

EORTC Quality of Life Group

Grant Application Guidelines 2024

The EORTC Quality of Life Group (QLG) invites applications for a new round of grants with a **deadline for submission of 15th of February 2024**.

Applications will be considered for any form of research relevant to the field of health-related quality of life (HRQL) in cancer that falls within the research focus of the group, namely the development, testing and application of measures for assessing the HRQL of patients with cancer. (See Appendix A describing the aims of the EORTC QLG as per its Standards of Conduct.)

Besides module development projects, strategic and research projects aiming to strengthen liaisons between the EORTC QLG and the EORTC Disease Oriented Groups (DOGs) will be given extra priority. It is therefore also possible to submit applications that focus on research to improve our understanding of the effects of cancer and its treatment on the HRQL of diverse populations of patients with cancer and/or to investigate the possible cross-cultural differences in these effects. Projects looking at psychosocial aspects in oncology or psychosocial interventions **do not** fall within the remit of the EORTC QLG.

Grants are awarded only to full members of the EORTC QLG as principal investigators (i.e., applicants have to be full members at the time of grant application, see Appendix B for membership rules). In case of research projects aiming to strengthen liaisons between the QLG and DOGs, members of a DOG group can apply for a grant together with an active EORTC QLG member (shared principal investigatorship).

Types of grant applications

We invite three types of grant applications:

- 1) Study (module): Generation of new data according to the Module Development Guidelines Phase 1 to 3
- 2) Study (non-module): Generation of new data with the aim of applying or further refining existing EORTC measures in a clinical or methodological context
- 3) Research project: Without collection of new data (e.g., retrospective analysis of existing data sets).

Please note that applications for Phase 4 module development studies go a fast-track route via the Project and Module Development Committee (PMDC). For more details contact the PMDC pmdc@eortc.be.

Budget limits

We invite applications for small and large project grants. The maximum budgets (excluding per-participant-payment, ethics, governance/contracting costs, overheads) are as follows:

Type of Project	Maximum budget (excluding per-participant - payment, ethics, governance/contracting costs, overheads)
Study (Module): Phase I-II	€125,000
Study (Module): Phase III	€150,000
Study (Module): Phase IV	€300,000
Other small projects	€150,000
Other large projects	€300,000

For details on how to budget per-participant-payment and general guidance on costing, see Appendix C.

Format of the applications

An application can only be submitted after submission of a written short outline, presentation at an EORTC QLG meeting (coordinated by the Project and Module Development Committee (PMDC)), and succeeding endorsement by the EORTC QLG EC. The application has to follow the grant application form including all elements (title page, lay summary, project description, references, budget, CV) and **has to be submitted as a single pdf**.

Please find below the requirements for the grant application:

- Lay summary (Word limit 300 words, using plain English so it is easy for a lay audience to understand)
- Project description including strategic assessment (maximum of 5 pages)
- References (maximum of 20 references)
- CV (maximum of 1 page, including the 5 most important publications in the last 5 years)
- Names and contact email addresses of 3 external reviewers (proposed reviewers should have no present research collaborations or have co-authorship in the last 3 years with principal investigator(s)).

If you are conducting a phase I study (module) or a phase I / II study (module) please see appendix D for additional instructions on what to include in the grant application.

Failure to comply with these requirements will result in automatic rejection of the grant application.

The grant application guidelines are available on <https://qol.eortc.org/active-members/>. The grant application form can be obtained from QOLGRC@eortc.org.

Applications should be submitted electronically to Prof. Martin Taphoorn (Chair of Grant Review Committee) at: QOLGRC@eortc.org by 5 p.m. CET, by 15th February 2024.

Peer review procedure

All grant applications will undergo a thorough review process that involves the Project and Module Development Committee (PMDC), the Board of the EORTC, the Protocol Review Committee (PRC) of the EORTC, the Grant Review Committee (GRC) of the EORTC QLG, and the Executive Committee (EC) of the QLG. Grant applications will be rated on the following criteria: (1) scientific quality; (2) relevance to the field; (3) feasibility of the project; (4) “value for money”; (5) qualifications and track record of the applicant(s) and (6) fit into the strategic agenda of the EORTC QLG.

The EC will meet to make the final decisions. Conflict of interest of EC members is declared at the start of the meeting. Those with a conflict of interest with respect to a given grant application leave the room and do not participate in discussing the specific application. The EC will inform the EORTC Board on the final decisions.

Provisional Timelines

- 15th February 2024: Deadline for grant submissions to the GRC, GRC checks eligibility of the grant applications
- February/March 2024: Eligible grant applications will be reviewed by EORTC Directors
- March 2024: Start review process of eligible grant applications via GRC (module and research projects) or PRC (non-module studies)
- April/May 2024: GRC internal meeting to discuss proposals.
- June 2024: EC meeting to discuss applications with reviews, send out for resubmission.
- July 2024: EC makes funding decision and informs PIs

Appendix A. Aims (from EORTC QLG Standards of Conduct, January 2017)

To develop reliable and valid instruments for measuring patient reported outcomes (PRO) and health related quality of life (HRQL) of cancer patients participating in international cancer clinical trials and other well-designed research studies.

To advise the EORTC regarding the assessment of the multidimensional aspects of patients' HRQL as a measurable outcome of cancer treatment. Where appropriate the QLG will work in collaboration with other EORTC groups and the EORTC headquarters/QL Department to advise and support the design, implementation and analysis of patients' PRO/HRQL.

To conduct research to understand better the effects of cancer and its treatment on the HRQL of diverse populations of patients with cancer and to investigate the possible cross-cultural differences in these effects.

To conduct basic methodological research in HRQL and PRO assessment.

To investigate the use of new technologies to administer PRO/HRQL instruments in clinical trials, research studies and in routine clinical practice.

To contribute to teaching/training initiatives to promote the EORTC approach to PRO/HRQL measurement through preparation of guidelines, teaching material, oral presentations etc.

To develop and maintain liaison with other non-EORTC groups conducting quality of life studies in oncology, e.g. NCI-Canada clinical trials group.

In line with the evolving EORTC strategy, the forms and the methods of clinical research also evolve. Knowledge development in various fields is also considered part of the possible aims of the group. These fields include, but are not limited to, cancer biology, molecular epidemiology, survivorship, outcome research, and health technology assessment.

Appendix B. EORTC QLG membership (from EORTC QLG Standards of Conduct, January 2017)

Full members are actively involved in at least one of the Group's activities, e.g.:

- a. Module development;
- b. An EORTC field study;
- c. Other research activities of the QLG;
- d. Providing advice to the EORTC on QOL assessment;
- e. Serving as an officer on one of the Group's committees.

Full members are expected to attend at least one meeting of the QLG per year.

Probationary members are individuals seeking to become members of the QLG through active involvement in at least one of its activities. Probationary members may attend for one year. By the second meeting of that year probationary members are expected to have identified activities within the Group to which they can contribute, thereby proceeding to full membership. Probationary members who are not actively participating after one year are discouraged from attending further meetings except in special circumstances. Probationary members have no voting rights and are not allowed to attend the Group's Business Meetings.

Corresponding members include individuals actively supporting the EORTC approach to QOL assessment who are unable to attend because of distance (e.g. NCI-Canada representatives) or cost (e.g. Eastern European colleagues). At the discretion of the Executive Committee individuals interested in the Group's work but unable to attend meetings may be kept informed of the Group's work and invited to collaborate, e.g. in research, as appropriate.

Group membership procedure

Individuals wishing to join the EORTC QLG should first contact via e-mail the Secretary of the Group (<http://groups.eortc.be/qol/membership>). After sending a formal e-mail (which should contain the name and surname of the applicant, his/her contact e-mail, and affiliation) expressing the wish to become a corresponding member of the EORTC QLG, corresponding membership will be granted by the Secretary of the Group on behalf of the Executive Committee.

To become a full active member, a corresponding member has to:

- 1. Attend 2 meetings up front (within 2 years).
- 2. Be actively involved in EORTC Quality of Life Group research.

On the third meeting the individual will become an active member. To maintain active membership the individual has to continue with EORTC QLG-related research activities and attend a minimum of 2 QLG meetings within every 2 years.

If a corresponding member remains inactive for 2 years (no research performed on behalf of the QLG, does not attend meeting) he or she will be removed from the list of EORT QLG members.

The EORTC Membership Committee will (i) evaluate the applicant's activity in other EORTC groups/task forces, (ii) evaluate the EORTC membership status of other groups/task forces within the applicant's institution, (iii) may request additional information and documentation as appropriate (e.g. CVs, normal laboratory values, and accreditation, etc.), (iv) will verify that the ROG Facility Questionnaire has been submitted (in the case of the applicant's wish to enter studies with radiation therapy) or request its submission, and (v) will request preliminary approval by the group officers on the basis of the procedure and documents as defined by the Membership Committee.

All applications will be regularly reviewed by the group's Steering Committee, at least at the half-yearly meetings, for final approval. If the application is accepted, the applicant becomes a member and may initiate participation in group activities.

Appendix C. Guidance on costing grant applications

Principal investigator salaries

Principal investigator (PI) salaries cannot be included in the budget of the grant.

Travel expenses

These are paid to attend the EORTC QLG meetings for persons employed on the grant and the principal investigator(s) at a maximum of 1000 Euro per person per meeting. Additional travel costs may be requested if they are required for the conduct of the research proposed.

Translation costs

Translation costs for new modules that have completed Phase 2 (i.e. have a preliminary module consisting of items/questions) or are in Phase 3 are covered by the QLG for core European languages and should not be included in the grant. Translation costs for rare or non-European languages should be included in the grant costs.

Translations of issues in Phase 1 and items for Phase 2 should be budgeted within the grant. Translation of any additional non-EORTC questionnaires used in some projects should be budgeted within the grant. These translations may be done via EORTC QL Department to ensure their quality.

Payment per participant (PPP)

The payment will depend on the number of proposed administrations of questionnaires and on whether face-to-face interviews will be conducted. PPP costs will not count towards the total cost of the grant, i.e. PPP will be paid in addition to the total budget. All proposed administrations need to be completed for payment unless a participant withdraws from the study.

Single administration of questionnaire(s)	75 Euro
2 administrations of questionnaire(s) per patient	150 Euro
3 administrations of questionnaire(s) per patient	225 Euro
Face-to-face interviews for phase 1 to 3	150 Euro

Overheads

A maximum of 25% for overheads is paid on requested salaries and consumables (not per participant payments) cost. Overhead costs will not count towards the total cost of the grant.

Ethics costs

A maximum of 10,000 euros can be requested to pay for ethics costs. Ethics costs will not count towards the total cost of the grant. Additional ethics costs may be requested and will be processed on a case-by-case basis.

Governance and contracting costs

In addition, given the increasing workload and complexity of governance and contracting processes, a 4-month fulltime person can be employed (in addition to the study personnel on the grant and will not count towards the total cost of the grant) who is responsible for all governance aspects. Ongoing projects that can show they still have to deal with governance issues can also request this additional funding.

Open Access Publication Costs

The QLG will cover the article processing charges for open access publication for articles published on behalf of the QLG. The fees for open access **should not be** included in the grant application. At the time of article acceptance, authors can request the additional costs from the Quality of Life Group treasurer (see Appendix E for more details).

Appendix D. Guidance on applying for a Phase 1 grant or a Phase 1&2 grant for developing an EORTC questionnaire

Questionnaire development follows the Module Development Guidelines. The 5th edition of the Module Development Guidelines should be consulted and is available on the QLG website.

If you are applying for a Phase 1 grant or Phase 1&2 grant for developing an EORTC questionnaire, please include the following information in the **method section** of the grant proposal:

- The planned **literature searches**
- A **recruitment matrix** for the **healthcare professionals**, including all relevant and applicable info about the planned sample (e.g., cross-cultural distribution, expertise)
- A **recruitment matrix** for the **patients**, including all relevant and applicable information about the planned sample (e.g., cross-cultural distribution, disease site, disease stage, treatment, gender, age). An example of a recruitment matrix can be found in Appendix 1 of the Module Development Guidelines
- The planned methods for the **healthcare professional** and **patient interviews**
- A description of the **steps** and **rules** that will be used to **select the final list of issues from Phase 1** (to be converted into questions or items in Phase 2)
- **If the application is for Phase 1&2:** a description of the planned consultation process that will lead to the preliminary questionnaire (to be pre-tested in Phase 3a if applicable).

Appendix E. EORTC Quality of Life Group Open Access Policy

1.1 Overview

When publishing an article on behalf of the EORTC Quality of Life Group, authors are strongly encouraged, but not required to publish the research with open access. Allowing free online access to our research will:

- Maximise the availability and usability of our work
- Ensure the research we fund can be built upon

1.2 Funding

The Quality of Life Group will cover the article processing charges for open access publication for articles published on behalf of the quality of life group. For the fees to be covered, the following must be true:

- The article reports the results of work funded or part-funded by the EORTC Quality of Life Group
- The article must have been reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee
- The article must include 'on behalf of the Quality of Life Group' in the authorship list

We expect authors to:

- Be aware of the costs of publishing in various journals
- Only submit to journals they consider represent value for money
- Only submit to journals that allow authors to include 'on behalf of the quality of life group' in the author list

1.3 How to obtain the funding

- The fees for open access should not be included in the initial grant application - these will be provided on top of the grant funding
- At the time of article acceptance, authors can request the additional costs from the Quality of Life Group treasurer
- Institutes need to pay the invoice and all the costs will be reimbursed by the QLG afterwards: this has the advantage that we can profit from agreements between publishers and institutes (which are not in place between the EORTC and publishers)