

Follicular Lymphoma Pathways Grant (2016-2019)

Guidelines and General Instructions for Application

KEY DATES

Application Release Date:	June 3, 2015
Application Deadline:	September 2, 2015
Peer Review Process:	September – October 2015
Applicant Notification:	December 2015
Earliest Project Start Date:	March 2016

Introduction

LYMPHOMA RESEARCH FOUNDATION OVERVIEW:

The Lymphoma Research Foundation (LRF) remains dedicated to finding a cure for lymphoma through an aggressively-funded research program and by supporting the next generation of lymphoma researchers. LRF provides education for people with lymphoma, their loved ones and caregivers, including comprehensive disease guides and facts sheets, in-person conferences and online resources. The Foundation also provides continuing medical education programs designed to increase the knowledge, skills and performance of healthcare professionals. The Foundation's patient services, including the LRF Helpline, Clinical Trials Information Service, financial assistance programs and Lymphoma Support Network, provide direct support to people with lymphoma.

FOLLICULAR LYMPHOMA PATHWAYS GRANT OVERVIEW:

LRF seeks proposals for high-quality research studies in follicular lymphoma (FL). Applications to this initiative must include the study of primary FL patient samples to assure relevance to the human disease. In addition, applicants are required to explicitly delineate how the proposed research will incorporate collaborative interactions between/among investigators in different disciplines (e.g. pathology and medical oncology, basic science research and clinical investigators) and/or different institutions.

Applications may be for a time frame of up to three years duration for a budget of no more than \$150,000 **per year** (\$450,000 total over the three years). LRF allows 25 percent overhead; smaller overhead amounts are preferred.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

Applicants are encouraged to design proposals that will complement existing LRF-funded clinical projects; ongoing clinical trials/recently completed¹ within the National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Cooperative Groups; or investigator-initiated clinical trials. Possible projects include correlative studies to ongoing trials, utilization of patient samples for specialized analyses, and Phase I or II clinical trials of novel therapeutic approaches. **Correlative project applications are welcome.**

¹ "...Recently completed clinical trials," for instance, a case where accrual has been completed but where outcome data are maturing.

The proposed study should:

- Investigate the pathogenesis, epidemiology, diagnosis or therapy of follicular lymphoma.
- Be capable of furthering the understanding of follicular lymphoma and/or its diagnosis and treatment.
- Have direct clinical relevance/involvement to and include primary follicular lymphoma patient samples or data.
- Incorporate collaborative interactions between/among investigators of different disciplines and/or different institutions.

Priority areas identified for funding include:

- Genomic/genetic analysis of FL. *What are the critical pathways involved in lymphomagenesis and what are the molecular predictors of tumor behavior?*
- Identification of biomarkers and biologic features. *What biologic features of lymphoma and which biomarkers are predictive of the outcome of follicular lymphomas?*
- Host-Tumor Interactions in FL. *How does the immune system modulate FL? Does the tumor microenvironment influence resistance of FL to therapies?*
- Transformation of FL. *What are the molecular events involved in transformation and what signaling pathways are impacted? How can transformation be delayed or prevented?*
- Heterogeneity of FL Behavior. *What are the molecular, biologic, immunologic and micro-environmental factors determining the variability in clinical behavior of FL?*
- Drug Resistance. *What are the molecular, biologic, immunologic and micro-environmental factors determining resistance to rituximab and other key anti-lymphoma agents?*
- Enhancement of Accrual of FL patients to clinical trials. *Despite a plethora of attractive agents for clinical trials, progress is slow due to the low accrual rate of patients to clinical trials in the United States. Convincing strategies with measurable endpoints documenting improvement in FL trial accrual will be considered for funding.*
- Novel therapies and New Biologic Approaches. *Projects focused on new therapeutics should explore and elucidate the mechanisms of action.*

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR ELIGIBILITY:

All principal investigators holding an academic faculty appointment at non-profit organizations or public or private institutions such as universities, colleges, hospitals, and laboratories based in the United States and Canada for the duration of the grant may apply for the LRF Follicular Lymphoma Pathways Grant. Eligible investigators must have a title of assistant, associate, or full professor or its equivalent. (More junior investigators should apply for LRF Career Development or Fellowship Awards.) For-profit entities are not eligible to apply for LRF funds. Questions about eligibility may be directed to researchgrants@lymphoma.org.

PUBLIC ACCESS POLICY – PubMed CENTRAL:

LRF funded researchers are required to submit, or have submitted for them, to the National Institutes of Health's PubMed Central database an electronic version of the author's final manuscript including all modifications from the publishing and peer review process (the "postprint") upon acceptance for publication, to be made publicly available no later than 12 months after the official date of publication. This requirement applies to all grants awarded after May 1, 2012, whether LRF funds the research in whole or in part.

All scientific progress reports must include the PMC ID number (PMCNnnnn) to publications in Pub Med Central supported by the Lymphoma Research Foundation starting on May 1, 2012.

Application Process

SUBMISSION INFORMATION:

All interested applicants must submit their applications online through proposalCENTRAL

(<https://proposalcentral.altum.com>) by 5:00 PM EST on September 2, 2015. Investigators are encouraged to contact LRF at researchgrants@lymphoma.org for questions or concerns relating to issues of eligibility for or responsiveness to this RFP.

To avoid being rushed at deadline time, applicants are encouraged to register and complete a professional profile at proposalCENTRAL now. Applicants should make sure their grants and contracts office has registered their institution and signing officials with proposalCENTRAL.

Applications that do not meet eligibility requirements, or that exceed page limitations, will not be reviewed.

PROPOSAL FORMAT:

A complete application includes the following:

- 1. Application Signature Page:** proposalCENTRAL will prompt you to generate a printable version of this page when you have completed your application. Original signatures from the applicant and institutional official are required. The signed original should be sent along with the LRF Waiver to the address on page 8.
- 2. LRF Waiver:** the original of the Waiver must be signed by the applicant, and the authorized official of the sponsoring institution. Original signatures in ink are required. A scan of the signed page should be uploaded as a PDF, and the original should be sent (along with the signature page) to the address on page 8.
- 3. Biosketch (Applicant):** To be completed by the applicant and limited to 2 pages. Applicants should use the template supplied and upload as a PDF.
- 4. Biosketch (Key Personnel):** To be completed for each member of the key personnel and limited to 2 pages per individual. Applicants should use the template supplied and upload as a PDF.
- 5. Research Plan:** Applicants must complete a research plan under the following headings, as per the template provided. Do not exceed 10 pages (using a minimum of type face 11pt). Tables and Figures may take up an additional two pages. References are not included in the page limit.
 1. Scientific Abstract
 2. Lay abstract
 3. Background
 4. Research plan
 5. Specific aims to be accomplished within the duration of the requested award
 6. Quantitative milestones for both the middle and end of the project period
- 6. Non-Technical Abstract:** This is a brief description (100 words or less) of the proposed research plan presented in terminology for the general public. It should be in language understandable to the average reader of a daily newspaper but still convey the purpose of the project.

7. **Technical Abstract:** In addition to describing the project using technical language, the Technical Abstract should explain (in 100 words or less) the significance of the research plan to the field of lymphoma. (Note: The non-technical and technical abstracts should explain the significance of the proposed work for patient treatment in lymphoma.)
8. **Letters of Reference:** This section is designed to collect the contact information for up to three individuals providing confidential letters of recommendation. [Recommendation letters are not required, but must be submitted before the deadline to be included in an application.]
9. **Budget:** Applicants must complete in line with the proposed project budget of up to \$150,000 each year for up to three years. Personnel expenses may include fringe. Institutional overhead is allowable up to 25% (smaller amounts are preferred). The start date for Year 1 should be no earlier than March 1, 2015.
10. **Other Research Support:** Applicants should include all current and pending research support. Note: proposalCENTRAL now records other support in your personal profile. Follow the instructions in the application system to enter or import information from your profile to this section.

APPENDICES:

The following additional documents **should be uploaded in PDF format:**

1. **Vertebrate Animals Certification or Statement of Exemption:** See LRF Terms and Conditions, #12 for direction.
2. **Human Subjects Certification or Statement of Exemption:** See LRF Terms and Conditions, #12 for direction.
3. **Biohazards Certification or Statement of Exemption:** See LRF Terms and Conditions, #12 for direction.
4. **Publication Reprints:** Each application is limited to 5 (five) publications.

PLEASE NOTE - About the appendices:

When uploading documents to proposalCENTRAL in the appendices, please be sure to follow the guidelines below in order to ensure that your attachments will be viewed by the reviewers as you intended.

- Ensure that all electronic signatures in your PDF attachment have been validated.
- Review the permissions and security settings in the PDF attachment and be sure that the file is not password protected or locked for editing so that it can merge properly with the rest of the application when downloaded.
- Check all merged documents created in Adobe PDF to make sure that each page is merged properly.
- Once the final application is submitted in proposalCENTRAL, no amendments or edits will be permitted.

It is important to view the application as a whole as well as each individual attachment before it is submitted. Some unresolved issues above can create problems with the download for reviewers and the application may be missing pages. To check that the whole application is correct and in the proper order, please select the blue hyperlink "Signature Page(s)" in the left menu tab. Then, click the red button "Print Signature Pages and Attached PDF Files." This will create a merged PDF of your application, which includes the attachments that you uploaded. If any pages are missing, please contact PC customer support for further assistance.

REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS:

Applications will be reviewed by the LRF Scientific Advisory Board who will make recommendations on applications to the LRF Board of Directors. The LRF Board of Directors will make final funding decisions based on available funds and program priorities.

1. The goals of LRF-supported research are to advance the understanding of the biological systems underlying FL and improve treatment of the disease. Reviewers will be asked to evaluate the application in order to judge the likelihood that the proposed research will have a substantial impact on the pursuit of these goals. The Scientific Advisory Board will then consider each of these criteria in assigning the application's final ranking:
2. Applicant qualifications and research experience;
3. Innovation of proposed research strategy and objectives;
4. Quality and impact of previous work in FL and lymphoma in general;
5. Potential translational/clinical application to advancing treatment of FL patients;
6. Reviewers' estimation of likely success and impact of the project;
7. Responsiveness of application to the priority research areas listed above.
8. Evidence of cross-discipline and/or cross institutional collaboration.
9. Resources, such as facilities and patient study group, available to support the project;
10. Financial resources available from other sources and overlap with possible LRF funding.

The application does not need to be strong in all categories to be judged as likely to have major scientific impact and thus be worthy of a high ranking. Ranking will be assigned based on the overall merit of the proposal. **However, please note that applications that do not address one of the priority areas or do not show evidence of collaboration will be disqualified.**

Additional review considerations:

1. Feasibility of research studies, patient accrual (if applicable), and other methodological considerations.
2. Budget: the reasonableness of the proposed budget and the requested period of support in relation to the proposed research.
3. Adequacy of proposed statistical analysis
4. If the study is related to a large project, discuss the degree to which it will contribute to the outcome of this larger project.

FOUNDATION CONTACTS:

Whitney Steen
Manager, Research Grants and Communications

Max Mulcahy, MPA
Director, Clinical and Scientific Programs

Email: researchgrants@lymphoma.org
Phone: 212-349-2910

TECHNICAL HELPLINE:

Questions concerning use of the proposalCENTRAL electronic submission system should be directed to the proposalCENTRAL helpline, which is available for questions from applicants during normal business hours (8:30 a.m. – 5:00 pm EST), Monday-Friday.

Phone: 800-875-2563 (Toll-free) or 703-964-5840
Email: pcsupport@altum.com

APPLICATION DEADLINES AND TIMETABLE:

- **Application**

**Submission Deadline: September 2, 2015 at 5:00 PM EST.
EXTENSIONS WILL NOT BE GIVEN**

- **Review**

September – October 2015

All applications will be reviewed by the LRF Scientific Advisory Board.

- **Notification**

December 2015

Applicants will receive notification of funding decision no later than December 15, 2015.

Individuals selected as LRF Grantees will receive with their notification an LRF Research Grant Agreement and Policy, Terms, and Conditions for signature by the LRF Grantee and the Sponsoring Institution.

- **Funding**

Earliest – March 2016

Funding will commence at the earliest on March 1, 2016. Payments will be made semi-annually to the comptroller or other financial officer of the Institution as indicated on cover sheet of the application form. The Institution will be responsible for disbursing funds to the LRF Grantee.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION:

Please follow the instructions on the proposalCENTRAL(PC) website. You do not need to complete the application all at once; your application will be saved on the PC server until completed. Incomplete applications cannot be submitted. A complete application must include all of the items listed in the checklist below. All applications must be submitted in English.

PC will enable the Applicant to print out all or part of the application. The signature page and the LRF Waiver page must each be printed out and signed in ink by the Applicant, the Mentor(s) and the Sponsoring Institution's authorized official. Proxy signatures are not acceptable. The signed original of both documents must be mailed to LRF at the following address, postmarked by the application deadline:

Lymphoma Research Foundation
Attn: Research Department/FL Pathways
115 Broadway, Suite 1301
New York, NY 10006

You may also wish to review the Research Grants Policy, Terms and Conditions, and FL Grant FAQ which is available on the LRF website at lymphoma.org/grants. All chosen awardees must adhere to all requirements as stated in the Policy, Terms, and Conditions.

After a successful submission of an application, applicants will receive a confirmation email from proposalCENTRAL.

If selected for award, payments will be made quarterly to the comptroller or other financial officer of the Institution as indicated on the cover page of the application form. The Institution will be responsible for disbursing funds to the LRF Clinical Investigator in accordance with the budget submitted with the application.

All LRF applications, application evaluations, and priority scores are considered confidential and are made available only to the SAB, the Board of Directors (BOD), LRF and PC administrative staff, and other LRF representatives involved in the application process. Written critiques of applications and priority scores are not made available to Applicants. Although LRF and PC endeavor to protect the confidentiality of proposal and evaluation materials, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Checklist for Applicants

Follicular Lymphoma Pathways Grant (2016)

Use this checklist as a tool to help in preparing your submission. Ensure that you allow **enough time** to complete the application process to meet the deadline of **5.00 pm (EST) September 2, 2015**, as late applications **will not be accepted**.

Application and Submission Checklist

- Register and complete a professional profile at proposalCENTRAL (<https://proposalcentral.altum.com>).
- Ensure that your grants and contracts office has registered your institution and signing officials with proposalCENTRAL.
- Print the Waiver & Signature pages and provide signatures (in ink) by the Applicant and the Sponsoring Institution's authorized official. Upload a scanned version of each signed page as a PDF. The signed original of each document must be mailed to the address below, postmarked by the application deadline:

Lymphoma Research Foundation
115 Broadway, Suite 1301
New York, NY 10006
Attn: Research Grants/FL Pathways

- While letters of support are **not** required for this application, if providing, please make sure your letters of support writers know and can comply with the deadline. ***Please note that your letter writers will not be able to upload their support letters once you officially submit your application, even if the application deadline has not yet passed.***
- Begin the application process on the proposalCENTRAL system. You do not need to complete the application all at once; your application will be saved on the server until completed. ***Remember, incomplete applications cannot be submitted.***
- Download and review the sample LRF Research Grant Policy, Terms and Conditions from the LRF Website at lymphoma.org/grants. **All** Applicants must adhere to all requirements as stated in the Terms and Conditions.

In addition, please note the following required application parts:

- Applicant Biosketch
- Key Personnel Biosketch(es)
- Non-Technical Abstract
- Technical Abstract
- Areas of Study – fill out through proposalCENTRAL
- Research Plan – See the RFP for detailed page limits.
- Current and Pending Research Support
- Budget – fill out through proposalCENTRAL
- Appendix – other items needed to support the application (limit 30 pages)