
ECCO Pioneer Award Fact Sheet

The [European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation](#) (ECCO) offers Research Awards to encourage and support innovative basic and/or clinical scientific research in all areas relating to Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD) across Europe.

ECCO Pioneer Awards are designed to support visionary, interdisciplinary scientific research in IBD. Applications can be as a single centre (including single PI applications) or a multicentre project group, and realistically achievable in 24 months and with the provided budget.

One ECCO Pioneer Award may be allocated in Call 2025 and awarded at ECCO'26.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible, the applicant(s) must meet the following criteria:

1. The applicant(s) must submit an original research project proposal using the [ECCO Fellowships and Grants Online Submission Pages](#). Incomplete applications will not be evaluated.
2. For multicentre applications, the project group must consist of
 - a Principal Investigator per institution who is responsible for implementing the project on behalf of their participating institution,
 - a Project Coordinator (this may or may not be one of the principal investigators), who has been identified by the participating institutions for coordinating the overall project.
3. All project group applicants (i.e., Project Coordinator and Principal Investigators of all participating institutions) need to be [ECCO Members](#) at the submission deadline.
4. ECCO Pioneer Award applicants must be from an [ECCO Country Members](#). For multicentre project groups, the majority of the ECCO Pioneer Award applicants must be from an ECCO Country Members; all applications that include non-European participating institutions must justify the selection of these institutions in the letter of intent. The Project Coordinator, however, must reside in an [ECCO Country](#).
5. The applicant can apply for only one ECCO Award category per annual call.
6. Members of [ECCO Governing Board](#) and [ECCO Scientific Committee](#) (SciCom) are excluded from applying.

Terms of Submission

1. A total of **EUR 300,000** will be awarded per ECCO Pioneer Award. It is intended for direct project costs incurred, most notably salary support; equipment; research consumables or institutional overheads. When two or more institutions are participating, the proportion of the budget for one institution may not exceed 60%.

If the ECCO Pioneer Award applicant receives additional funding for the project, this is likely to be regarded as an “add-on” and should not conflict with ECCO funded activities, although ECCO should be informed through the Project Coordinator.

2. The duration of the Award is 24 months. The proposed study is therefore expected to be completed within two years (feasibility criterion, see “review process” below).
3. A department may support one application per ECCO Award category per annual call.
4. The application process will be carried out in two stages:
 - In the first stage, applicants must submit a “Letter of Intent” (max. 2 pages) using the [ECCO Fellowships and Grants Online Submission Pages](#). Please note that only applications using the ECCO Letter of Intent form will be accepted. Please note that particular value is given to the project’s feasibility and innovative potential.

The “Letter of Intent” of 2 pages should contain the following information:

- Project title
- Name, address, affiliation(s), ECCO Member ID of the applicant(s)
- Abstract including aims, methods and anticipated impact of the proposed project (max. 300 words)
- Background and aims (max. 150 words)
- Study design / methodology (max. 150 words)
- Originality and innovation (max. 150 words)
- Importance of the project in the field of IBD (max. 150 words)
- Chronogram with mandatory milestones and specific deliverables of the project aligned with work plan
- Budget outline (a transparent budget split per category and subdivided into participating institutions). When two or more institutions are participating, the proportion of the budget for one institution may not exceed 60%
- Endorsement signatures of all participating institutions
- In the second stage, the applicants with the highest ranking eligible applications will be invited to submit a full proposal using the [ECCO Fellowships and Grants Online Submission Pages](#). The proposal should contain the following information:
 - Project title
 - Name, and address of the participating institution(s)
 - Name, address, and ECCO Member ID of the Project Coordinator and Principal Investigators (for multicentre applications)
 - Abstract including aims, methods and anticipated impact (max. 300 words)
 - Introduction (max. 900 words)
 - Objectives (max. 450 words)
 - Overall aim of the research project
 - Award objectives; achievable within the 24-month timeframe and with the funds and support provided by ECCO
 - Methodology and working plan with particular attention to feasibility (max. 1350 words)

- Chronogram with mandatory milestones and specific deliverables of the project aligned with work plan
- Significance (pioneer quality) and impact of the project for the IBD Community. (max. 250 words)
- Budget (incl. budget split per category and further explanations, e.g. salary, equipment, consumables, travel and meeting costs, other expenses as well as institutional overheads)

As well as the following documents:

- CVs of the applicant(s) (including those of the Project Coordinator and Principal Investigators(s) for multicentre applications)
 - Signed letters of commitment from all participating institutions (e.g. necessary equipment will be made available; confirming the employment of the applicant; scientific and administrative support)
 - IRB (clinical/experimental) approval of the project of the project, if already available
 - Disclosure of additional funding
5. The annual deadline for submission for ECCO Pioneer Award applications is **May 5, 2025** (stage 1), and **September 10, 2025** (stage 2).
 6. Applications are scored by IBD Specialists according to five criteria (see review process below). The Scientific Committee of ECCO (SciCom) invites successful applicants to submit a full project proposal in **June 2025** for the second stage.
 7. Payment of the Award funds is contingent upon the ECCO Pioneer Award Agreement being signed by the participating institutions and ECCO. The Award will be split into one pre-financing payment of **50% in January 2026** and a second payment of **50% in 2027**, conditional on delivery of an interim report using the ECCO report template.
 8. Successful applicants receive the ECCO Pioneer Award certificate at the annual Congress of ECCO and are encouraged to be present to receive it in person, if they are attending.
 9. Three reports are to be submitted to ECCO for publication in ECCO channels.
 - A 300-word synopsis (extracted from the project proposal abstract) will be published in ECCO Channels and the [JCC Congress Abstract book](#).
 - An interim report of the project progress to be submitted within 12 months of project start date.
 - A final report is due within six months of the project end-date.
- Note: upon submission of a written request, no-cost-extensions of the deadline can be granted by SciCom.
- For report templates, please contact the ECCO Office at ecco@ecco-ibd.eu.
10. The Project Coordinator and their institution are expected to submit the results of the project in the form of an abstract to the annual [Congress of ECCO](#) following the completion of the Award objectives.
 11. ECCO Pioneer Award awardees are required to inform SciCom, via the ECCO Office at ecco@ecco-ibd.eu, of any publications and presentations (oral or poster) resulting from the project funded. If this is not upheld, ECCO reserves the right to not review further applications of the awardee.

12. When presenting or publishing any results of the project, ECCO is to be acknowledged on all printed matter as contributing to the funding. Please contact the ECCO Office at ecco@ecco-ibd.eu to request the ECCO logo for slide presentations. If this is not upheld, ECCO reserves the right to not review further applications of the awardee.
13. ECCO encourages awardees to submit the project outcome to [JCC](#) for publication.
14. ECCO reserves the right to request a return of unused funds in the case of a serious impediment to project progress such as a significant delay or if the awardee withdraws from the project or field, or similar disruption.

Review Process

1. All applications are reviewed and scored by ECCO Committee Members or external IBD experts, based on the following five criteria:
 1. Originality and innovation
 2. Methodology
 3. Feasibility of the research project and budget - realistically achievable in 24 months and with the provided budget
 4. International scientific level of the research team / CVs
 5. Importance of the project in the field of IBD
2. Applications need to fulfil the formal criteria: no indication of plagiarism, compliance with word limits, justified budget, IRB approval (if submitted).
3. Reviewing: Each Pioneer Award application will be reviewed by a minimum of three ECCO Committee Members or external IBD experts. The applications will be scored according to the five evaluation criteria and reviewers can make comments on each application.
4. Ranking: Applications are ranked according to their average scores.
5. Selection: ECCO Scientific Committee makes the final selection and seeks approval from the ECCO Governing Board. Please note, in line with a general trend in the scientific world, the active peer reviewing contribution for ECCO will also become a weighing criterion in the selection process when candidate rankings are very close.
6. Notification: Applicants are notified of **stage 1 results in June 2025** and **stage 2 results by November 2025**.

Reviewers

Reviewers are invited according to their area of expertise and are selected from the following:

- [ECCO Officers \(Committee Members\)](#)
- Former ECCO Congress speakers
- Acknowledged experts
- [Former ECCO Fellowships & Grants awardees](#)