



# **AACR Clinical Oncology Research (CORE) Training Fellowships**

## **Program Guidelines and Application Instructions**

**American Association for Cancer Research**

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Last Updated: March 5, 2024

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The AACR Clinical Oncology Research (CORE) Training Fellowship Program is designed to provide an industry-academic clinical practicum with a unique opportunity for academic clinicians to train in drug development. **Each fellowship provides \$100,000 over one year for the fellow to work on site at the facility of one of AACR's pharmaceutical industry partners.** Applicants must plan to spend one year on site; however, time spent at the industry site over this one-year period may be flexible and will be determined upon mutual agreement between the selected fellow, fellow's institution, and industry partner.

Fellows will be provided with real-world experience in drug development, including clinical research, clinical trial design, and data analysis. They will be accountable for executing clinical activities and research project(s) to be completed within the one-year period. Opportunities for publication and presentation of completed work will be provided.

The industry partners for this program and their areas of interest include the following (please see [More about the Partners](#) at the end of this document for more information):

- AstraZeneca (facility located in Gaithersburg, MD or Waltham, MA)
  - Early- and late-stage clinical development including, but not limited to, antibody-drug conjugates, immunotherapy, and cell therapy

## 2. PROGRAM SUMMARY

### 2.1 Use of Grant Funds

The AACR CORE Training Fellowship can be used to fund:

- salary and benefits of the fellow;
- attendance at the Annual Grantee Recognition Event during the AACR Annual Meeting or a similar recognition event (attendance required);
- indirect costs for up to a maximum of 20% of total direct costs.

A limited stipend of up to \$7,500 may be provided separate from the grant funds to cover necessary costs for the fellow to travel to and from the industry site (please see [Section 3.3](#) for more information).

### 2.2 Process Overview

1. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis via submission to [grants@aacr.org](mailto:grants@aacr.org) (please see [Section 3](#) for application instructions). The deadline for submission of applications for the current cycle is **May 31, 2024**.
2. Submitted applications will be reviewed quarterly by the Scientific Review Committee.
3. Selected fellows will be notified.
4. The start of the grant term can be flexible and will be determined upon mutual agreement between the selected fellow, the fellow's institution, and the industry partner.

### 2.3 Grant Acceptance

Grant recipient must attend the Annual Grantee Recognition Event during the AACR Annual Meeting or a similar recognition event to formally accept the grant. Grant funds may be used to support the grant recipient's attendance at this required event.

*In the event of unforeseen scheduling changes, the grant recipient will be contacted regarding alternative arrangements.*

## 2.4 Eligibility Criteria

### The Applicant:

At the start of the grant term, applicants must:

- have a medical degree (including MD, DO, or MD/PhD) in a related field, and not currently be a candidate for a further doctoral degree.
- have enrolled in an accredited hematology/oncology fellowship program at an academic, medical, or research institution within the United States
  - There are no citizenship requirements. However, by submitting an application for this grant, the applicant who is not a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident assures that the visa status will provide sufficient time to complete the project and grant term.
  - The applicant should ensure that their visa status will allow them to complete the fellowship onsite with the industry partner while maintaining their employment with the host institution.
  - Applicant's enrollment in an accredited hematology/oncology fellowship program cannot be contingent upon receiving this grant.
- not be employees or subcontractors of a U.S. government entity or for-profit private industry or be clinical fellows applying from a U.S. government laboratory (e.g., NIH, CDC, FDA, etc.).

### Other considerations:

- Applicants **must** be AACR members in good standing (dues paid for the current year). Annual dues are not required for early-career researchers interested in Associate membership. Please be informed that AACR offers reduced rates for [membership dues](#) for applicants from countries with emerging economies based on the World Bank listing. Nonmembers interested in this grant opportunity must submit a satisfactory application for AACR membership by the application deadline. **Nonmembers** can apply for membership [online](#). Please review the [Membership Categories](#) for the category that best fits your qualifications. Nonmembers must obtain a statement of support from a nominator who is an Active AACR member in good standing (dues paid for the current year). Nonmembers requiring assistance with finding a nominator may email [membership@aacr.org](mailto:membership@aacr.org) and include your geographical location to receive a list of members in your area to contact for nominations. For more information check the [membership FAQ](#). **Members** can renew their membership through [myAACR](#). You will need your logon (email address) and password to access the member portal. If you require assistance logging in, please submit a [help form](#). **Lapsed** members must be members in good standing by the application deadline and should contact the Membership Department at [membership@aacr.org](mailto:membership@aacr.org) for assistance.
- Applicants should not submit more than one application for the AACR CORE Training Fellowship but may concurrently apply for other AACR grants. However, applicants are expected to accept the first grant they are awarded. Individuals may accept and hold only one AACR grant at a time.

All applicants with questions about eligibility must contact AACR's Research and Grants Administration department (AACR's RGA) **before** submitting an application. Please review frequently asked questions (FAQs) [here](#).

## 2.5 Year at the Industry Site

During the year at the industry site, the fellow will be paired with an industry scientist or clinical team member who will serve as their mentor. Fellows will shadow the mentor during their various activities, including meetings with project and study teams, discussions on various topics with key stakeholders

(e.g., drug development strategy and execution, regulatory strategy implementation, statistics, marketing, clinical operations).

Activities conducted during this year will provide the fellow with the opportunity to gain experience in drug development and understand challenges in early-stage and/or late-stage clinical research in oncology. Depending on the background of the fellow, additional focus areas may also be provided (e.g., preclinical research, biomarker discovery).

The training experience during the course of the fellowship includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Learning the fundamentals of conducting clinical research in oncology, such as:
  - understanding potential predictors of response to therapies
  - identifying early response endpoints
  - developing optimal trial design methods for evaluating a large number of novel drug combinations and quickly identifying the most promising combinations
- Learning about clinical trial design, protocol development, and data analysis
- Learning about late-stage clinical development from the perspective of medical affairs
- Designing and completing a clinical research project
- Participating in weekly meetings
- Participating in additional training on site
- Opportunities for publication and presentation of the completed work

The fellow will have the opportunity to develop expertise in drug development and commercialization including developing an understanding of preclinical research, biomarker strategy, and study design in clinical phases 1-3 (depending on their interest).

There will be the potential to becoming an expert on the clinical drug candidate(s) being followed in terms of understanding the competitor landscape and the underlying science and biomarker strategy.

#### Clinical requirements:

Applicants who will require arrangements to complete their clinical duties during the course of the grant term should contact AACR's RGA **before submitting an application**. AACR will work with applicants and the industry partner to determine how accommodations can be made to facilitate this training while onsite. **Failure to disclose clinical and other responsibilities before the selection process may result in the disqualification of the applicant.**

## 2.6 Inquiries

Inquiries about the program guidelines, eligibility requirements, and application materials can be directed to AACR's RGA at [grants@aacr.org](mailto:grants@aacr.org).

## 3. APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

### 3.1. Application Evaluation

Applications will be peer-reviewed by a Scientific Review Committee comprised of scientists who are well-respected for their own accomplishments in cancer research and are viewed as leaders in the field. The Committee will consider the following criteria when reviewing applications and determining funding decisions:

- **Applicant:** What training and experience does the applicant have to ensure a successful experience during the time spent on site at the industry partner's facility? Is their academic

record and research experience of high quality? Does the applicant have the potential to develop as an independent and productive researcher in the field? Is the applicant motivated and enthusiastic about the field? Will the development of the applicant's career benefit from the program? How does the applicant plan to apply their training to their future work as a physician-scientist?

- **Training Environment:** Is there appropriate commitment from the applicant's academic institution to foster the applicant's training to become a productive researcher in the field?

### 3.2. Application Overview

Applicants should send all application materials as email attachments to [grants@aacr.org](mailto:grants@aacr.org) under the subject line "Applicant name - AACR CORE Training Fellowship Application Submission", including:

- A. Completed [Application Form](#) with all necessary signatures obtained
- B. Applicant's Biographical Sketch
- C. Current Institutional Mentor's Biographical Sketch

Applicants should contact AACR's RGA to provide the e-mail address of the current institutional mentor submitting a letter of reference and the e-mail address of the endorser (if applicable) *at least two weeks before the application deadline*. AACR's RGA will reach out to them with instructions for the letter of reference and the endorsement form (if applicable), and the following documents should be sent directly by the current institutional mentor and endorser (if applicable) to [grants@aacr.org](mailto:grants@aacr.org):

- D. Current Institutional Mentor's Letter of Reference
- E. Endorser's Statement of Support (if applicable)

Please see section [3.3](#) for more information. An application is only considered complete when all required documents are received and in compliance with the Program Guidelines.

### 3.3. Application Documents

- A. **Application Form.** Applicants are required to use the [template](#) which is also available from the AACR Research Funding [website](#).

- I. **Applicant Information.** Please provide applicant name and degree, institution, ORCID iD (optional), mailing address, phone number, email address, training/education history, citizenship status, AACR membership information, company and program preference (rank in order of preference), current institutional mentor contact information, institutional contact information, and technology transfer office contact information.

On this form, the applicant and institutional contact should acknowledge receipt and review of the [Terms and Conditions](#) and [Intellectual Property Statement](#). The technology transfer office contact should acknowledge receipt and review of the [Intellectual Property Statement](#). Please provide a signature for each and check the box below each signature line to acknowledge receipt and review of these documents.

- II. **Personal Statement.** Limited to two pages. Applicants should include details about their medical and scientific background; their motivation for wanting to participate in the AACR CORE program; and their career goals and measurable objectives, including how the experience at a pharmaceutical company will enhance their research skills and contribute to their career advancement.
- III. **Budget Justification.** Limited to one page. Applicants must submit a budget in the amount of \$100,000 over a one-year grant term. Grant funds can be used to support salary and

benefits of the fellow. The percentage of salary requested may not exceed the percent effort of the applicant. Up to \$2,000 may be allocated from the grant to support the grant recipient's attendance at the Annual Grantee Recognition Event. No other travel is permitted and travel funds are for the grant recipient **ONLY**. In addition, a maximum of 20% of the total direct costs may be requested for indirect expenses.

**NOTE:** A limited stipend may be provided separate from the Grant to allow the fellow to travel to the industry site prior to the start of the one-year term to secure accommodations, and to travel to and from the industry site at the beginning and end of the one-year term. The total amount of the stipend will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will be dependent upon the distance traveled by the fellow, but will be no more than \$7,500.

- IV. Secured and Pending Other Support.** In the table provided, list all **existing** and **pending** support (institutional, federal, etc.) that may be used in whole or in part by the applicant during the term of this grant. Only funding sources that specifically provide support for the applicant should be listed, which includes grants for which the applicant is not the Principal Investigator. This may include support for multiple projects.

**NOTE:** If at any time prior to selection and notification an applicant is awarded any additional research funding, the applicant **must** notify the AACR immediately. If selected, grant recipients may not be permitted to hold additional funding beyond the AACR CORE Training Fellowship while their grant is active.

- B. Applicant's Biographical Sketch.** Applicants are required to use the **Fellowship Biosketch** template available for download from the [NIH's Biosketch Format Pages, Instructions and Samples](#). Please refer to the Instructions and Fellowship Biosketch sample under **Biographical Sketch Format Page (fellowship)**. *Please disregard instructions to remove the Scholastic Summary.* The biographical sketch must be in English.
- C. Current Institutional Mentor's Biographical Sketch.** Mentors are required to use the **Non-fellowship Biosketch** template available for download from the [NIH's Biosketch Format Pages, Instructions and Samples](#). Please refer to the Instructions and Non-fellowship biosketch sample under **Biographical Sketch Format Page (non-fellowship)**. The biographical sketch must be in English.

If a co-signed letter of reference is being provided, a biographical sketch must be provided for each member of the mentorship team signing the letter.

- D. Letter of Reference.** Each applicant must have a letter of reference from their current institutional mentor accompanying the application. If the mentor is **not** an active, emeritus, or honorary member of the AACR, the applicant must be endorsed by an active, emeritus, or honorary member of the AACR using the endorsement form. If an applicant's mentor is an AACR member, an endorsement form is not needed.

**NOTE: Significant weight will be given to this letter in the evaluation of the application, therefore, it should detail the applicant's scientific and clinical merit, as well as their potential to become a leader in the field. Letters should only be provided by the current institutional mentor; the industry-appointed mentor will be determined at the time of award.**

If the applicant is being co-mentored, mentors must provide a co-signed letter providing the mentorship details described in the e-mail instructions as they pertain to each member of the

mentorship team and signed by each member of the mentorship team. If a co-signed letter of reference is used, and a member of the mentorship team is an active, emeritus, or honorary member of AACR, an endorsement form is not needed.

Please contact the AACR's RGA to provide the e-mail address of the current institutional mentor submitting a letter of reference and the e-mail address of the endorser (if applicable) **at least two weeks before the application deadline**. AACR's RGA will reach out to the mentor for a letter of reference and the endorser for a statement of support with instructions. These documents should be sent directly from the current institutional mentor and the endorser (if applicable) to [grants@aacr.org](mailto:grants@aacr.org).

- E. **Applicant Checklist.** To ensure each applicant's eligibility, this [checklist](#) is required for all applicants. The checklist MUST be downloaded, completed, and signed by all required parties. Electronic/digital signatures are permitted. These signatures transmitted by electronic means shall have the same force and effect as original signatures. Please note that if eligibility is based on a future position, the position must be confirmed at the time of application, and CANNOT be contingent upon receiving this grant.

### 3.4. Changes to Your Application

**Withdrawal of Application.** Please advise the AACR promptly, in writing, should you decide to withdraw your application for any reason. Your correspondence must include your name, the grant opportunity to which you applied, and the reason for withdrawal.

**Change of Address.** Notify the AACR in writing of any changes of address, e-mail, or phone number, following the submission of an application. The e-mail address provided with your application will be used for all official communication about your submission including the grant recipient selection results.

**Change of Institution or Position.** If you change your institution or professional position, contact the AACR's RGA to determine whether your application is still eligible for review.

## 4. TOBACCO INDUSTRY FUNDING AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST STATEMENT

A fellow whose named mentor is funded by the tobacco industry for any research project is not eligible for any AACR grant. A grant recipient or their named mentor who accepts funding from the tobacco industry for any research project during the term of an AACR grant must inform the AACR of such funding, whereupon the AACR grant will be immediately terminated.

Tobacco industry funding is defined for the purposes of AACR grant applicants and recipients as money provided or used for all or any of the costs of any research project, including personnel, consumables, equipment, buildings, travel, meetings and conferences, and operating costs for laboratories and offices.

It is not defined as money provided or used for meetings or conferences that do not relate to any particular research project.

Tobacco industry funding includes: funds from a company that is engaged in or has affiliates engaged in the manufacture of tobacco produced for human use; funds in the name of a tobacco brand, whether or not the brand name is used solely for tobacco products; funds from a body set up by the tobacco industry or by one or more companies engaged in the manufacture of tobacco products.

The following do not constitute tobacco industry funding for the purposes of this policy:

- Legacies from tobacco industry investments (unless the names of a tobacco company or



- cigarette brand are associated with them)
- Funding from a trust or foundation established with assets related to the tobacco industry but no longer having any connection with the tobacco industry even though it may bear a name that (for historical reasons) is associated with the tobacco industry

## MORE ABOUT THE PARTNERS



Founded in 1907, the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) is the world's first and largest professional organization dedicated to advancing cancer research and its mission to prevent and cure cancer. AACR membership includes more than 58,000 laboratory, translational, and clinical researchers; population scientists; other health care professionals; and patient advocates residing in 141 countries and territories around the world. Presently, 32% of members live outside the United States and 22% of AACR's international members are located in countries with emerging economies. The AACR offers seven categories of membership to support each aspect of our members' professional development and enhancement in cancer research. In support of the professional development of early-career researchers, no annual dues are required for Associate membership. The AACR marshals the full spectrum of expertise of the cancer community to accelerate progress in the prevention, biology, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer by annually convening more than 30 conferences and educational workshops, the largest of which is the AACR Annual Meeting with more than 22,500 attendees. The AACR's Virtual 2020 Annual Meeting attracted over 74,000 attendees. In addition, the AACR publishes ten prestigious, peer-reviewed scientific journals and a magazine for cancer survivors, patients, and their caregivers. The AACR funds meritorious research directly as well as in cooperation with numerous cancer organizations. As the Scientific Partner of Stand Up To Cancer, the AACR provides expert peer review, grants administration, and scientific oversight of team science and individual investigator grants in cancer research that have the potential for near-term patient benefit. The AACR actively communicates with legislators and other policymakers about the value of cancer research and related biomedical science in saving lives from cancer. For more information about the AACR, visit [www.AACR.org](http://www.AACR.org).



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