

# Working for a future free of cancer



## AICR

funds more than **250** research projects in **23** countries funding the best science, anywhere in the world and spends more than **£9m** on research every year.

## Research Projects

- typically 3 year project grants, or
- 1 year pilot studies
- 2 grant rounds per year – April & October
- specific Prostate round in October

## Career Fellowships

- typically 6 years support to establish an independent research group
- tenable at any institution, worldwide
- proposals in any area of non-clinical cancer research
- up to £1m of research funding

# AICR

**CANCER KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES  
FORTUNATELY, NEITHER DO WE**

**Contact AICR's Grants Office for further information:**

Tel: +44 (0)1334-477910 [www.aicr.org.uk](http://www.aicr.org.uk)  
Madras House, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9EH  
Charity No. Sc022918



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Fortunately, neither do we.***

## **AICR – dedicated to the worldwide fight against cancer**

AICR (the Association for International Cancer Research) will already be known to a number of EACR members who have either held AICR grants or acted as referees for it. This cancer research charity, based in St Andrews, Scotland, has a small but important relationship with EACR, as the sponsor of the EACR Travel Fellowships which each year make it possible for about 15 postdoctoral researchers to attend workshops or courses or make collaborative visits to learn new techniques.

Founded in the late 1970's, AICR has grown rapidly to its current level. It's all thanks to the generosity of their donors, as AICR receives no funding from the government or statutory bodies, that they have been able to fund over €140 million of cancer research to date, mostly in Europe.

The unique aspect of AICR is that it has no geographical boundaries. It accepts grant applications from, and is willing to fund research in any country. Almost every other cancer research funding agency in the world has a national remit and will not fund work abroad. A few award some 'foreign' grants to researchers in certain other countries, but none has AICR's completely international approach to funding cancer research.

However, the reality is that over 85% of applications to AICR come from Europe and approximately the same proportion of the grants are made here. One can speculate about the reasons for this, but it seems most

likely that main reasons are the strong American focus on the NIH as the source of funding and the high concentration of cancer researchers in Europe compared with the rest of the world (USA aside).

AICR concentrates on providing traditional three-year project grants, typically funding the salary of a post-doc, or perhaps a PhD student, plus money for consumables, mice, microarrays, etc. They are quite flexible in what they will consider: their only firm restriction is that they do not support clinical research. Obviously, there are different definitions of clinical research: AICR draws the line at intervention studies, such as clinical trials. Its current funding portfolio includes a lot of molecular cell biology, but also epidemiology, drug development, virology, immunology and diagnostics development.

They operate two funding rounds each year, accepting applications during the months of April and October. The Scientific Advisory Committee, with members drawn from across Europe, meets approximately six months later to assess the applications and decide which should be funded. This is not a minor task. Their most recent round received 276 applications. Not all of these will actually get to the committee meeting. Nearly half are declined in a preliminary triage process in which the committee members with most expertise in the field consider whether there is any realistic chance that an application will get funded, given the level of competition. If they all agree that the answer is no, the application is declined without going to external referees. This triage system has

upset a few applicants, but the majority accept that it is necessary. The alternative would be to burden even more members of the cancer research community with the job of external referee. AICR take the view that it is better to leave them to get on with research.

With approximately 35 awarded each round, the ratio of grants to applications is lower than for many other funding bodies, but this is an inevitable consequence of being an international organisation. With national funding agencies, each application is in competition with the best from that country. At AICR, it is in competition with the best in Europe and, to some extent, the world. This ensures that AICR funds very high quality science.

This year AICR are launching a new initiative – an International Research Fellowship. This has been trialled in the UK for a few years and has now been opened up to all countries. Each year one Fellowship will be awarded to a young researcher to enable them to establish their first research group. The Fellowship includes their salary, salaries for two other research staff, consumables and equipment for six years. The applicant may come from any country and hold the Fellowship in any country. The application deadline is the end of June.

Further information on AICR can be obtained by contacting Debbie Wheelans, Grants Administrator on +44 (0)1334 477910 or [debbie.wheelans@aicr.org.uk](mailto:debbie.wheelans@aicr.org.uk), from their website ([www.aicr.org.uk](http://www.aicr.org.uk)) or their Scientific Co-ordinator Dr Mark Matfield ([matfield@aicr.org.uk](mailto:matfield@aicr.org.uk)).