TCRN Cancer Challenge of the Year 2015
Guidelines

TCRN Cancer Challenge of the Year Grants Scheme
The TCRN Cancer Challenge of the Year (CCY) is a unique funding opportunity that provides up to $100,000 to support one to two translational research projects that address an urgent and unmet need in cancer patient care or treatment. The focus of the CCY is on creating solutions to today’s priority problems in order to make rapid and appropriate gains in the improvement of cancer patient care and treatment outcomes. Therefore, CCY targets research initiatives capable of producing a demonstrable outcome within a 12-15 month period.

**This is the last opportunity to apply for Cancer Challenge of Year funding, please note the different time lines for this last round of funding**

Key Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23 October 2014</td>
<td>CCY15 EOI OPEN</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 November 2014</td>
<td>CCY15 Concept Development workshop</td>
<td>Half day Concept Development workshop to help applicants prepare their Cancer Challenge of the Year EOI and application.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 November 2014</td>
<td>CCY15 EOI Closes</td>
<td>EOI for final round of the CCY grant are due in, they will then be assessed by an external panel</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 December 2014</td>
<td>TCRN invitation to submit full CCY15 applications sent out</td>
<td>Top 3-5 applications will be invited to submit full applications for consideration by the TCRN Leadership Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 February 2015</td>
<td>CCY15 Full applications Due into TCRN</td>
<td>To then be assessed by the Leadership Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early March 2015</td>
<td>Successful CCY15 project(s) notified of their success</td>
<td>Project expected to commence by the end of March</td>
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Funding available
The TCRN will provide seed funding of up to $100,000 to fund one or two CCY projects commencing in 2015. Projects must have formal ethics and governance approval before the funds will be released but applications can be submitted in anticipation of approval.

Objectives
The CCY will support research projects designed to inform about or initiate direct improvements in cancer patient care, clinical and treatment practices, and/or patient outcomes. The TCRN subscribes to the translational research model of the Cancer Institute NSW and under the CCY Grants Scheme will prioritise funding of T2, T2/T3 or T3 projects, i.e. projects with an emphasis on improving clinical practice across the system and practice-based research.
In order to meet the key grant criteria, CCY 2015 projects must demonstrate:

- focus on an unmet need
- significant potential impact
- multidisciplinary collaboration with predominately TCRN members
- capacity to leverage TCRN core strengths
- capacity to deliver translational outcomes aligned with the TCRN goals initially within 12 months
- ability to commence by no later than 30 March 2015 and complete within 12 months
- current applicable human research ethics committee (HREC) and governance approvals to carry out the proposed research (or at least, the commencement of the HREC & governance process with approval anticipated within 3 months)
- a sustainable pathway beyond the CCY funding timeline
- ability to work with the TCRN’s translational team, and
- a design framework employing the TCRN’s six-step model.

A key element of the TCRN program is the deployment of a novel **six-step model** – a translational research engine that involves an annual cycle of problem identification, research question-framing, implementation and outcome assessment. Projects achieving CCY funding will be required to utilise the six-step model through collaboration with TCRN’s translational team.

**Eligibility Criteria**

- The 2015 CCY Grants Scheme is open to TCRN Members as listed on the [TCRN website](#).
- 2015 CCY projects must be carried out predominantly in one or more of the TCRN’s founding institutions (see [here](#)). Preference may be given to projects to be executed entirely in one or more of these institutions.
- Preference may be given to projects that offer an Independent Learning Project (ILP) opportunity as part of their proposal.
- Preference may also be given to proposals which use or advance existing TCRN projects, e.g. the HSA Biobank biospecimens or data (for more information on possible options contact [Nicki.Meagher@unsw.edu.au](mailto:Nikki.Meagher@unsw.edu.au)).
- Clinical trials are not eligible for funding but a proof of concept study to demonstrate that a clinical trial is warranted, may be considered.
- Proposals that are considered as T1 research according to the [Translational Pipeline](#) are not eligible for this funding.
**IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO APPLICANTS**

**Application Process**
The 2015 CCY award process will follow a 2-step process:

**Step 1: Call for ‘Expressions of Interest” NOW OPEN**

*Submission deadline is Midnight, Wednesday 26 November 2014*

- TCRN members interested in applying for funding under the 2015 CCY Grants Scheme **MUST COMPLETE AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM**.
- The Expression of Interest (EOI) provides applicants with the opportunity to present a succinct 2-page outline describing the “how”, “who” and “where” of a project designed to address the identified Cancer Challenge.
- The TCRN is interested in funding projects that look to address a Cancer Challenge in as many of our member hospitals as is practical. **These Challenges must relate back to the hospitals and patients in the TCRN’s network.**
- Applicants submitting an EOI agree that they do so with a view to winning funding to undertake the project in 2015/16 in conjunction with the TCRN.
- EOIs should be submitted via email to TCRNGrants@unsw.edu.au with the subject line: **CCY 2015 EOI by Midnight, Wednesday 26 November 2014.** Templates should be saved using the naming format CCY 2015 EOI_Pi Surname e.g. CCY 2015 EOI_Jones
- Review: Submitted EOIs will be assessed by an external, independent panel against the four selection criteria:
  - Publishable and sustainable outcomes (30% of overall score)
  - A significant potential impact (30% of overall score)
  - Multidisciplinary collaboration and involvement (20% of overall score)
  - Scientific quality (20% of score)

After assessment, 3 – 5 of the top-ranked candidates will be invited to move on to Step 2 of the application process.

**Step 2: Invitation for Full Applications – this is by invitation only, invitations to be sent 15 DECEMBER 2014**

- Contributors of the top 3-5 EOIs, as rated by the external assessment panel, will be invited by the TCRN to submit a full 2015 CCY project proposal (“Full Application”).
- Invited applicants must submit a Full Application in consultation with the TCRN by **4 February 2015**. These will be evaluated by the TCRN Leadership Council.
- Successful 2015 CCY project(s) will be offered in early March 2015 with projects expected to commence by 30 March 2015.
- Successful Applicant(s) must be aware that the offer of the award may include a request to tweak their project proposal for maximum benefit

**Further information**

Further information can be obtained by contacting the TCRN Operations and Projects Team: tcrn@unsw.edu.au with the subject line ‘Cancer Challenge 2015’.
THE TCRN TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH SIX-STEP MODEL

THIS MUST BE REFERED TO WHEN COMPLETING THE CCY FULL APPLICATION ONLY

Cancer-specific strategies to address TCRN program objectives

The six-step model is a translational research engine that involves an annual cycle of problem identification, research question-framing, implementation and outcome assessment.

The six step model

Taking science to practice
- step by step

KPIs reflect processes known to improve patient outcomes
- pre and post audit of practice
- analysis of barriers
- provide mechanisms to overcome barriers
- use of opinion leaders
- enhancement of multi-disciplinary teamwork
- progress with guidelines implementation
- measurable practice and culture change

The specific steps in each cycle are:

1. Identify translational opportunities; assess potential gain, build on core strengths, exploit immediate gains.
2. Identify the research questions and data requirements.
3. Develop and implement project plans, KPIs and milestones for 12 months. KPIs must reflect processes known to improve patient outcomes, including:
   - pre and post audit of practice
   - analysis of barriers
   - provision of supporting mechanisms to overcome barriers
   - use of opinion leaders
   - enhancement of multi-disciplinary teamwork
   - progress with guidelines implementation
   - measurable practice and culture change.
4. Evaluate performance against KPIs using formative evaluation models.
5. Develop strategies for widespread and sustainable implementation.
6. Identify new opportunities for a fresh cycle.