

OCRf RESEARCH GRANT GUIDELINES

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS APPLYING
FOR OCRf RESEARCH GRANTS

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RESEARCH GRANT GUIDELINES

Supporting Information to Apply for OCRF Research Grants

Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation Inc.

C/- Newell Lock, Level 1, 110 Church Street, Hawthorn, VIC, 3122



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1. OVARIAN CANCER RESEARCH FOUNDATION OVERVIEW

The Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation Inc. (OCRF) was established in early 2000 and supports ovarian cancer research in Australia and New Zealand by funding grants to the most innovative and/or promising research proposals that accord with our mission.

While our major goal is to raise vital research funds for the development of an early detection test to save women's lives, we also provide funding to improve the long-term survival rates of ovarian cancer sufferers. An expectation of grant allocations is that any discoveries will move towards commercialisation – particularly around the discovery and commercial development of an early detection test.

OUR VISION

Every Woman, Everywhere – Free from the Threat of Ovarian Cancer.

OUR MISSION

Funding innovative ovarian cancer research to save women's lives through early detection and personalised treatment.

OUR OBJECTIVES

1. Develop and implement an early detection program for ovarian cancer that is non-invasive, highly accurate and widely available.
2. Improve the mortality rate, management and long-term survival of women with ovarian cancer.
3. Attract and fund the most innovative and skilled researchers.

2. OCRF RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The OCRF has articulated four research priorities in its **Research Strategy** (available on the website) which remain the focus of our research funding in line with the OCRF's mission and objectives:

a) **Finding New and Effective Treatments**

Improving treatment options to increase survival rates

b) **Managing Recurrence**

Better management of recurrent disease to enhance survival and quality of life

c) **Early Detection**

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Saving lives through early diagnosis

d) **Prevention**

Reducing disease prevalence through preventative research

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3. OCRF RESEARCH GRANTS – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: A Focus on Innovation

The OCRF aims to fund research projects which are highly innovative and offer original ideas with a direct link to our mission. These projects need to challenge existing paradigms, break new theoretical ground or continue previous relevant research which is progressing into new territory. The OCRF aims to fill the gap in funding for researchers particularly in the area of preliminary studies aimed at providing pilot data or proof of concepts needed to reach clinical trials. All project proposals also have to clearly articulate a path leading to translation of the research findings into impactful results for those who may be, and are, affected by ovarian cancer.

Principle 2: Sustained Research Investment

The funding of research projects in ovarian cancer over a sustained period has seen positive outcomes. Improvements in other cancer research, such as breast cancer, further validate the need for the OCRF to continue to provide sustained ovarian cancer research funding. To do this, the OCRF has committed to funding multi-year grants (from 1 to 3 years in length) to provide stability in the sector, and to focus on funding research staff salaries to attract the most innovative and skilled researchers into the field.

Principle 3: Supporting Researchers & the Research Community

The OCRF aims to attract the most innovative and skilled researchers by also promoting the development and career progression of scientists at all career stages with a particular emphasis on supporting highly talented mid-career researchers with a passion for ovarian cancer research. The OCRF continues to encourage established leaders in the field to support mid-career researchers to submit research proposals as Lead Chief Investigators as well as support early career and post-doctoral researchers in their research efforts by including them as personnel in applications by more senior research leaders. The OCRF is also intent on bringing together researchers in the field and supports ongoing collaboration both within Australia, New Zealand and across the globe.

Principle 4: Transparency & Accountability

The OCRF relies solely on the financial support of corporate Australia and the community to support ovarian cancer research. It is critical that the OCRF be able to demonstrate that the financial, and often emotional, investment of the community and corporate sponsors is rewarded with insight into the research projects funded by the OCRF and the assurance that the funds awarded are utilised wisely, with care, and always with the end vision in mind of a future free from the threat of ovarian cancer. To this end, the OCRF expects sound fiscal management of awarded projects, researcher engagement with the OCRF, its supporters and the community as well as transparency in reporting on progress for each research project.

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4. FUNDING INFORMATION

The OCRF offers funding for most aspects of research related costs. As such, research proposals could comprise the salaries of personnel directly or proportionately involved in the research project (that are not otherwise funded), as well as the costs of materials and minor equipment.

The OCRF offers multi-year grants with funding periods considered between one (1) and three (3) years.

Funding is offered from 1 July of the year in which the application is accepted by the OCRF.

The OCRF aims to continually raise substantial funding for ovarian cancer research through the generous support of the community and corporate sponsors, and to be fiscally responsible in providing sustained funding in research. In submitting their proposals, applicants should be mindful of the limited albeit substantial funds available every year, and therefore contain their costs so that they are realistic and competitive. While the OCRF aims to fully fund proposals, the OCRF reserves the right to ask applicants to review and revise their budgets where necessary or to offer reduced or part funding of projects.

In the event that funding for a project (or similar projects) is offered concomitantly, or post awarding of funding, by the OCRF and by another research funder (such as the NHMRC), the applicant must notify the OCRF immediately. The OCRF retains the right to withdraw funding or to elect to top up the funds from the alternative funding agency rather than awarding the full amount requested for the grant in order to maximize the opportunity for ovarian cancer research in Australia and New Zealand.

4.1 Project Costs

Project costs are not capped. However, Lead CIs must clearly articulate the scientific excellence of their project, and costing has to be realistic and competitive. In estimating the costs of the proposed research, Lead CIs should keep in mind that large, costly projects requiring a substantial percentage of the OCRF's annual budget will only be funded in exceptional circumstances.

4.1.1 Researcher Salaries

Lead CIs may apply for the salaries of any research staff they deem appropriate to ensure successful completion of the project (comprising mid-level and early career researchers, research assistants/officers, postdoctoral fellows, students, specialist personnel such as bioinformaticians etc).

The applicant is expected to quantify the remuneration they are seeking for staff from the OCRF over the duration of the grant based on:

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- 1) their current employee pay level (i.e. base salary received) from their host institution);
- 2) the full-time equivalent (FTE) to be allocated specifically and only to the project;
- 3) salary on costs applied by the Administering Institution's model up to 25%; and
- 4) if applicable, additional (full or partial) sources of funding for their salary, which will be detracted from the contribution requested from the OCRF.

To reiterate, applicants are expected to budget the base salary for each position plus up to 25% salary on costs (referred to by OCRF as 'Research Personnel Overhead Costs') in line with the Administering Institution's applied salary on costs model to support those additional staffing costs for the Administering Institution.

4.1.2 Minor Equipment & Maintenance Costs

Costing relating to minor equipment has to be fully itemized and justified.

Costing relating to consumables and other maintenance costs can be shown as an aggregate figure for items with individual costs less than or equal to \$2000 and have to be fully itemized for items with individual costs greater than \$2000.

4.1.3 Indirect/Overhead Costs

Grants funds cannot be used for indirect institutional overhead costs often referred to as the 'cost of research' or 'research levies' or expenses of the Research Personnel or the Administering Institution.

5. ELIGIBILITY

5.1 Administering Institution

- The proposed project must be located, managed, and operated under the auspices of a University, hospital or major research institution located within Australia or New Zealand.
- A single institution must be nominated as the Administering Institution.
- The Administering Institution must have in place policies and procedure for the management of public funds, for the management of Intellectual Property, and for the proper conduct of research in relation to ethics and good scientific conduct.
- The Administering Institution will be provided a copy of the Funding Agreement upon awarding of the grant and must review and agree to perform the proposed project on the terms of that Funding Agreement for funding to be received.

5.2 Chief and Associate Investigators

The Chief Investigators must demonstrate career excellence and a commitment to carry out research projects that aim to have a significant impact on ovarian cancer. Each application must nominate a Lead Chief Investigator (Lead CI) who takes the lead role in the conduct of the research project and is the investigator who takes responsibility for completion and lodgment of the application as well as the preparation of Progress and Final Reports should the grant be awarded.

A Lead CI can nominate additional Chief Investigators on the application who will be considered equal on the grant. All Chief Investigators have to show a significant and material contribution to the project that justifies their appointment (and where relevant, their salary) in their role. A researcher that serves an advisory only function to the project should be nominated as an Associate Investigator rather than a Chief Investigator.

The Lead CI may also nominate Associate Investigators who provide intellectual input into the research and whose participation warrants inclusion of their name on publications. Associate investigators are not able to draw a salary from the grant.

At the time of application, Chief Investigators must:

- Have demonstrated research experience, capability and productivity (for those applying for a salary this must accord with the salary level in the application).
- Demonstrate excellent potential for a career in ovarian cancer research.
- Agree to and sign the application form to demonstrate an understanding of the OCRF expectations as set out in these Guidelines.

The Lead Chief Investigator and at least 50% of the nominated Chief Investigator must:

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- Reside in Australia or New Zealand (or intend to reside in Australia) throughout the funding period.
- Be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, have resident status or have an appropriate visa to work in Australia or New Zealand for the entire duration of the funding period.

In addition, the Lead CI must remain the same for the entire duration of the funding period.

6. ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

The OCRF uses the expertise of a Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) to consider, assess and advise on the Research Grant applications. The SAC's recommendations for funding are reviewed and finalised by the OCRF's Committee of Management.

The OCRF assesses applications based on both the **OCRF Research Priorities** (see Section 2: OCRF Research Priorities) and a set of Research Project Criteria to ensure robust and well-considered project proposals are funded. The **Research Project Criteria** includes:

- a) **INNOVATION:** Cutting-edge, Scientific Merit, Translational Impact
- b) **QUALITY & OUTCOMES:** Likelihood of Success, Contribution to Current Knowledge, Profile of Researchers (including publications & citations), Clarity of Research
- c) **PROJECT MANAGEMENT:** Planning & Management, Budget, Timelines

All applications will be reviewed for completeness and adherence to the Guidelines by the OCRF Grants Officer. Applications that have provided incomplete documentation at the deadline will be excluded from the assessment process. As OCRF receives more applications than can be funded, strictly no additional documentation or new applications will be accepted after the closing date, and Lead CIs are advised to submit applications well in advance of the closing date.

6.1 Consumer Review

The OCRF also relies on the expertise and commitment of reviewers who serve on the Consumer Review Panel (CRP). The CRP forms a key part of decision making when recommending applications for funding to the OCRF's Committee of Management. The **Consumer Review Assessment Criteria** includes:

- a) **Relevance, Equity and Alignment:** aligns with OCRF's mission, relevance of the issue/problem the project will address, potential to provide benefit to a broad range of relevant people OR a specific group with a high burden of illness, is under-studied or has poorer outcomes.
- b) **Translation & Impact:** specific methodologies or approaches and collaborations to ensure that project results are translated into further research or clinical practice.
- c) **Consumer Engagement:** involvement and level of engagement of consumers in the development, planned conduct and communication of results of the proposal relevant to the stage and type of research.

Importantly, our CRP represents women who have had an ovarian cancer diagnosis, cared for ovarian cancer patients, or family of those affected by ovarian cancer. Therefore, the OCRF suggests that Lead CIs give more consideration to the type of audience being addressed in responding to this section.

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While we do request layman's language, the audience is very sensitive to current ovarian cancer prognosis and statistics, so this does not need to be covered in this section. What is expected is that time and due consideration is given to devising clear consumer input and planning for the project proposal.

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7. GRANT ADMINISTRATION AND CONDITIONS

7.1 Funding Agreement

Upon awarding of a grant, a Funding Agreement will be prepared and issued to the Administering Institution for review and signing. This Funding Agreement will certify that the institution endorses the application, is willing to administer the Research, and has the appropriate facilities and services to be made available for use by the Lead CI. All parties must accept the terms of the Funding Agreement and sign the Agreement before payments are made.

Projects must be conducted as set out in the Funding Agreement. The Funding Agreement is available for review on the OCRF website.

7.2 Variations to Funding Agreement

Lead CIs can request to extend the duration of the grant for up to 12 months without any additional OCRF funding. Extensions will be reviewed by the Scientific Advisory Committee for the currency of the research and approval will need to be granted by the Committee of Management.

Extensions beyond 12 months will not be approved.

The OCRF should be notified immediately of any changes to Chief Investigators on the project. The OCRF should also be informed of any changes in staff funded by the grant or any long-term leave and how the Lead CI intends to manage these changes and any affect this will have on the budget.

7.3 Reporting Requirements

Successful Lead CIs will be required to submit Progress Reports on an annual basis outlining the progress and achievements made. The OCRF reserves the right to modify the mode and content requested for submission in the annual reports. Failure to submit reports on time will lead to the suspension of future funding.

Successful Lead CIs will also be asked to present to the Committee of Management from time to time on their grant and its progress.

The OCRF reserves the right to recommend the suspension and/or termination of funding to a grant if progress is unsatisfactory.

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Successful Lead CIs will also be required to submit Financial Reports on an annual basis outlining expenditure of funds in relation to the grant. The OCRF reserves the right to withhold payments if a substantial amount of funds is unspent at the time of the financial report. A financial acquittal will be required at the completion of the funding.

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7.4 Media and Community Engagement

Media and community engagement is a hugely important aspect of the terms of engagement with the OCRF as it assists in raising the OCRF's profile to support future fundraising activities and in turn research.

The OCRF requests that all media releases, materials, and announcements related to the awarded grant including data derived from the project, be provided prior to their release for review and approval by the OCRF marketing team and with appropriate acknowledgement of the OCRF.

All Chief Investigators and personnel funded by the OCRF are expected to participate from time to time, and within reason, to activities such as talks to OCRF corporate partners and supporters, assist in laboratory tours, other social and media activities etc.

As part of the OCRF's commitment to attract the most innovative and skilled researchers, a regular symposium will be organised to bring OCRF-funded researchers together at which participation will be requested.

7.5 Acknowledgement of Support

All publications including journal articles/books, media releases and presentation of data derived from the awarded grant must acknowledge the support of the OCRF. The OCRF requires that the correct branding (the OCRF logo) is used and the team at the OCRF will be happy to provide support with this.

8. PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY

The OCRF values your privacy and takes reasonable steps to protect your personal information (that is, information that identifies or may reasonably be used to identify you). The OCRF is bound by the *Privacy Act 1988* (the Privacy Act) as well as applicable state/territory legislation so your personal information will be handled and protected in accordance with the provisions of this Act. The OCRF only collects personal information from you that is necessary for it to perform its functions. For these purposes, your information may be shared with trusted third parties and OCRF's service providers. If you choose not to provide certain personal information to the OCRF, we may not be able to process your grant application or communicate with you.

Our Privacy Policy tells you what kinds of information we may collect about you, how we usually collect, use and disclose your personal information, how you can complain about a misuse of your personal

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information and how you can ask for access to it. You can view our Privacy Policy by visiting ocrf.com.au/privacy-policy/.

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9. APPLICATION PROCESS & FORM

This section has the purpose of giving further details on the information to be submitted as part of the application. Please ensure you complete all sections of the application and adhere to any word limits outlined in the application form. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

9.1 Application Form

SECTION 1: Contact Details

Lead Chief See Guidelines Section 5: ELIGIBILITY for details.

Investigator - Contact

Administering Institution – Contact The contact person will be responsible for coordinating the Funding Agreement, invoices and annual progress reports alongside the Lead CI.

SECTION 2: Project Proposal

Synopsis Should include background, aim(s), methodology, impact and significance.

Proposed Study The research project is an important component in the selection process. This section should contain background and any preliminary data, aim(s), methodology, and provide an overview of the research strategy and plans for the duration of the research project. Please be as concise as possible. Relevant critical reference should be included.
Please include any relevant images/figures in this section and clearly label them.

OCRF Research Priorities & Relevance Outline the overall direction, contribution, and significance/relevance of the research project to ovarian cancer research and how the project aligns with the OCRF Research Priorities as outlined in the OCRF Research Strategy.

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Translational Impact Discussion of the potential for translational impact of the research and how the outcomes of the research project may in the short, medium and/or long-term impact on ovarian cancer in Australia and New Zealand.

SECTION 3: Project Planning & Management

Milestones & Deliverables Milestones should outline significant events or outcomes that you aim to reach throughout the research period. Deliverables are of a short-term nature and there should be measurable goals throughout each reporting period. These are important as they will be used to determine the progress and success of your research project.

Project Timelines Please timetable the major activities to be conducted in each year including the expected timeframes. This should align with your research strategy/plans as outlined in the proposed study section.

Budget & Justification Provide a detailed budget and a clear justification for each salary (if requested) and any other research support. Titles and salary figures must be commensurate to the position and involvement of the staff member. Costs must fit within the guidelines provide in Section 4 Funding Information.

Other Funding All funding secured form additional sources (host institution, University, Government agencies, other not for profit organisations etc) must be reported in this section and itemized. This allows the OCRF to assess and articulate the value proposition of its funding to a range of supporters and the community.

Ethics Lead CIs need to complete this section acknowledging whether or not ethics approval needs to be, has been sought, or has been achieved. Successful Lead CIs will need to provide final ethics clearance(s) to the OCRF before the project is to commence and prior to funding being released.

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SECTION 4: Research Team

Investigator – Contact Details

Please ensure this is completed for all Investigators as per the application form. Lead CI details do not need to be provided again as they were completed in Section 1.

Citizenship & Visa Status

As stated in Section 5, the Lead CI and at least 50% of the nominated Chief Investigators must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, an Australian or New Zealand Permanent Resident or hold a relevant visa to work in Australia or New Zealand. Lead CIs who have not yet been granted a relevant visa status may apply provided that such status has been sought and evidence must be provided with the application.

Participation in Project

Complete the table by outlining the percentage of time each Chief Investigator will be contributing to the research project and include a brief overview of their role on the project. Ensure this aligns with any CI salaries included in your budget.

Research & Professional Experience

Include a brief biography which will be utilised in any marketing and communication material and the website for the OCRF should the application be successful.

Provide a career chronology including any awards and honours and any current memberships on any advisory committees.

Also include in chronological order all publications in the past 5 years and any representative earlier publications pertinent to this application. Please include where possible citations.

Chief Investigators may also attach their Resumes to the application.

SECTION 5: Consumer Review

Lay Description

Lead CIs must include a brief description of the research project **IN LAY TERMS**. It is essential that care is taken to provide a non-scientific summary in simple, easy-to-understand, non-technical language, which explains the rationale, research objectives and the relevance of the project to OCRF's mission and ovarian cancer research. Lead CIs are encouraged to work with their institution's communications and/or marketing staff on this section.

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Importantly, our CRP represents women who have had an ovarian cancer diagnosis, cared for ovarian cancer patients, or family of those affected by ovarian cancer. Therefore, the OCRF suggests for future applications that more consideration is given to the type of audience being addressed. While we do request layman's language, the audience is very sensitive to current ovarian cancer prognosis and statistics, so this does not need to be covered in this section. What is expected is that time and due consideration is given to devising clear consumer input and planning for the project proposal.

The lay description may also be used in the production of a range of printed, digital and other communication materials and channels, promoting research funded by the OCRF.

Relevance, Equity and Alignment

As stated in Section 6, Lead CIs need to highlight ways in which the potential research outcomes could benefit an ovarian cancer population/group that has a high burden of illness, has been under-studied or has poorer outcomes. Alternatively, please describe how the research outcomes could provide widespread benefit to the ovarian cancer community.

Translation and Impact

Describe how the research outcomes will be translated to impact on ovarian cancer incidence, prevention, diagnosis or management. Response should include details of how the team will achieve these impacts in the short, medium and long terms.

Consumer Engagement

Indicate whether consumers have been involved in the development and planning of this research proposal. If so, describe how consumers have been engaged and ways in which this will continue throughout the duration of the project consummate with the stage and type of research.

SECTION 6: Certification

All Chief Investigators must certify that all the details given in the application are correct and that they agree to carry out the project according to the conditions determined by the OCRF.

The Lead CI must ensure that the Administering Institution and the Head of the relevant Department within the Administering Institution which will host the project have approved the application and

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authorized the Lead CI to submit the application by completing the relevant certification section. Incomplete certifications will not be considered.

9.2 Submission

Applications must be submitted in **a single PDF document** to the Grants Officer at grants@ocrf.com.au by **9am AEST** on the closing day. However, it is highly recommended that Lead CIs submit well in advance of the closing date. An acknowledgment of receipt of the application will follow within 2 business days. For any enquiries please email the Grants Officer at grants@ocrf.com.au.

The document must be named according to the following convention:

2023 Grant Application_SURNAME OF LEAD CI (Host Institution name)

e.g 2023 Grant Application_SMITH (Monash)