2026 Pilot Grant Application Guidance

Please ensure you read these guidance notes carefully — they provide advice and instructions for applicants and are designed to help ensure you meet the requirements of the funding call. Applications which are incomplete, or which do not meet the conditions detailed below, will be rejected without being sent for review.

Applications must be submitted using our Flexigrant online grants management system by **11am on Wednesday 18 March 2026**. We are unable to accept late submissions.

Guidance contents

Submission process

Applications must be submitted using our Flexigrant online grants management system by **11am on Wednesday 18 March 2026**. Please note that late applications cannot be considered.

All those participating in the application must each confirm their involvement, and complete their respective contributions, to enable submission of your proposal. You can find guidance for application participants in Appendix A.

Please ensure you have prepared all supporting documents. You may need to upload:

- a letter of confirmation from the Head of Department that the Lead Applicant's contract extends beyond the life of the grant.
- copies of ethical approval (if already obtained).
- copies of any approval letters for animal work (Home Office/Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)).
- a copy of the Schedule of Events with Cost Attribution Tool (SoECAT), obtainable via the NIHR Central Portfolio Management System (CPMS).

For any questions, or if you require help using Flexigrant, please contact research@bowelcanceruk.org.uk **well before** the submission deadline.

Remit and eligibility

We're looking for innovations in bowel cancer diagnosis and screening. It's not just about discovering new methods — strengthening and enhancing what's already working is equally important.

Proposals **must** address one of the areas highlighted in Goal 1 of our Research Strategy, which focuses on removing barriers to early and timely diagnosis:

- stratify populations based on their risk of developing bowel cancer, with a focus on people with high-risk conditions.
- improve the sensitivity, acceptability and coverage of bowel cancer screening tests.
- enhance the diagnosis of bowel cancer and how the right treatment options are chosen.

Applicants don't need preliminary data to support the application. These pilot grants are for providing the means to gather initial data to form the basis of a larger grant proposal. The pilot project must be designed so that it gives results which show whether a bigger project is possible.

The Lead Applicant **must** have a strong track record in conducting research and be based in a recognised academic or clinical institution in the UK. They must be in a tenured position, or hold a contract with the host that extends beyond the lifetime of the grant.

The application can include researchers based in institutions outside the UK as Co-applicants or Collaborators.

<u>**Funding guidelines**</u>

Funding can cover salaries, excluding that of the Lead Applicant. Funding can also cover consumables that are direct costs of the project (including animal costs).

We will not cover salary costs for individuals whose salaries are funded by other means, or any applicants or named staff who hold tenured positions. If you're seeking salary costs for the Lead Applicant, please contact the Bowel Cancer UK Research Team to discuss this **before** applying.

We will **not** accept applications that are:

- for research without a clear path to clinical impact in the next 5–10 years.
- for further education (e.g., MSc/PhD and course fees).
- for Clinical Research Training Fellowships.
- for work primarily undertaken outside the UK.
- for 'top up' funding for specific projects already supported by other funding bodies.

NIHR RDN support

Bowel Cancer UK is a National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) non-commercial Partner. This means the studies that we fund may be eligible to access NIHR Research Delivery Network (RDN) support.

The NIHR RDN supports researchers and the life sciences industry in planning, setting up and delivering high quality research to the agreed timelines and study recruitment target, for the benefit of patients and the NHS, including relevant research in public health and social care in England.

In partnership with your local Research and Development office, we encourage you to involve your local RDN team in discussions as early as possible when planning your study to fully benefit from the support the NIHR RDN offers as outlined in their Study Support Service.

Application and assessment process

1. **Application submission**
   i. Applications must be submitted using our Flexigrant grants management system by **11am on Wednesday 18 March 2026**.

2. **Triage**
   i. We'll carry out administrative checks to ensure applications meet the remit and eligibility of the call.

3. **Expert & Lay Review Panel review**
   i. Eligible applications will be subject to international expert review (in line with AMRC guidance) and review by our Lay Review Panel (a panel consisting of people affected by bowel cancer). For further information on the different criteria used by our reviewers, please see Appendix C.

4. **Scientific Advisory Board meeting**
   i. Applications will be considered by our Scientific Advisory Board in **July 2026**, who'll make funding recommendations to our Trustees.

5. **Notification**
   i. Once funding recommendations have been approved by our Board of Trustees, we'll notify applicants of the outcome of their application in **August 2026**. We thank you for your patience during this time.
   ii. All awards made will be in line with our Terms and Conditions.

Using our grants management system

To start an application, register an account on our Flexigrant grants management system.

Once logged in, select 'My applications' on the left-hand side panel of the application portal and click the blue 'Start' box on the right-hand side of the screen. Please read and confirm that you have read and understood the information regarding the remit and eligibility for this call.
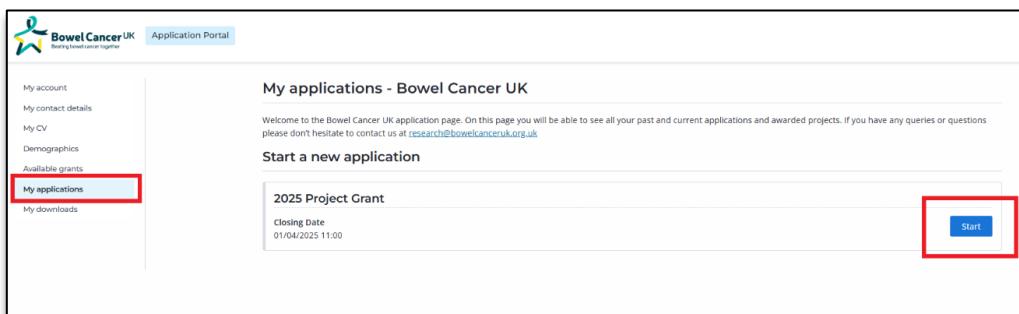
Application summary page

The application summary gives you an overview of all the sections of the application form that you'll need to complete.

On the '**Application**' tab (highlighted by the red box below) you'll be able to see the status of each section.
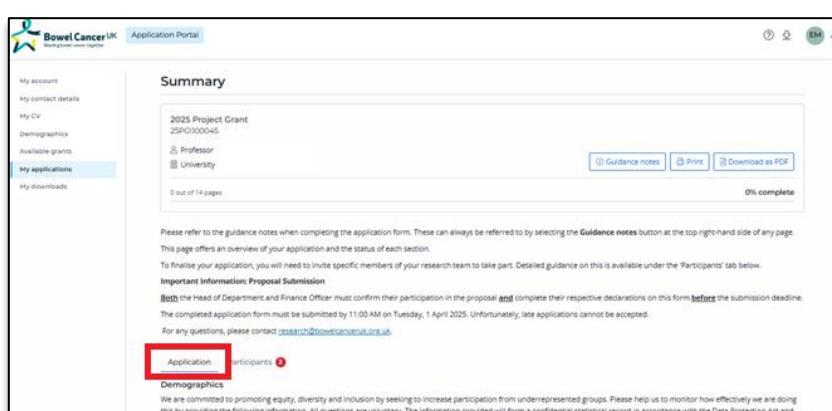
Here, you can use the 'Start' links to navigate through each section to input your information, as highlighted in the following image.

The '**Participants**' tab (see highlighted area in the below image) enables you to invite individuals to participate in your application. A Head of Department and Finance Officer from your Host Institution must be invited to join your application. If your proposed project will include a Joint Lead Applicant and/or any Co-applicant(s), you'll also need to use this tab to invite them to your proposal. Once added, each participant will receive an invitation to the email address you provide, notifying them to respond to your invitation to join.

When navigating through each page of the application, we strongly recommend that you periodically click the 'Save progress' button to ensure that your work is saved. You can go back to the application summary using 'Return to Summary'. These options are highlighted by the red box in the image below.

Section and question guidance for Lead Applicants

Below, you'll find guidance specific to each section and its questions.

Demographics

We're committed to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion by seeking to understand participation from underrepresented groups. Please help us to monitor this by providing information about your age, ethnicity and gender in the 'Demographics' section at the top of the Summary page (shown below). The information you give will form a confidential statistical record in accordance with the Data Protection Act and will not be used for any purpose other than analysis of our activities. Your answers will also have no bearing on the outcome of your application.

Completing this section is **mandatory** for **Lead and Joint Lead Applicants**, but all questions are voluntary (you can respond to questions with 'prefer not to say').
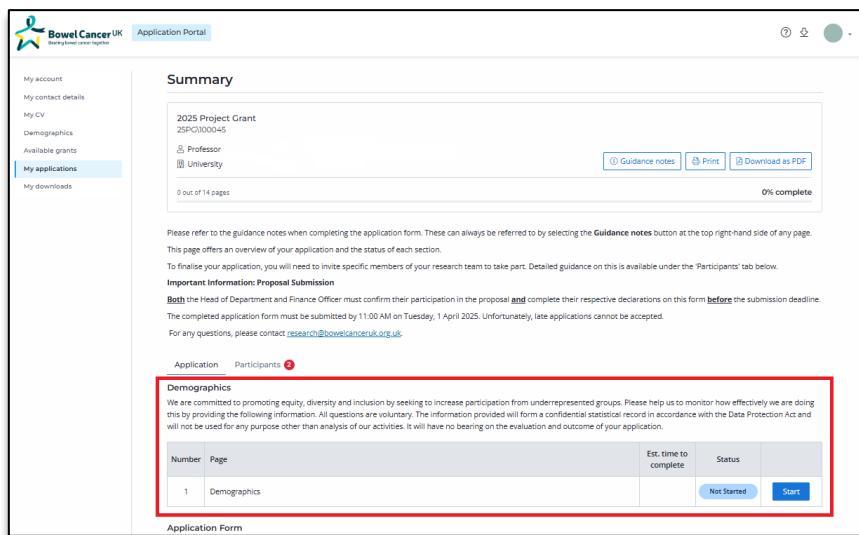
Summary of application

Project title
Please provide the title of the project in sentence case, not in capitals. This should accurately reflect the content of the proposal.

Grant duration and anticipated start date
Please specify the project length in months and your expected start date, should your application be successful. The project **must not exceed 60 months in length** and the start date **must be no earlier than 01/10/2026**.

Be as accurate and realistic as possible with the proposed start date, ensuring that you allow at least three months for grant setup processes to be completed. While the start date may be adjusted if your application is funded, we anticipate minimal delays between the award being made and the grant commencing. In any case, the start date should not be more than nine months after the award.

Keywords
Please give up to six keywords that describe your proposed research.

Is there a Joint Lead Applicant involved?
A Joint Lead Applicant is someone who'll contribute equally to the Lead Applicant on the proposed project. If answering 'yes', please provide the name of the Joint Lead Applicant, their institution and describe their contribution, ensuring that you clarify any specific skills, expertise and or techniques that they'll provide to the project.

If your project includes a Joint Lead Applicant, please remember to invite them to the application through the 'Participants' tab.

Will there be any Co-applicants involved?
A Co-applicant must have an active role in the proposed project. If answering 'yes', please provide the names of **all** Co-applicants, their institutions and clearly describe the role of **each** in the proposed project. **Please do not give a general statement to cover all Co-applicants.**

Please remember to invite any Co-applicants to the application through the 'Participants' tab.

Will there be any Collaborators involved?
A Collaborator should have a specific role within the project such as providing access to, or use of, key samples, datasets, or models. If answering 'yes', please provide the names of **all** Collaborators, their institutions and clearly describe the role of **each** Collaborator in the proposed project.

Optional: if you feel a letter of agreement from a Collaborator would highlight crucial additional details or endorsement, please upload it in the 'Supporting Information' section of the application.

Host Institution name
Please search for your Host Institution in the search bar and add it by clicking the blue '**Add organisation from our contacts**' button which is highlighted by the red box in the image on the next page.

Please **only** use the **'Add Organisation'** button on the far right-hand side if your Institution **is not** in the search list. If you need to add your Host Institution, please **do not** include details such as department/building etc.

＊ Host Institution

Please search for your Host Institution in the search bar; please only use the **'Add Organisation'** button on the far right hand side if your Institution is not in the system. If you need to add your Host Institution, do not include details such as department/building etc.

ⓘ You must add at least 1 organisation(s) with a name specified.

Lead organisation	Organisation name	Phone		
No records to display.				

| Type to search existing organisatio 🔍 | Add organisation from our contacts | | Add organisation |
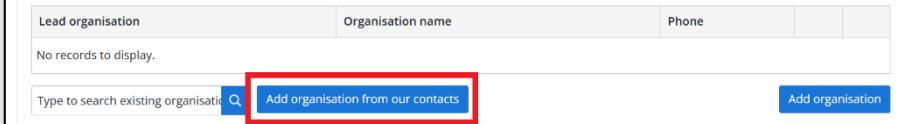
Lay application

This section of the application form should be written in clear, simple English that members of the public can easily understand. It will be assessed by our Lay Review Panel, a group of people who have been affected by bowel cancer. They don't have scientific or medical backgrounds but have the expertise to assess the proposed project from a patient benefit and participation perspective.

Two members of the Panel also sit on the Scientific Advisory Board. The Scientific Advisory Board will discuss the applications and make funding recommendations to our Board of Trustees for ratification. You can find the criteria used by our Lay Review Panel to assess applications in Appendix D of this guidance.

A lay summary which is difficult to understand can be challenging for our Lay Review Panel to assess, which can negatively impact the overall outcome of the application. To ensure that your application is accessible, we **strongly recommend** that you:

- avoid using abbreviations, technical jargon or scientific references.
- ask someone without a scientific background to read it and provide feedback before submission (ideally someone not closely familiar with your work).

You can also request support from our Research Network. The Network consists of people who also have personal experience of bowel cancer. They may have received a bowel cancer diagnosis themselves, or have a loved one who has been affected. Their role is to help shape research from the development stage onwards by providing the patient perspective. If you'd like a Network representative to review your application prior to submission, please download the request form from our website and return to us. You'll need to allow at least four weeks for us to connect you with a Network member.

If a grant is awarded, the information provided in your lay application may be used for publicity purposes. These statements may be disseminated to the public, used on the Bowel Cancer UK website and in external publications to promote fundraising for your research. We may contact you for more details or clarification of the information you provide. **Please do not include confidential or sensitive information** in this section. If it's unavoidable, please highlight that you've done so and be specific about which information we cannot disseminate.

Lay title

Please provide a short, simple title for the research project. This should accurately reflect the content of the proposal.

What are you proposing to do? (Word limit: 150)

Please provide a brief explanation of what research question(s) you are planning to answer.

Why is this research needed? (Word limit: 200)

Please give some background to why the project is necessary and what the research question(s) is/are that you are planning to answer. There's no need to include basic information about bowel cancer or how many people it affects — instead, please focus on the specific background to this project. Consider consulting people affected by bowel cancer to make sure your research question reflects a genuine need and considers relevant patient outcome measures.

How do you plan to carry out this research and what are the main objectives? (Word limit: 250)

Please give a brief description of the methods you will use to answer the research question(s), as well as listing the main objectives of the work.

What are the expected outcomes and your criteria for success? (Word limit: 200)

Please provide details of what the main expected outcomes will be from your project. Please ensure that it is clear how the need, the objectives and the intended outcomes are linked. Please also include how you will measure and demonstrate that your project has been successful.

Who could benefit from this research? (Word limit: 100)

Please briefly explain whether this work might benefit all people with bowel cancer, members of the public (e.g., for screening projects) or a specific subset of patients, such as those with advanced disease or a genetic predisposition to bowel cancer.

What is the intended impact and potential clinical benefit of the research? (Word limit: 200)

Please describe the expected clinical benefits of this project, if successful. Make sure your research has a clear pathway to impact and consider how the findings could be translated into clinical practice to benefit people affected by bowel cancer. If relevant, think about any potential barriers to adoption by the NHS and how these could be addressed.

Please describe the anticipated timeline to clinical benefit within the next 10 years. (Word limit: 150 words)

Please give a clear and realistic timeline.

Please explain how your project will address one of the areas highlighted in Goal 1 of our [Research Strategy](), which focuses on removing barriers to early and timely diagnosis: (Word limit: 200)

- Stratify populations based on their risk of developing bowel cancer, with a focus on people with high-risk conditions.
- Improve the sensitivity, acceptability, and coverage of bowel cancer screening tests.
- Enhance the diagnosis of bowel cancer and how the right treatment options are chosen.

Please clearly highlight how the application is within the remit of the grant call.

How have you involved people affected by bowel cancer in the development and planning of this proposal? (Word limit: 200)
We expect researchers applying to our grant call to have **meaningfully** consulted people affected by bowel cancer when designing their research. Any Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) described in this section must be directly relevant to the study outlined in your application.

Involving people affected by bowel cancer can strengthen your research by ensuring it is patient-focused and delivers outcomes that matter to them. It also enhances the ethical acceptability of your work, as it demonstrates consideration of what is acceptable to those who may take part in the study.

Please address the following points:

- How many people have you involved, and how is their experience relevant to this project?
- How did you engage with them (e.g., surveys, interviews, meetings), and has their involvement led to changes to your project? For example, have you adjusted your research questions, study design, methods, outcome measures or recruitment process? If so, please provide details.
- If your project involves creating patient-facing materials (e.g., information leaflets, consent forms), have these been reviewed by people affected by bowel cancer?

If you plan to involve people at different stages of your project, please ensure you have budgeted for this. The NIHR provide [payment guidance for researchers and professionals](). These costs can be included in the 'Other' section of the budget table in the 'Financial information' section of the application form. Please list them separately from costs associated with study participants.

How will people affected by bowel cancer be involved in the delivery and management of this research, if funded? (Word limit: 150)
Please highlight how you will be involving people going forward **(not as study participants)** through the lifetime of the project. You may wish to include who you plan to involve, how they will be involved and what impact you hope their involvement will bring.

Does your research involve recruiting participants to the study? If yes, how many?
Please state the number of participants you plan to recruit, if applicable. If you plan to recruit different

numbers of participants at different stages of your project, and would like to clarify/outline this, please type the information into the answer box (e.g., Work package one: 15; work package two: 18). You will be asked for further information about ethical approval in the 'Working with humans/human tissue/human data' section of the application form.

Please describe the role that the participants will play in your research. (Word limit: 150)

If appropriate, please provide information on how study participants will be involved (e.g., what types of samples will be taken, how often they will have to visit a hospital, what interventions will they receive, will expenses be paid etc). Please consider consulting people affected by bowel cancer in your study design to ensure that what you expect participants to undergo is acceptable and feasible. If you have done this, please confirm here.

Are there any risks for participants? (Word limit: 150)

Please describe what the possible risks may be for participants who take part in the study and explain what measures you have in place to mitigate or minimise these risks.

Communication plan (Word limit: 200)

Please describe how you will disseminate and publicise the results of your work. Consider how you might work with us to keep our supporters and donors informed and how you can act as an ambassador for the charity. Please also provide contact details for the Host Institution's PR office.

Main proposal

Scientific abstract (Word limit: 250)

This should provide a summary of the proposed project. Potential reviewers may use the abstract to judge whether they should review the application. Please include a brief description of the aims, methodology and expected outcomes of the research. If funded, the abstract will also be shared with the AMRC, and any other organisation as specified in the grant Terms and Conditions. **Therefore, please do not include any confidential or commercially sensitive information in this section.**

Is this, or a related application, currently being submitted elsewhere?

If yes**,** please provide details of any related submissions and the dates by which you expect to know the outcome. We may contact you about these prior to a funding decision being made by our Board of Trustees.

Is this a resubmission of a previous application to Bowel Cancer UK?

If yes, please give brief details of the former application and explain how this application differs sufficiently from the previous one, including how the past feedback has been addressed.

Is the proposed research likely to lead to patentable or commercially exploitable results?
If 'yes', please state whether any patents have been filed, or commercial interest has been expressed, in relation to this research, and provide details. Please also provide the most recent details for your Institute's Technology Transfer Office.

Please detail the milestones for the project and when you expect to achieve them.
The progress of the project will be measured against this plan. If your application is successful, you will be expected to report against these milestones in annual and final reports, as well as in follow-up reports after project completion.

Case for support
This is the main scientific proposal and should be a detailed statement of the research being proposed. **It must not exceed 2000 words**. Please ensure you have provided the following information:

- Background.
- Aims and objectives of the project.
- Detailed plan of investigation including study design, power calculations, methodology, techniques and data analysis.
- Evidence of the research team's ability to conduct the research. You may provide a summary of any unpublished work that will support the proposal.
- Potential risks/challenges and how these will be addressed.

References
Please list any references cited in the full scientific proposal. All authors must be listed in full and use of 'et al.' is **not** permitted.

Optional upload
You will have the option to upload **one** Word or PDF document with a **maximum of two sides** of tables and figures of key supporting data/information. You are not permitted to use this as an overflow for additional text.

Is this a clinical study (with excess treatment costs/savings)?
If yes, please upload a copy of the SoECAT as an Excel file in the 'Supporting Information' section of the application form.

Use of animals

Please note that these questions are mandatory for all applications that propose research using animals. Applications may be referred to the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of

Animals in Research (NC3Rs) for review. Where animal work is sub-contracted, these questions must be completed by the organisation conducting the animal studies.

Please make sure that you have considered alternatives to the use of animals when designing your protocol. Please visit the NC3Rs for further information on reduction, replacement and refinement of the use of animals in research. Please also refer to the NC3Rs publication "Responsibility in the use of animals in bioscience research: Expectations of the major research council and charitable funding bodies".

Applicants should make use of the Animal Research: Reporting In Vivo Experiments (ARRIVE) guidelines when designing their experiments and ensure that they report animal-based studies in accordance with the ARRIVE guidelines as far as possible, taking into account the specific editorial policies of the journal concerned.

Please consider using the Experimental Design Assistant provided by the NC3Rs. This is a free resource to support researchers in the planning of animal experiments, ensuring robust study design and reliable and reproducible findings.

In the event of an award being made, full evidence of Home Office approval relating to **this project**, covering the full period of research, will be required **before** the research commences. If you already have approval, please ensure evidence is uploaded in the 'Supporting Information' section of the application form.

Does the project involve the use of animals?
If yes, please state the type (species and strain) and number of animals to be used. You will also be asked to confirm if any of these animals are genetically modified.

Does your proposal include any procedures carried out on animals in the UK that are regulated under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986?
If yes, have the necessary approvals been given by the Home Office in relation to project and establishment licences? If you have received these approvals, please upload evidence in the 'Supporting Information' section of the application form.

Have the necessary approvals been given by the Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB)?
Please answer 'yes' or 'no'.

What is the severity of the procedures being used? Please provide details of any moderate or severe procedures.
If any procedures are classed as moderate or severe, please provide details and explain why a less severe procedure could not have been used.

Does your proposal involve the use of animals or animal tissue outside the UK?
If yes, you may be asked for further information. Please note, research involving animals that is conducted outside of the UK must, regardless of location, comply with:

- current UK legislation and regulation.
- the [Home Office guidelines](#).
- "[Responsibility in the use of animals in bioscience research: Expectations of the major research council and charitable funding bodies](#)".
- the [ARRIVE](#) guidelines.

It must also have been approved by the local ethics committee that reviews applications for animal work and comply with any relevant legislation, regulation, guidelines, and jurisdictions for that country. If your proposal is successful, we will require evidence of all relevant approvals from outside the UK before the project can commence.

Why is the species/model to be used the most appropriate?
Please give details.

Please justify the number of animals to be used per experiment, including details of any sample size calculations and/or statistical advice sought. Please explain how you have considered the 3Rs.
Please ensure that you are using the minimum number of animals that will answer the research question. Please also ensure that experiments are adequately powered and seek help with this if needed.

Why is animal use necessary; are there any other possible approaches?
Please explain why you cannot use other methods to answer the research question.

Working with humans/human tissue/human data

Does the project involve human participants, the use of human tissue (including stem cells) and/or identifiable human data (e.g., registries, electronic health records, audit datasets)?
If yes, you will be asked to indicate which of the following the project will involve: active recruitment of human participants; use of human tissue samples; use of human data. Please select all that apply. If your project involves human tissue and/or human data, please briefly explain how it will be sourced, accessed and stored.

Does the project involve the use of stem cells?
If yes, please provide further details on type and source below. Please also provide a justification for this and explain why an alternative cannot be used.

Please confirm the status of any ethical committee approval for the project.
Please let us know if it is not required, to be submitted, pending, or has been granted, and explain your chosen response.

Applicant details

Lead Applicant details.

Please describe the Lead Applicant's role on the proposed project.

Number of hours per week to be spent on the project.

Please provide a number.

Please enter up to 10 of your most relevant research publications for this application.

Please provide details. All authors must be listed in full and use of 'et al.' is **not** permitted.

Please enter up to 10 of your most relevant grants for this application.

Please ensure for each grant you include the awarding body, amount awarded, project title and the date the support was awarded (month and year is sufficient).

Financial information

You may apply for funding of **up to £50,000**. Please note, we will only fund the direct costs of the research and will not cover the full economic cost.

Please complete the budget table displayed in this section of the application form. Extra years can be added using the '**Add another period**' feature at the bottom right of the table. You can add items (e.g., an additional salary) by using the '**Add A New Item**' button at the bottom left of the table. These options are highlighted by red boxes in the image below.

You can edit the details of an item by clicking on the **pencil icon** next to the item's name, shown below by the blue circle. You can remove items you have added by clicking on the **bin icon**, shown below by the blue box.

Please **do not** include any of the following in your costings as they will not be funded by Bowel Cancer UK:

- Overhead and infrastructure (e.g., lighting, estate costs etc).
- General office expenses (e.g., photocopying, postage etc).
- Central support staff salaries (e.g., secretarial support).
- General technician salaries (e.g., for wash up, waste disposal etc).
- Equipment maintenance and running costs.
- Staff recruitment costs.
- Purchase of books.
- Training courses (including Home Office animal license courses).
- Apprenticeship levies.

If your planned project includes the recruitment of participants, you are required to complete a SoECAT. This tool provides a standardised approach for attributing the costs of health and social care research and development (AcoRD) across England. Please also contact your local NIHR RDN early to help with study design, cost attribution and availability of resources. Please also see Appendix B — Costing clinical research, within this document, for a brief overview.

Salaries

In the budget table, please include the costs for any researcher who is directly working on the project. You must also add any London weighting (if applicable) and the Employer's cost for each staff member included in the table.

Co-applicants can be a named researcher on the grant and therefore their salary included in the budget, as long as they are not in a tenured position, or their salary is not already covered by another funder. This also applies for any Joint Lead Applicant. If you are seeking salary costs for the Lead Applicant, please contact the research team to discuss this **before** submitting an application.

You should use salary costs from the expected start date, not the application date. Please consult your finance office to ensure these are correct and have considered known inflationary increases and annual increments based on the Host Institution's salary scale. Yearly salary increases should not exceed 6%. Please include the full time equivalent (FTE) that the researcher will spend on the project.

Consumables

Under this heading, please detail all expenses that will be directly incurred by the project and include all laboratory materials (excluding equipment) that are directly attributable to the project. Each item should be detailed separately in its own line on the budget table. Please also include any applicable animal costs (purchase and maintenance).

Other

You may include underline small items of equipment, but they must be specific to the proposed project, rather than for general laboratory use. We will not consider applications where the majority of the budget is for equipment. Please use this section to also include any costs associated with PPI or study participation. You may also

include conference costs (up to £500/year) for any conferences at which you will be presenting Bowel Cancer UK-funded work. You may also include up to £1,500 (in total) for open access publication costs. You can read our open access publication policy on our website. Please note, Bowel Cancer UK does not make supplementary awards so these costs cannot be requested after an award has been made.

Please ensure that it is clear throughout this section what each cost line relates to, as value for money will be a key consideration as part of the review of your application.

Total project cost
Please enter the total project cost, ensuring that it matches the grand total amount listed in the table.

Please provide a detailed justification of the costs requested in the budget table. (Word limit: 250)
Please clearly outline why the costs listed are necessary for your project. If the amount requested does not cover the full study costs (e.g., where the work would be part funded by another grant), please also provide brief details as to how the remaining costs of the study will be met.

Declarations

Lead Applicant
The Lead Applicant will need to indicate that they agree to the following declaration by selecting a tick box:

I have read the Terms and Conditions and in the event of a grant being awarded agree to abide by them and any amendments which may subsequently be issued. I shall be actively engaged in, and in day-to-day control of, the project. Bowel Cancer UK will be informed as soon as I hear the outcome of any other applications for funding for the proposed project and/or any significant changes to this proposal.

The Lead Applicant will also be asked how they heard about the opportunity to apply for Bowel Cancer UK funding. This helps us to understand which of our communication methods applicants have found effective so that we can continue to use them for future rounds.

Joint Lead Applicant
If a Joint Lead Applicant is listed on the application, they will be asked to confirm that they agree to the following declaration by selecting a tick box:

I have read the Terms and Conditions and in the event of a grant being awarded agree to abide by them and any amendments which may subsequently be issued. I shall be actively engaged in, and in day-to-day control of, the project.

Head of Department
The Head of Department will need to confirm that they agree to the following statement by selecting a tick box:

I confirm that I have read this application and the [Terms and Conditions](#) and, if granted, agree that the work will be accommodated and administered in my Department/Institution. All the necessary licenses and approvals have been obtained or are being sought.

If the Head of Department is the Lead, or Joint Lead Applicant, a suitable deputy with sufficient authority to approve the proposal, must be assigned to the application to complete this declaration.

Finance Officer
The Finance Officer of the Host Institution will need to indicate that they agree to the following statement by selecting a tick box:

I confirm that I have read this application and the [Terms and Conditions](#) and, if granted, the work will be accommodated and administered in the Department/Institution. The staff gradings and salaries quoted are correct and in accordance with the normal practice of this Institution and no University overheads have been added.

Expert review

This section of the application will only be seen by the Research Team at Bowel Cancer UK who will use it to assist in the expert review of your grant application.

Please suggest four individuals who have expertise related to the areas of work detailed in the proposal. Do not include colleagues from the Host Institution, nor individuals whom any of the applicants are actively collaborating or have collaborated with in the last five years. Please include individuals from both the UK and overseas.

You may also exclude up to two individuals who you do not wish us to approach to review the application. Please provide a brief explanation as to why they should not be contacted. Please note that the final decision on who should be contacted to review the grant application rests with Bowel Cancer UK.

Supporting information

In this section of your Flexigrant application, you will be able to upload:

- Confirmation of contract — for those applicants who are contracted and not in a tenured post, a letter from the Head of Department is required to confirm that your contract extends beyond the end date for the proposed research. Confirmation should be uploaded as a PDF or Word document. **Please name the file 'Contract_confirmation' followed by the Lead Applicant's last name (e.g., Contract_confirmation_Smith)**.

- Collaborator letters — general letters of support are not required. Please only attach letters of agreement from Collaborators if you think they add crucial additional details or endorsement. Letters should be uploaded as PDF, Word or email screenshots (in either jpeg or png format). **Please name the file(s) 'LoA' followed by the Collaborator last name (e.g., LoA_Ahmed)**.

- SoECAT — if your proposed research will involve recruitment of participants, please upload the Funder Export of the SoECAT as an Excel file. **Please name the file 'SoECAT' followed by the Lead Applicant's last name (e.g., SoECAT_Smith)**.

- Approval for use of animals — if you have already received the necessary approvals from the Home Office in relation to project and establishment licences, please upload evidence here as a PDF or Word Document. **Please name the file 'Animal_use_approval' followed by the last name of the licence holder (e.g., Animal_use_approval_Garcia)**.

Submitting your application

You can submit your application by clicking the blue 'Submit application' button in the top right of the application summary page, shown by the red box in the image below.

This option will only become visible when:

- Each mandatory section of the application form, and 'Participants' tab is complete.
- The Joint Lead Applicant (if listed), the Head of Department and the Finance Officer have **all** completed their declarations and clicked the blue 'Finish contribution' button **at the bottom left** of their **respective** application summary pages.
- Co-applicants (if listed) have clicked the blue 'Finish contribution' button **at the bottom left** of their application summary page.

Upon successful submission, you will receive an email confirmation from Flexigrant.

Appendix A — Guidance for application participants

Once your account is activated and you have accepted your invite to participate in the application, you'll be directed to the application summary page, where you can see the status of each section. If you have read-only access to a section, a 'View' option will appear in the last column of the summary table. If you have editing permissions, you'll see a 'Start' or 'Edit' option instead. These options are highlighted with red boxes in the image below.

During future visits to the Flexigrant portal, click 'My applications' in the left panel. This will show you a list of the applications in which you are a participant.

To access an application, select the blue 'Resume' option next to the application. This will take you to its summary page.

Information on roles

A Joint Lead Applicant:

- is someone who will contribute equally to the Lead Applicant on the proposed project.
- will need to sign the Joint Lead Applicant declaration (adherence to our Terms and Conditions) **and** complete their contribution **before** the application can be submitted. This includes completing the 'Demographics' section at the top of the application Summary page.
- will be able to edit all sections of the application, except 'Financial information' and the declarations of other participants where they have read-only access.

The Head of Department:

- is required to confirm that the work will be accommodated and administered in their Department/Institution.
- will need to sign the Head of Department declaration (adherence to our Terms and Conditions) **and** complete their contribution **before** the application can be submitted.
- will have read-only access to the rest of the application form.

The Finance Officer:

- is required to confirm that the application has been correctly budgeted for.
- will need to sign the Finance Officer declaration (adherence to our Terms and Conditions) **and** complete their contribution **before** the application can be submitted.
- will have read-only access to the rest of the application form, apart from 'Financial information', which they can edit.

A Co-applicant:

- is someone with an active role in the proposed project.
- has read-only access to all application form sections.
- will need to access the application **and** confirm their contribution **before** the application can be submitted.

When a Joint Lead Applicant, the Head of Department or Finance Officer have answered all mandatory questions, a prompt to submit the contribution will appear, as shown below. You can finish your contribution by selecting 'Submit'. The Lead Applicant will be notified by email when any participant selects 'Finish contribution'.
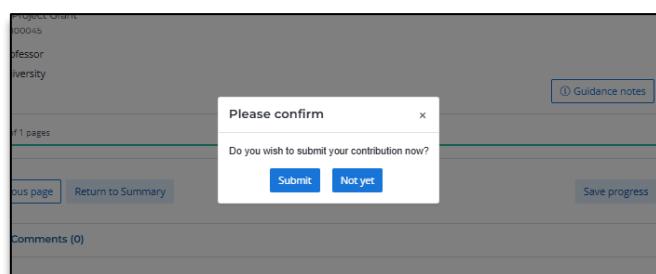
Appendix B — Costing clinical research

Research that involves NHS patients or facilities is subject to the AcoRD guidance published by the Department of Health and Social Care. This guidance clarifies the distinction between research costs, NHS support costs and NHS treatment costs, and therefore the costs that will be funded by us, the NIHR and the NHS.

Before applying to us for funds towards a clinical study taking place within the NHS, you must contact all relevant parties to ensure all costs are correctly attributed, and studies are designed to make effective use of research support staff.

You should contact:

- The Research and Development (R&D) office in the NHS Trust(s) where the study will be held.
- The Finance Office in the Host Institution (where the Lead Applicant is based).
- In England, the lead NIHR RDN responsible for providing infrastructure for the study, NHS Research Scotland in Scotland, Health and Care Research Wales in Wales, or the Health and Social Care (HSC) R&D office in Northern Ireland.

Please refer to AcoRD guidance which explains in detail how the costs of clinical studies should be attributed. Annex A of the AcoRD guidance fully details the subset of costs that may be requested from us, and those which we would expect to be funded by the NIHR or local NHS Trusts.

Research costs — the costs of the R&D itself. These end when the research ends. They relate to activities that are being undertaken to answer the research question(s). Research costs can be direct and indirect, and as a charity, we do not have to pay indirect costs. You can apply to us for the research costs included in Part A of the AcoRD guidance. Please ensure these costs match those included in your Flexigrant application form in the 'Financial information' section. As an AMRC member charity, we do not have to pay any of the research costs detailed in Part B of the AcoRD guidance.

NHS treatment costs — the patient care costs, which would continue to be incurred if the patient care service in question continued to be provided after the R&D study had stopped. This includes any excess treatment costs associated with the research.

NHS support costs — the additional patient care costs associated with the research, which would end once the R&D study had stopped, even if the patient care involved continued to be provided.

Sometimes, a clinical research study will involve administering different or additional care or treatments from standard. This means that treatment costs can differ from standard. When the associated treatment costs are more than the standard treatment, they are known as 'Excess Treatment Costs'. When they are less, they are known as 'Excess Treatment Savings'.

You will need to complete a SoECAT alongside your grant application form. We require the 'Funder Export' from the online SoECAT, obtainable via the NIHR CPMS. We strongly advise submitting your SoECAT **at least 3 weeks before the grant submission deadline** to have it authorised (by the AcoRD specialist) and returned to you before you submit your application. In order to create a SoECAT, you will need to set up a CPMS account. Further guidance on how to complete your SoECAT form can be found on the Online SoECAT Guidance page.

Appendix C — Expert review scoring criteria

Applications which pass remit and eligibility checks will undergo expert review by at least two reviewers.

Reviewers will be asked to comment on the following areas:

- **Research question(s)** including if the questions are timely and relevant, and whether they address an important issue or knowledge gap.
- **Proposed methodology** including if it is robust and appropriate, and has realistic objectives and timeline.
- **Strengths and weaknesses** of the proposal.
- **Applicant team** ability to conduct and deliver the research.
- **Route to clinical application** pathway and timeframes.
- **Ethical concerns** relating to any use of animals, human participants, human tissue or human data.
- **Budget evaluation** including if it is realistic and well-justified.

They will also be asked to score the application from 1–6:

Score	Score indicators
6 (must support)	Highly innovative or will substantially improve existing systems; likely to achieve substantial impact.
5 (should support)	Innovative or will significantly advance current practices; likely to achieve positive impact with minor areas of improvement.
4 (support if funds available)	Good quality with novel aspects or relevant improvements; impact is evident, though areas might require further detail or justification.
3 (potential to support (with revisions))	Promising but revisions needed to achieve higher confidence.
2 (not worthy of support)	Some strengths but includes significant weaknesses which raise concerns.
1 (do not support)	Lacks novelty, has major methodological flaws, or is unlikely to achieve its aims and impact.

Appendix D — Lay review criteria

The 'Lay application' section of proposals which pass remit and eligibility checks will undergo review by our Lay Review Panel. Please note, two members of this Panel will sit on the Scientific Advisory Board.

Reviewers will be asked to comment on the following areas:

- **Patient & Public Involvement** in the:
    - design, planning and preparation of the research.
    - management of the project (if funded).
    - dissemination of the research findings to people affected by bowel cancer.
- **Communication of research plans** including any comments/questions/feedback relating to the Lay application section.
- **Importance and impact** relating to the short-term outcomes and the potential future impact of the study outlined in the Lay application section.
- **Patient experience** (for applications with a clinical component)
    - Likeliness of patients wanting to enrol and their willingness to provide what is asked of them.
    - Consideration of patients' needs.
    - Is the patient cohort likely to be representative of the population?

They will also be asked to score the application from 1–6:

Score	Score indicators
6 (must support)	Strong likelihood of substantial direct and future impacts; PPI plans are comprehensive; equality, diversity and inclusivity (EDI) issues are thoroughly considered.
5 (should support)	Clearly defined direct impact and potential future benefits; PPI plan is well thought out; strong EDI plans; may benefit from minor adjustments.
4 (support if funds available)	Potential benefits, but direct impact may be less pronounced/not fully realised; PPI plans are present but may lack detail; EDI considerations have been acknowledged but minor adjustments needed.
3 (potential to support (with revisions))	Addresses a recognisable need, but the direct or future impacts need more clarification; PPI and EDI elements are evident but require more depth.
2 (not worthy of support)	Only partially addresses an unmet need or lacks clear benefits; PPI and EDI considerations are inadequate/not well-integrated.
1 (do not support)	Lacks clear relevance/significant benefits; PPI and EDI are not meaningfully addressed.