



THE OVARIAN CANCER ACTION IMMUNOTHERAPY CHALLENGE
Project Grant Application Terms of Reference

November 2018

Key information

Target	Established researchers with a strong track record, based at a research institution anywhere in the world
Focus	Immunotherapy / immunology and ovarian cancer
Deadline for application status	1st Round – 18th January 2019 2nd Round – 5th April 2019
Funding decision for applicants	1st Round – 22nd February 2019 2nd Round – June 2019 Final decision: September 2019 at HHMT
Grant duration	2-4 Years
Maximum value of award	£600,000

Contents

1. The Immunotherapy Challenge in context	3
Background.....	3
About Ovarian Cancer Action	3
The research we currently fund.....	3
2. About the Immunotherapy Challenge	4
Remit.....	4
Eligibility	4
Judging successful applications	5
Outcomes.....	5
3. Application process and timeline	5
Process.....	5
Timeline	7
Judging panel	7
4. Requirements of awardees	7
5. Costs Policy	8
6. Animal Research Policy	8
7. Contact	8

1. The Immunotherapy Challenge in context

Background

Ovarian Cancer Action (OCA) is the UK's ovarian cancer research charity. We fund research to save lives. We have invested over £11.5m in research funding, through the Ovarian Cancer Action Research Centre at Imperial College London, the University of Oxford and other UK universities. For over 30 years OCA has hosted and curated the international HHMT forum on ovarian cancer, which will meet again of the 14th HHMT Forum on Ovarian Cancer in September 2019, focusing on immunotherapy.

At this meeting we will award a significant grant of up to £600,000 for an immunotherapy or immunology based research project to benefit women with ovarian cancer. We are accepting applications from around the world and are actively encouraging collaborative bids.

This document sets out the terms of reference for the Immunotherapy Challenge, including information on how to apply and timelines.

About Ovarian Cancer Action

Ovarian Cancer Action is the UK's ovarian cancer research charity, dedicated to beating ovarian cancer. It's the UK's most deadly gynaecological disease, claiming the life of a woman every two hours. At the moment the diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancers lags behind other high profile diseases like prostate or breast cancer. We think this is unacceptable.

We're on a mission to stop women dying before their time, by finding and funding the innovators who will help us break this cancer. We're here to champion the cause and bring people together to overcome a disease that strikes at the heart of what it means to be a woman.

We believe that research is the best way to change the future of ovarian cancer. We want to see translational outcomes from our research that will make a real difference to the lives of women with the disease. We believe in a rigorous peer review process, and are a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities.

The research we currently fund

Over more than 10 years OCA has funded scientific research in the UK. Our main investments have been:

- Founding the Ovarian Cancer Action Research Centre at Imperial College London. It's a hub for translational research into ovarian cancer and brings together expertise from both basic and clinician scientists. Professor Iain McNeish has led the Centre since 2017 and the team work on projects across the spectrum from prevention to surgery and treatment.
- Supporting Professor Ahmed Ahmed's research at University of Oxford into the drivers behind treatment resistance in ovarian cancer and early detection.
- The British Translational Research Ovarian Cancer Collaborative (BriTROC), a project collecting paired biopsies from women with relapsed ovarian cancer at 15 centres across the UK, to better understand the generic changes that occur as the cancer returns.

We have also hosted and curated the HHMT International Forum on ovarian cancer for over 30 years, bringing together the world's leading ovarian cancer scientists and clinicians to identify the research gaps needed to be filled and set the agenda for future study.

2. About the Immunotherapy Challenge

Remit

At the September 2019 HHMT meeting we will award a grant of up to £600,000 for an impressive immunotherapy project that will improve outcomes for women with ovarian cancer. We want to hear from talented scientists from around the world who share our ambition to see women with ovarian cancer benefit from advances in immunotherapy.

The grant will be available to established researchers with a strong track record, based at a research institution anywhere in the world. Collaborative applications across institutions and countries are particularly welcome and encouraged, although the contracted grant (and funding arrangements) will be with the Lead Applicant's institution.

Applicants should have conducted independent research in the field of immunotherapy or immunology and ovarian cancer. We actively welcome applications from wider experts in the field of immunotherapy and immunology, however a co-applicant should be included whose specialty is ovarian cancer.

The award can be flexible in terms of duration of the project (from one – four years) and can cover staff salary, research expenses and essential equipment. We are also happy to receive applications that are not for the full £600,000 and will consider awarding more than one grant for the right projects. Costs requested must not exceed this cap.

We are committed to supporting young investigators in ovarian cancer and or immunological research and welcome applications from talented postdoctoral researchers or that include a plan for mentoring early career scientists.

The successful project should enrich scientific understanding of the disease, with the overall ambition to improve survival rates.

Eligibility

Please note the following:

- Applicants can be based at any respected academic institution worldwide, as long as communication and results can be delivered in the English language
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate support for their application by a letter from their academic institution indicating eligibility
- Applicants can be at any career stage from post-doctorate level and above, however:
 - Applicants that are not a permanent salaried member of staff at a recognised academic institution should include a co-applicant who meets this criteria.
 - Applicants who are unable to meet this criteria can request help finding a relevant co-applicant. This will be facilitated at the HHMT meeting for the highest quality applications. Applicants must make this request clear on the Phase One application form.
- Applicants must have a strong track record in the field of ovarian cancer or immunotherapy / immunology
- Principal Investigators may not submit more than one application, but can be included as co-applicant or collaborator on multiple applications.

The following are not eligible and will not be accepted:

- Research into conditions other than ovarian cancer.
- Applications for equipment, consumables or running costs only. We will accept requests for these as part of a larger grant, but there must be a clear justification for them in the application.
- Applicants who are not employed by an eligible institution i.e. a university or research institute.

Judging successful applications

Successful applications will:

- Be innovative and thought-leading
- Demonstrate good early pilot data
- Have a strong hypothesis and methodology
- Have clear sight of the goals and outcomes (see below)
- Be able to demonstrate the impact of the proposed work

Outcomes

We aren't simply content to fund work whose main end goal is publication (although we fully recognise and respect the value of this). Therefore applicants will have a clear sighted vision of how outcomes from the funded work could be taken to the next stage to help women with ovarian cancer.

3. Application process and timeline

Process

The Immunotherapy Challenge will have a three phase application process.

Phase one

Applicants to submit a preliminary application form to the charity in a single PDF file emailed to immunotherapy@ovarian.org.uk. All applicants will receive an email confirming receipt. The judging panel will then select applications to go on to full submission and all applicants will be notified of the outcome.

The application should include the following, merged into a single PDF file:

Part 1 – Phase One Application Form

Part 2 (not to exceed two pages) - CV or biosketch of PI and co-applicants, including publications relevant to the proposal

Part 3- Letter from the host institution confirming support of the entry

Successful applicants of Phase One will be determined by the Phase One Judging panel.

Phase two

Phase one's successful applicants will be invited to submit a full application. This cannot deviate significantly from the project described in the preliminary application. Full requirements for this phase will be shared with successful applicants.

Part 1 – Phase Two Application Form

This will include:

- Scientific abstract
- Lay abstract (one page maximum)
- Specific aims
- Preliminary supporting data
- Experimental plan
- Potential translational value
- Description of impact and how this will be measured
- Bibliography (not included in page limit)

Part 2 – Budget justification

Part 3 – Environment, one page maximum

Part 4 – Endorsement, one page maximum

The total word limit for Phase Two will be 3000 words.

Successful applicants of Phase Two will be determined by the Phase Two judging panel, with the support of external written reviewers.

Presentation at the 14th HHMT International Forum on Ovarian Cancer

The final short-listed finalists will be invited to present their recent work at the 14th HHMT International Forum on Ovarian Cancer. All attendees will be able to hear presentations and questions.

Presentations will last 10 minutes.

Following each presentation there will be a 15 minute Q&A.

All presentations will be heard on the first afternoon of the HHMT meeting with the award being made on the final evening of the meeting. Shortlisted applicants are therefore asked to attend the full HHMT meeting.

Anticipated Timeline

Immunotherapy Challenge formally open	3 rd December 2018
Phase 1	
Deadline for Phase 1 applications	18th January 2019
Judging panel meets and OCA feeds back to applicants	22 nd February 2019
Phase 2	
Deadline for Phase 2 applications	5th April 2019 Close of play
Judging panel meets and OCA feeds back to applicants	June 2019
HHMT meeting: presentation and award made	8 – 11 September 2019

Please note that timeline is subject to change based on the volume of applications received.

Judging panel

We are committed to the principle of peer review and will only fund work that passes its stringent requirements. This award will be judged by a panel at Phase 1 and 2 and will include international immunotherapy and ovarian cancer experts, representatives from Ovarian Cancer Action and a patient representative.

4. Requirements of awardees

We like to build a long term relationship with the scientists whose work we fund. An important part of this relationship is our shared belief in communicating the outcomes of research to our supporters, without whom none of this would be possible, and to women and their families affected by ovarian cancer.

In our funding partnership we have the following expectations:

- Rapid progression from award grant confirmation to work commencing
- A formal report every year on progress against milestones and goals, and on budget, which will be reviewed by our Scientific Advisory Board.
- OCA branding on all papers, presentations, website etc. about the work
- Willingness to interact with fundraising and communication teams at OCA, for the purpose of promoting the work.
- End of grant evaluation
- Where scientifically relevant, mutual information and idea sharing with the Ovarian Cancer Action Research Centre and other scientists funded by OCA will be encouraged
- Data sharing is actively encouraged, with the UK Research and Innovation's Concordat on Open Research Data as the benchmark: <https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/data-policy/>

When the grant is awarded more detailed information will be shared about our expectations.

5. Costs Policy

Applications for funding should be based on estimated expenditure and all figures should be entered in GBP (£ Sterling). Invoices will be paid quarterly in arrears in sterling. If the successful applicant is based at an institution outside of the UK and converted to the currency of request by the bank at their exchange rate on the day the transfer is actioned. Ovarian Cancer Action will not be responsible for losses incurred through fluctuations in exchange rates.

Applicants will have to confirm their agreement to the above in Phase one of the Immunotherapy Challenge. If this is an issue for your institution and you'd like to discuss this with our Research Team please get in touch.

6. Animal Research Policy

Ovarian Cancer Action's policy on funding animal research states that we will not fund animal research projects in countries or institutions that do not have sufficient controls on laboratory welfare. As a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC), we are committed to the principles of the Three R's of animal research (Reduction, Refinement and Replacement).

Applicants must read Ovarian Cancer Action's research policy and confirm that their project is compliant with the policy in Phase one of the application.

7. Contact

If you have any queries regarding this application please contact the Research Team on immunotherapy@ovarian.org.uk or call +44 (0)20 7380 1730.