

POLICY ON CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD) POLICY FOR CRUK-FUNDED RESEARCHERS

1 Purpose

This policy sets out Cancer Research UK's (CRUK) position on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for CRUK-funded researchers.

CRUK is a proud signatory of the [Researcher Development Concordat](#) to support the development of our community of brilliant researchers. We expect anyone with CRUK funding – researchers, managers and institutions – to follow the appropriate principles, standards and practices required by the Concordat, including those based outside the UK. CRUK has published an [action plan](#), in which we committed to integrating the requirement of 10 days' CPD pro rata per year into our funding schemes.

CPD enables individuals to develop and enhance their skills and knowledge following essential training. CPD is crucial for conducting high-quality research because it:

- is integral to researchers reaching their full potential
- ensures the integrity and quality of research
- improves the research environment and culture.

2 Scope

This policy applies to CRUK-funded researchers and their Host Institutions. Researchers include lead applicants and grant holders, co-investigators, research staff funded on CRUK awards, including technical experts, technicians and students.

We recognise that different career stages and fields of study benefit from various types of CPD. This policy does not prescribe what CPD activity researchers should engage in, but we require them to make clear provisions for doing so. Managers of research staff have a responsibility to allow and encourage their staff to engage in

CPD related activities. This applies in all research settings, including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), research institutes, the NHS or other health care providers, Local Authorities, not for profit or commercial organisations.

3 Definitions

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): provides the opportunity for formal and informal, guided and self-directed opportunities to learn, embed and improve a range of skills, which includes both project-specific skills training and career-based skills training.

4 Key points

This section outlines what CRUK expects from researchers and their Host Institutions, our position on what can be defined as project-specific skills training and career-based skills training, and what costs CRUK covers.

4.1 What CRUK expects of researchers and students funded by us

We expect people funded by us to:

- complete induction and regular refresher training.
- integrate CPD in their work plan alongside training that is specific to their research role.
- take responsibility for undertaking CPD regardless of their career stage.
- keep up to date with changes in legislation, regulations and practice relevant to their work.
- complete the appropriate leadership and development training to support and develop their team, where they are leaders/managers.
- where they are leaders/managers, provide support to their research team through:
 - mentorship
 - promoting and giving their team time for opportunities for their training and professional development
 - building time for this into research plans from application stage.

4.2 What CRUK expects of organisations where we fund research

Organisations must support CPD of all CRUK-funded researchers or those applying by:

- providing and funding CPD opportunities.
- giving them 10 days a year (pro-rata if part time) to undertake career-based skills training, in addition to project-specific skills training.
- encouraging researchers to build time for CPD into research plans from application stage.
- actively promoting CPD as important and valuable within the organisation.
- providing mandatory training on the handling of bullying and harassment or research misconduct investigations, including appeals, to panel members involved in such investigations.
- providing a system of onboarding, embedding and career planning when new starters join the organisation.
- assessing professional and career development needs through an annual performance review process.
- actively monitoring the uptake and effectiveness of CPD and training activities at both a participant and organisational level.

4.3 Project-specific skills training

Project-specific skills are defined as those required to complete the scientific and technical aspects of a project. The time allocated for project-specific skills training must be in addition to the 10 days annual CPD time.

Grant applicants can ask for funding to cover project-specific skills training needed to complete the science proposed in their grant application. This could include (and is not limited to) scientific equipment training, microscopy, and specific data analysis techniques (see also the [CRUK Cost Guidance](#)). Please note that CRUK does not cover animal handling training costs. Reasonable costs can be requested but will need to be fully justified in the application and will be assessed as part of the scientific review process.

Costs* for project-specific skills training may only be requested on response mode

awards for:

- the lead applicant and co-investigators
- researchers working on the grant on a pro-rata basis.

* Costs associated with project-specific skills training for researchers funded by a CRUK Institute should be covered by the core award.

Current grantholders can use their existing funds towards these project-specific skills training costs. They do not need to ask CRUK to do this. However, we will not supplement for this cost.

CRUK-funded PhD students can use up to £2,000 of [ringfenced funding](#) from the overall budget of running expenses of their PhD studentship for researcher development activities.

4.4 Career-based skills training

We expect organisations to provide and fund career-based skills training in the first instance.

Career-based skills are defined as those required to gain broader skills to allow researchers to develop their full potential. People learn in different ways and CPD can be formal or informal, guided or self-directed. CPD can be (but is not limited to) courses, workshops, e-learning, mentoring and/or coaching, action learning sets and self- reflection.

Researchers should have access to a range of career-based skills training that could include (but is not limited to):

- the responsible conduct of research: the skills necessary for good research practice including record keeping, research design and analysis, sharing research outputs, data generation, management, curation and protection. Organisations should draw on the principles of the [UK Concordat on Research Integrity](#) where appropriate, when designing these programmes. Host Institutions outside the UK are also expected to follow appropriate guidelines of a similar standard.

- guidance on how people at all career stages can support or create a diverse, inclusive and positive research environment, including the management of bullying and harassment when it occurs, wellbeing and mental health.
- leadership and management training, mentorship and/or coaching as appropriate for current role and planned career trajectory.
- translational and entrepreneurial training and activities as appropriate to maximise the impact of the research we support for patient benefit.
- profession-specific skills retention: the practice, knowledge and time necessary to maintain and improve the skills required by your profession, for example clinicians who need to practise a certain number of hours to retain registration – these skills are primarily provided through professional bodies/organisations. Please note that CRUK does not cover costs associated with belonging to professional bodies/organisations.

If a CRUK-funded researcher's development needs cannot be met by organisational provision*, they should be supported to access external career-based skills training. In this case, applicants can ask for up to £500 p.a. for themselves and anyone working on the grant on a pro-rata basis. Costs need to be fully justified in the application or, if requests are made post-award, they will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the CRUK Office.

*We expect that the majority of host institutions where we fund research do already provide an adequate level of career-based skills training and hence we do not expect to support these costs on the vast majority of our awards to UK-based researchers. CRUK may offer and cover costs of training/career development opportunities for specific groups of researchers e.g. CRUK fellowship holders.

Costs for career-based CPD may only be requested on response mode awards for:

- lead applicants and co-investigators
- researchers working on the grant on a pro-rata basis

Examples of ineligible costs:

- Masters
- Internships
- MBAs
- Membership to professional bodies/organisations

Current grantholders can use their existing funds towards these external career-based skills training costs. They do not need to ask CRUK to do this. However, we will not supplement for this cost.

The funding should only be used for the research team working on the award. It should not be paid into a generalised central fund that supports career-based skills training across the organisation. However, where course attendance fees are requested from all participants, these may be paid from an award.

CRUK-funded PhD students can use up to £2,000 of [ringfenced funding](#) from the overall budget of running expenses of their PhD studentship for researcher development activities.

5 Support & Advice

For any queries about this policy please contact: CRUK's Research Careers & Culture Team: fellowships@cancer.org.uk

6 Related documents

CPD should be tailored to meet needs within an organisation and aligned to any relevant guidance, these are the:

- [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#)
- [Technician Commitment](#)
- [Statement of expectations for postgraduate training](#)
- [CRUK's Conditions of your Grant](#)

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| Policy sponsor | Dr Iain Foulkes, Executive Director of Research & Innovation, CEO Cancer Research Horizons |
| Policy owner | Dan Burkwood, Director of Research Operations & Communications |
| Subject Matter Experts (SME) | Research Careers & Culture |
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