



AACR IMMUNO-ONCOLOGY RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

2024 Program Guidelines and Application Instructions

American Association for Cancer Research

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PROGRAM GUIDELINES

PROGRAM SUMMARY

These guidelines pertain to the following fellowship to be presented in 2024, referred to as the AACR Immuno-oncology Research Fellowship:

- AACR-Genentech Immuno-oncology Research Fellowship

The AACR Immuno-oncology Research Fellowships represent a joint effort to encourage and support postdoctoral or clinical research fellows to conduct immuno-oncology research and to establish a successful career path in this field. The research proposed for funding may be basic, translational, clinical, or epidemiological in nature and must have direct applicability and relevance to immuno-oncology.

These fellowships provide two-year grants of \$130,000 to support the salary and benefits of the fellow while working on mentored immuno-oncology research. A partial amount of funds may be designated for non-personnel expenses, such as research/laboratory supplies, equipment, travel to one AACR Annual Meeting, publication charges for manuscripts that pertain directly to the funded project, and other research expenses.

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE

June 25, 2024, at **1:00 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time

We recommend confirming this time in your respective time zone. To do so, please use a time zone converter.

APPLICANTS NOTIFIED OF DECISION STATUS OF LETTER OF INTENT

August 2024

FULL APPLICATION DEADLINE *(for those invited to apply based on the Letter of Intent)*

October 8, 2024 at **1:00 p.m.** U.S. Eastern Time

NOTIFICATION OF AWARD

November 2024

ANNUAL GRANTEE RECOGNITION EVENT

Grant recipient must attend the Annual Grantee Recognition Event 2025 during the AACR Annual Meeting or a similar recognition event to formally accept their grant. Grant funds may be used to support the grantee's registration and travel to this event.

In the event of unforeseen scheduling changes, the grantee will be contacted regarding alternative arrangements.

START OF GRANT TERM

December 1, 2024

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must have a doctoral degree (including PhD, MD, MD/PhD, or equivalent) in a related field and not currently be a candidate for a further doctoral degree.

At the start of the grant term on December 1, 2024, applicants must:

- Hold a mentored research position with the title of postdoctoral fellow, clinical research fellow, or the equivalent.
 - 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.
 - If the future position is at a different institution than the applicant's current institution, the applicant must contact AACR's Research and Grants Administration Department (AACR's RGA) at grants@aacr.org **before** submitting their Letter of Intent for information on additional verification materials/signatures that may be required.
- Have completed their most recent doctoral degree **within the past five years** (*i.e., degree cannot have been conferred before December 1, 2019; the formal date of receipt of doctoral degree is the date the degree was conferred as indicated on your diploma and/or transcript*).
 - Applicants with a medical degree must have completed their most recent doctoral degree or medical residency - **whichever date is later** - within the past five years.
- Work **under the auspices of a mentor** at an academic, medical, or research institution anywhere in the world.
 - *There are no citizenship or geographic requirements. However, by submitting an application for this grant, an applicant applying from an institution located in a country in which they are not a citizen or a permanent resident assures that the visa status will provide sufficient time to complete the project and grant term at the institution from which they applied.*

An **exception** to the five-year window may be granted for parental leave or other well-justified leave from research for pressing personal or family situations of generally less than 12 months' duration. Applicants whose experience exceeds the maximum of five years but who believe they are eligible must contact AACR's RGA **before** submitting an application to verify their eligibility.

Applicants who believe that they are at the level of postdoctoral or clinical research fellow but hold a different title may be eligible and must contact AACR's RGA **before** submitting an application.

AACR is obligated to comply with U.S. laws and regulations regarding research and related transactions in countries subject to US Government enforcement of economic and trade sanctions for particular foreign policy and national security reasons. If your proposed project involves US Government [sanctioned countries](#) subject to restrictions, please contact the AACR's RGA at grants@aacr.org.

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 [membership due rates](#) 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 letter of intent 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 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 for assistance.

Investigators may submit only **one** application for the AACR Immuno-oncology Research 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.

Employees or subcontractors of a U.S. government entity or for-profit private industry are not eligible. Postdoctoral fellows conducting research in a U.S. government laboratory (e.g., NIH, CDC, FDA, etc.), are not eligible.

Current AACR grantees may apply only if their current grant ends before the start of the grant term of this funding opportunity (i.e., December 1, 2024). Also, the terms of their current grant must require that the final progress reports be approved by the AACR before December 1, 2024.

Investigators currently or previously holding the rank of instructor, adjunct professor, assistant professor, research assistant professor, the equivalent or higher are not eligible. Qualified researchers are invited to apply for an AACR Career Development Award.

Exception: If you are an MD who is considered a postdoctoral fellow but hold the title of instructor so that you can see patients, you may be eligible. Potential applicants possessing an MD are encouraged to contact AACR's RGA **before** submitting an application to verify your eligibility.

All applicants with questions about eligibility must contact AACR's RGA at grants@aacr.org **before** submitting an application.

RESEARCH PROJECT CRITERIA

Proposed research projects may be in basic, translational, clinical, or population sciences related research and **must have direct applicability and relevance to immuno-oncology**.

COMPETITIVE LETTER OF INTENT DESCRIPTION

An AACR Competitive Letter of Intent is an application tool designed to identify projects with the greatest scientific potential and alignment with the Program Guidelines without requiring applicants to first submit a full application. A Letter of Intent is not written as *correspondence* to the Scientific Review Committee, but instead follows a prescribed template which gathers information summarizing the proposed research project. Letters of Intent have also been called "pre-applications", "concept papers", or "letters of inquiry" by other funders.

Letters of Intent are peer-reviewed by the Scientific Review Committee. A limited number of applicants whose Letters of Intent are deemed most meritorious will be invited by the Committee to submit full applications.

The Letter of Intent for the AACR Immuno-oncology Research Fellowship is limited to two pages and must describe the proposed cancer research project, including the Specific Aims; Rationale, Preliminary Data, Methodology, and Approach; and Significance and Statement of Relevance. Relevant references must be attached and are limited to two pages.

The Letter of Intent must be accompanied by:

- Lay and Scientific Abstracts, limited to 3,000 characters each including spaces, which provide clear, concise, and comprehensive overviews of the proposed research project
- Applicant's Biographical Sketch

EVALUATION OF COMPETITIVE LETTERS OF INTENT AND INVITED APPLICATIONS

Letters of Intent and full applications will be peer-reviewed by a Scientific Review Committee comprised of researchers and physician-scientists respected for their own accomplishments in cancer research and viewed as leaders in the field. The President of the AACR will appoint the members of the Scientific Review Committee.

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 successful implementation of the proposed project? Is their academic record and research experience of high quality? Does the applicant have the potential to develop as an independent and productive cancer researcher in this field?
- **Project Proposal.** Is the proposed project of high scientific quality? Is the budget justified and reasonable in relation to the proposed project? (*The budget-related question will be used to evaluate invited full applications.*)
- **Mentor.** Does the mentor have the appropriate research qualifications and a demonstrated record of mentorship? Do the research interests of the applicant match those of the mentor to ensure the applicant's development as a productive cancer researcher in this field? (*The mentor-related question will be used to evaluate invited full applications.*)
- **Training Environment.** Is the institutional environment for the scientific development of the applicant of high quality? Is there appropriate institutional commitment to foster the applicant's training? (*This criterion will be used to evaluate invited full applications.*)

The Committee will consider each year's applicants independent of previously funded proposals or institutions of previous grantees.

LETTER OF REFERENCE (required only for those invited to submit full applications)

Each applicant must have a letter of reference from their mentor accompany the online application. If the applicant is being co-mentored, a co-signed letter of reference must be provided. For applicants whose eligibility is based on a future position, the letter of reference must verify that the future position is confirmed, and the title of the new position and start date must be stated.

NOTE: Due to the mentorship component of this grant, significant weight will be given to the letter of reference in the evaluation of the full applications.

If the mentor or co-mentor (if applicable) 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.

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 grantee or their named mentor who accepts funding from the tobacco industry for any research project during the term of an AACR grant must inform 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.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

LETTER OF INTENT PROCEDURES

The AACR requires applicants to submit an online application by **1:00 p.m. U.S. Eastern Time on Tuesday, June 25, 2024**, using the ProposalCentral website at <https://proposalcentral.com/>.

In order to submit a complete application, applicants need to enter information directly into the online application platform as well as upload a number of documents. Below are details about information that needs to be entered and the materials that need to be uploaded. The section numbering corresponds with the section number of the Letter of Intent Format below and the online ProposalCentral application.

Information to be Entered Directly into ProposalCentral	Letter of Intent Format Section	ProposalCentral Section
Project Title and Acknowledgement of Reading the Terms and Conditions	1. Title Page	1) Title Page
Applicant Information	4. Applicant	4) Applicant
Institution and Contact Information	5. Institution & Contacts	5) Institution & Contacts
Lay Abstract	6.A. Lay Abstract	6) Abstracts
Scientific Abstract	6.B. Scientific Abstract	6) Abstracts
Specific Aims	7. Specific Aims	7) Specific Aims

Templates	Letter of Intent Format Section	ProposalCentral Section
Letter of Intent Template	8.A. Letter of Intent Documents	8) Letter of Intent Documents

Additional Materials to be Uploaded	Letter of Intent Format Section	ProposalCentral Section
Applicant's Biographical Sketch	8.B. Letter of Intent Documents	8) Letter of Intent Documents

Required Signatures	Letter of Intent Format Section	ProposalCentral Section
Letter of Intent Signature Page	10. Signature Page(s)	10) Signature Page(s)

GETTING STARTED IN ProposalCentral

If you are a new user of ProposalCentral, click the “Need an account?” link and complete the registration process. After logging in, complete your Professional Profile before starting a Letter of Intent.

If you are already registered with ProposalCentral, access the site and log in with your Username and Password. If you have forgotten your login information, click on the “Forgot Your Password?” link.

To start a Letter of Intent, select the “Grant Opportunities” tab. A list of grant opportunities will be displayed. The list of applications can be filtered for just this organization by clicking “Filter by Grant Maker” at the top and selecting “American Association for Cancer Research” in the drop down menu. Find “2024 AACR Immuno-oncology Research Fellowship” and click the “Apply Now” button to create your application.

If you have any difficulties registering, logging in, or creating your application, contact ProposalCentral Customer Support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1-703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International), or by email at pcsupport@altum.com. See the ProposalCentral [FAQ](#) section for additional

information.

LETTER OF INTENT FORMAT

The following information is required to submit a complete application. Numbers correspond to the application sections found on the left side of the ProposalCentral website.

- 1. TITLE PAGE.** Enter the title of the research project. The title is limited to no more than 100 characters (including spaces). Do not use abbreviations. A project title must be entered **and saved** before additional sections may be accessed.

Terms and Conditions of the Grant. In order to ensure that the applicant is informed of the terms and conditions of the grant should they be selected as a recipient, applicant must acknowledge that they have read the Terms and Conditions and have shared them with their institution by typing in their name and date in the box provided.

The terms and conditions of this grant may be modified or amended by the AACR prior to execution of the Grant Agreement. In addition, the grant recipient's institution may only request revisions to sections VII.F.; XII.; XIII.F.; and XIV.A. of the Grant Agreement prior to execution. Only in special circumstances will revisions be considered to sections other than those noted above.

- 2. DOWNLOAD TEMPLATES & INSTRUCTIONS.** The Program Guidelines and Letter of Intent Instructions, Terms and Conditions, and all templates can be downloaded from this page. Applicants are required to use the application templates.

See Section 8 of the Letter of Intent Format for how to complete and upload the templates. This Letter of Intent also requires an additional attachment for which templates are not provided (applicant's biographical sketch).

- 3. ENABLE OTHER USERS TO ACCESS THIS PROPOSAL.** Optional.
- 4. APPLICANT.** Enter information for the applicant. Applicants must include their contact information, including e-mail address, phone number, mailing address, and AACR membership information.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to have an ORCID iD and include this identifier with their application.

- 5. INSTITUTION & CONTACTS.** Enter information regarding the applicant's institution, mentor, endorser (if applicable), and signing official.

NOTE: For those invited to submit a full application, the application process will require a letter of reference from the applicant's mentor accompany the online application. If the applicant is being co-mentored, a co-signed letter of reference must be provided. If the mentor or co-mentor (if applicable) 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.


- 6. ABSTRACTS.**

A. Lay Abstract. Limited to 3,000 characters (including spaces) and must provide a clear, concise, and comprehensive overview of the proposed research project in language suitable for a non-scientific audience. Do not use abbreviations unless absolutely necessary.

B. Scientific Abstract. Limited to 3,000 characters (including spaces) and must provide a brief summary of the proposed project.

If funded, both Abstracts will become public information; therefore, do not include proprietary or confidential information.

From the lists provided, select the research areas that are most applicable to this project (*select no more than two*), select the tumor site that is most applicable to this project, and indicate how you found out about this grant opportunity.

7. **SPECIFIC AIMS.** Use the add button  to initiate a Specific Aim entry. Please enter Specific Aims exactly as written in the Research Proposal Narrative (see Section 8 of the Application Format). Be sure to click the 'Save' button after each Specific Aim entry.

8. LETTER OF INTENT DOCUMENTS.

Formatting Instructions. Applicants must adhere to the following instructions in completing the templates. **Failure to observe these guidelines may result in the return of the application without review.**

- **Type size.** Must use 12-point Times New Roman for the text, and no smaller than 9-point type for figures, legends, and tables.
- **Single-spaced text.** Single-spacing is acceptable, and space between paragraphs is recommended.
- **Margins.** The page margins must be no less than 0.75 inches on each side.
- **Page numbering.** The Proposal Narrative must be numbered consecutively; do not use section designations such as "3A" or "3B".
- **Tips and techniques for inserting images in documents:**
 - Reduce the file size of documents with images by "inserting" the image (as opposed to "cutting" and "pasting"). Save graphical images as a JPG or GIF file. Insert the image into the document by selecting "Insert – Picture – From File" from the MS Word menu.
 - Insert only GIF or JPG graphic files as images in your Word document. Other graphical file formats are either very large or difficult to manipulate in the document.
 - Do not insert Quick Time or TIFF objects into your document.
 - Anchor the images that you embed in your document.
 - Once you have anchored the inserted image, you can format text to wrap around the image.
 - Do not edit your images in Word. Use a graphics program.
 - Do not embed your images in tables, text boxes, and other form elements.
 - Do not add annotations over the images in Word. Add annotations to the images in a graphics program.

When a template is provided, the template MUST be used. Prepare and upload the following documents to your Letter of Intent in portable document format (PDF):

A. Letter of Intent. *Applicants are required to use the Letter of Intent template available from the ProposalCentral website. The information must be presented in this order:*

- I. **Letter of Intent Narrative. Limited to two pages**, including figures and tables. The References section does not count against this page limit. Must describe the proposed cancer research project and include the Specific Aims; Rationale, Preliminary Data, Methodology, and Approach; and Significance and Statement of Relevance.
- II. **References. Limited to two pages.** AACR reference style follows that of the [Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals](#). Note that the *Uniform Requirements* specify that, for articles with more than six authors, the names of the first six authors must be listed, followed by "et al." For articles with six or fewer authors, all authors must be listed.

B. Applicant's Biographical Sketch. Applicants are required to use the **Fellowship Biosketch** template available 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.

Uploading the attachments into your application. Once you have converted your attachments to PDF files, the next step is to upload the files to your online application. *Only PDF attachments are permitted for this application submission.*


- Open your online application and go to the section for attaching files. Click the blue "Attach Files" button.
- Select the appropriate type of attachment from the drop-down list.
- Enter your own description of the file in the "Describe Attachment" field.
- Click on the "click here to browse" link to select the file from your computer or drag and drop.
- Click on the "Upload and Continue" button. You will get a confirmation message on your screen that the file was uploaded successfully. You will also see that your file is now listed in the "Current list of uploaded attachments" section of the screen. Clicking the "Back" or "Upload and Return" button allows you to go back to the main page of this section where the uploaded documents should now be listed. **Click the download icon next to the file name to open and view your uploaded documents.** To delete the file, click on the trashcan icon to the right under the "Delete" column.

In the section for attachments, all the required attachments are listed in the middle of the screen, just below where you upload your files. This list of required attachments helps you track completion and uploading of your required attachments. Once you upload a required attachment, that attachment type will be removed from the required list and will be displayed in the "Current list of uploaded attachments".

If you wish to modify the attached file, make the revisions to your **original** file on your computer, convert the file to PDF, and use the same process above to attach the new file. **Delete any previously submitted versions of the file before submitting your application.**

SUBMITTING COMPLETE APPLICATION

- 9. PI DATA SHEET.** Please verify the applicant gender, race, and ethnicity. This is automatically populated based on the applicant's Professional Profile within ProposalCentral. Changes to the selections on this screen will be reflected in your Professional Profile. The information is handled separately from the application and will not be provided to the Scientific Review Committee.
- 10. SIGNATURE PAGE(S).** In order to ensure that all parties have approved the application, electronic signatures are required from the Applicant/PI, Signing Official, Mentor, and Endorser (if applicable). Any user whose signature is required will have automatic access to this application. An email notification is sent to all signatories when a signature is provided.

To sign, enter your name then click the sign button .

Use the "Download Application" button to download a copy of your application, including attachments.

NOTE: Data entered in the online application are automatically included in the Signature Page. The following signature page fields will remain blank until the full application process: Dates of Proposed Project, Proposed Budget, Human Subjects, Vertebrate Animals, Recombinant DNA, and Biohazards. If information is missing in the Signature Page, it could be because you have not entered the information in one of the online application sections **OR** the information is not required for this grant program. If the institution's Employer Identification Number (EIN) is not completed on the Signature Page, please request your institution to provide that information in their ProposalCentral profile.

The AACR **strongly encourages** applicants to also use the "Download Application" option. This option can be used if your institution wishes to review the full application but also should be used by the applicant to ensure that your attachments loaded properly.

Errors may occur when the uploaded PDF files are assembled by the system. Please check to ensure that all pages of every document included appear in the "Print Signature Pages with Attachments" option. If you are having any issues with this option, please contact ProposalCentral customer support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1-703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International), or by e-mail to pcsupport@altum.com.

- 11. VALIDATE.** Validate the application on ProposalCentral. This is an essential step. An application that has not been validated cannot be submitted. "Validate" checks for required data and attachments. You will not be able to submit if all the required data and attachments have not been provided.
- 12. SUBMIT.** After successfully passing the validate check, click the "**Submit**" link. An e-mail will be sent to you confirming your submission.

Once your application is submitted, you may view it by selecting "Submitted" from the "Proposal Status" drop-down menu under the 'Proposals' tab, then clicking the "View" button under the Edit column. The status column will show "Submitted" and the date submitted. You may need to refresh your browser screen after submitting the application to see the updated status.

CHANGES TO YOUR APPLICATION

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

Change of Address. Notify AACR's RGA in writing of any changes of address, e-mail, or phone number, following the submission of an application. Include your name and the ProposalCentral identification number. The e-mail address provided with your application will be used for all official communication about your submission including the recipient selection results; therefore, your Professional Profile in ProposalCentral must be kept up to date.

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

INQUIRIES

Inquiries or technical issues regarding ProposalCentral and the online application process should be directed to customer support at: 800-875-2562 (Toll-free U.S. and Canada), +1-703-964-5840 (Direct Dial International), or by e-mail to pcsupport@altum.com.

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

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.