

Imperial Confidence in Concept (ICiC) Scheme 2020



Call for Proposals

ICiC provides pilot funding to bridge the gap between discovery research and well-developed applications for [MRC Developmental Pathway Funding Scheme \(DPFS\)](#) support, or similar follow-on funding schemes.

We aim to 'pump-prime' the translation of novel therapeutics, including repurposing of existing therapies, devices and diagnostics, toward clinical testing within the Imperial Academic Health Sciences Centre (AHSC). Funding is provided by the Imperial College London Joint Translational Fund, which comprises of contributions from:

- EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account
- MRC Confidence in Concept
- NIHR Imperial Biomedical Research Centre Therapeutic Primer Fund
- Rosetrees Trust
- The Royal Marsden Hospital NHS Foundation Trust Fund
- Wellcome Trust Institutional Strategic Support Fund

Multi-disciplinary proposals and those with external collaborations are strongly encouraged - particularly with the Francis Crick Institute, MRC London Institute of Medical Sciences or commercial partners.

Industry Partners

This scheme also provides an opportunity for applications to collaborate with two of our industry partners through the **AstraZeneca (AZ) Innovation Fund** and the **Yuhan Innovation Fund**.

Both the AZ and Yuhan Innovation funds support drug discovery research by facilitating the development of new technologies and the exploration of disease biology. All projects must have a PI from both Imperial and the relevant partner and be investigating new science or demonstrate proof of concept for new technology capabilities with the primary objective of seeding larger funding applications.

In 2020 AZ will fund up to three proof of concept collaborative projects. Key areas of interest to AZ in this round are:

- a) The science and technology of molecule delivery to cells, tissues, organs and patients
- b) Complex model systems of disease or toxicity
- c) Multiparametric cellular measurement of drug engagement
- d) Technology to monitor patient response to drug treatment through the course of disease
- e) Novel aspects of oncology, respiratory or cardiovascular disease – new chemistry, targets or diagnostic opportunities

In 2020, the **Yuhan Innovation Fund** will fund up to three proof of concept collaborative projects. Yuhan Corporation's areas of interest are:

- a) Potential therapeutic candidates with novel mode of action. Potential first in class candidates are of particular interest
- b) Modalities include small molecules, antibodies (or antibody-like proteins), fusion proteins, peptides, siRNA, etc.
- c) Therapeutic areas of interest include oncology, metabolism (NASH/fibrosis), immunology and CNS/neurology

Royal Marsden Collaborations

The ICiC scheme also encourages Royal Marsden researchers to put forward collaborative bids with an Imperial College London co-applicant (or vice versa) in translational research, and specific areas of interest include (but are not limited to):

- Early diagnosis of disease
- Surgery
- Imaging
- Data science

If you are looking for collaborators in these areas please contact confidenceinconcept@imperial.ac.uk and cancerbrc@rmh.nhs.uk

Key points for all ICiC applications

- Is the project at the correct stage for ICiC funding? If in doubt, discuss this with the ICiC contact (details below) before progressing with your application
 - Our Translator in Residence may be of particular help (details below)
- Projects must be completed within 12 months, and have 2-3 defined and realistic milestones
- If ethics approvals are needed, they must be in place before the project start date

- IP/market competitiveness should be discussed with the relevant Imperial Industry Partnerships and Commercialisation (IPC) team or Royal Marsden contacts (details below) before an application is submitted
- Translational aims and routes to the clinic/market should be clearly defined
- Be aware of the competition in the area and ensure you have freedom to operate
- Costs should reflect the needs of the project and be fully justified
- No-cost extensions cannot be granted

Scope of ICiC projects

Applications for projects that aim to progress the development of novel therapeutics, medical devices or diagnostics are invited.

Please note that multidisciplinary applications are strongly encouraged, as well as those investigating using artificial intelligence in healthcare, engineering applied to health, those addressing the aims of the [Global Challenge Research Fund](#). We also encourage applications that engage with the [NIHR Imperial BRC](#).

Examples of types of projects eligible for this scheme include:

- a) Generation of a prototype of a medical device
- b) Validation of diagnostic assays, platforms or algorithms
- c) Studies aimed at preliminary *in vitro* or *in vivo* proof-of-concept for a novel or re-purposed therapeutic treatment
- d) Synthesis of specific antibodies and/or compounds for proof-of-concept studies
- e) Optimisation and profiling of a novel therapeutic
- f) Validation studies for the proposed target/approach

Funding and grant rules

- The ICiC scheme is managed by the Faculty of Medicine Research Strategy Team
- Projects must be costed with full economic costs, but the final awards will only provide 100% of directly incurred costs
- Typical total budgets (for directly incurred costs) from £50K to £80K will be considered
- Projects should run for 6-12 months, with timelines and milestones provided
- Projects must commence within 3 months of the award being issued
- All projects must be **completed** by 28 February 2022
 - **No-cost extensions cannot be granted**

- Imperial IPC Faculty teams will cover costs of protecting arising Intellectual Property (IP) in line with its normal policies

Eligibility

Any researcher from Imperial College London or Imperial AHSC, who has a contract with Imperial College (but not ICHT alone), which extends to at least the end of the proposed project, may apply - if they have departmental approval.

Royal Marsden researchers are encouraged to put forward a bid. To note, these must be with an Imperial College London co-applicant.

Application and selection process

1 - Application

Applications close **4pm, Monday 20 July 2020**

Applications must be submitted via this [online portal](#).

There are two parts to the application, Part A is an online form we are using to gather various pieces of information on your project, and Part B requires various documentation to be uploaded via the online form.

Part A – PI details, ethics and IP (complete [online](#))

- PI and co-investigator details
- Details of collaborators
- Details of industry partners (if applicable)
- Project title, modality and research area
- IP Information
- Home office licence
- Ethics

At the end of this online form you will be asked to upload the material below

Part B – Research plan details and approvals (upload via [online form](#))

1. Project plan form ([form available here](#))
2. The InfoEd recovery page
 - a. Plus Royal Marsden costs (where applicable)
3. Email of costings approval from JRO
 - a. Plus Royal Marsden (where applicable)
4. HoD approval email
 - a. Plus Royal Marsden Clinical Research Lead approval (where applicable)

Please include PI surname included at beginning of all file names

Approvals

- All applications require approval from the Head of Department.
- In the case of Royal Marsden, applications require approval from the relevant Clinical Unit Research Lead at Royal Marsden **and** the Imperial co-investigator's Head of Department.
- An email signifying approval will suffice and must be attached to the online form.

The InfoEd recovery page must be uploaded to the online form as part of the application (and please state your InfoEd P number on all correspondence).

- However, they should not have been formally submitted, but **must be** approved by the appropriate department and Joint Research Office (JRO) prior to submission of the application.
- An e-mail signifying approval will suffice and must be attached to the online form.
- This includes applications which have Royal Marsden collaborators (see below). The Imperial co-applicant should submit costs on behalf of the Royal Marsden counterpart.

Budget

Costings must be developed on InfoEd, with 'Internal Scheme' picked as the funder. Costing should be submitted with the application form as FEC projects, with the recovery page reflecting the 'charity' rule. Although indirect costs must be included in the budget, only directly incurred costs will be supported through ICiC funding (at 100%).

Applications with Royal Marsden collaborators **must seek approval from both Royal Marsden and Imperial College finance teams (JRO) and include the approved costs from both institutions on the InfoEd recovery page**

- ***Applicants are encouraged to discuss collaborative project budgets with the relevant contacts (see below) asap***

For all applications, if potential staff have already been identified for positions on a project, please detail this on both the InfoEd and the application. This will enable faster recruitment and contract amendment, reducing potential delays in starting.

Assessment criteria

Applications will be reviewed by the selection panel, and the short-list of applicants will be invited to continue to the next stage.

Projects will be assessed on:

- strength of rationale
- quality of science
- un-met medical need
- future commercial opportunity

- IP position
- likelihood of project leading to the development of a full proposal to be submitted to the MRC DPFS/DCS award scheme (or similar)

If ethics and/or Home Office approvals are required for the projects, priority will be given to those applications that already have these in place.

Feedback on applications will be provided **by Monday 14 September 2020**.

2 - Full application

Shortlisted applicants will be asked to provide a short update on their project addressing reviewer's comments before **28 September 2020**.

The selection panel will meet in October, when proposals must be well developed, with a project plan, deliverables, resources, costs and timelines clearly defined.

Award notification & commencement of work

Applicants will be notified of the outcome by the end of October 2020.

Award letters will be provided in **November/December 2020**.

Work must commence **within three months of the award letter**, otherwise the funding will be withdrawn.

It is recommended that PIs do not plan to commence projects before January 2021.

Project reporting and management

Grant-holders will be required to submit up to three project reports per year: August/Sept, Feb/March and May/June. These will be used to keep the ICiC Panel up to date with regards to progress, and any issues or deviations in terms of deliverables, budget or timings. In addition, information from these reports will be used to complete the annual Researchfish return, and end of grant reports required by the funders.

Payments will be dependent on meeting milestones, and failure to meet milestones could result in termination of the project.

NOTE: Due to the short nature of the grants, no-cost extensions cannot be supported.

Contacts

Imperial

- **General queries:** confidenceinconcept@imperial.ac.uk, or Kimberley Trim k.trim@imperial.ac.uk
- **Industry collaboration and Imperial IP-related queries:** Vjera Magdalenic-Moussavi and Stephanie Morris (directorIPC.medicine@imperial.ac.uk)
- **Costing queries:** Julie Williams (j.williams@imperial.ac.uk), or Raj Chitnavis (r.chitnavis@imperial.ac.uk)
- **Translator in Residence:** Richard Rutter (a.rutter@imperial.ac.uk)

Royal Marsden Hospital

- **Application queries:** cancerbrc@rmh.nhs.uk, 020 3186 5415 or 020 7808 2603
- **IP-related queries:** Alan Stuttle (alan.stuttle@icr.ac.uk), 020 8722 4559
- **Costing enquiries:** BRCfinance@rmh.nhs.uk or cancerbrc@rmh.nhs.uk

AZ Innovation Fund

- Jonathan Wingfield (Jonathan.Wingfield@astrazeneca.com)

Yuhan Innovation Fund

- Jisoo Lim (jlim6830@yuhan.co.kr)

Please refer to the accompanying Frequently Asked Questions on the [ICiC application webpage](#) for more information.