funding arrangements have been set up by ACRF in collaboration with other cancer research organisations.

If successful in receiving an ACRF grant award, applicant may **potentially** also be eligible for additional funding through this scheme for project personnel.

The ACRF grant application should identify which arrangement would be of interest and the role that would be supported.

Post successful interview, the ACRF grant application (and potentially further substantiation) will be shared with the respective collaborating funding organisation for their consideration. The award of this funding is at the discretion of the collaborating organization. Funding would be in addition to ACRF grant award and administered by ACRF.

9) The arrangements are as follows:

   Cancer Institute NSW
   $100,000 per year for five years
   For project based in NSW.

   Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation (OCRF)
   Up to $150,000 per year for three years
   Ovarian cancer: Early detection, prevention and treatment.

   National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF)
   Up to $150,000 per year for three years
   Breast cancer: New treatments and prevention for breast cancer can be identified, developed and implemented.

10) The decision of the ACRF Board in relation to the successful grant applicants is final.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY

Australian Cancer Research Foundation (ACRF) reserves the right, in appropriate circumstances, to conclude an arrangement with a successful grant applicant to share in the financial rewards of the commercial exploitation of Intellectual Property generated wholly or in part as a consequence of the award of a Grant.

In implementing this policy, the ACRF Board of Trustees has approved the following guidelines:

a) The awarding of a grant shall not be conditional upon the Foundation receiving an income from the utilisation of Intellectual Property developed by the applicants.
b) Under exceptional circumstances, where there is a clear link between the utilization of the grant and the development of commercialisable Intellectual Property, ACRF may choose to negotiate an appropriate arrangement about sharing of the income from that intellectual property.
c) Any income so derived by ACRF will be used for funding future Grants
d) ACRF will not take on the responsibility for seeking, maintaining or enforcing Intellectual Property protection
e) Any arrangements made by ACRF must not affect in any way the tax exempt position of ACRF.

CONTACT DETAILS

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The closing date for applications is **5:00pm, Friday 21 May 2027.**

One electronic copy of the grant application is required to be submitted by email to criddington@acrf.com.au.

Late applications will not be considered.