UKSH UNIVERSITÄTSKLINIKUM Schleswig-Holstein
UCCSH | Universitäres Cancer Center Schleswig-Holstein

CONNECT Grants 2027
UCCSH & UCC Hamburg

UKE Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf
HAMBURG
Universitäres Cancer Center HAMBURG

Announcement NORD CONNECT Grants 2027

- Cooperative NORD-Networking for Early Career Teams -

We aim to promote collaborative cancer research projects and the exchange of young Medical & Clinician Scientists* within the NORD consortium.

Therefore, we will award up to €50,000 per project, in line with your plans, for innovative & trend-setting team projects between UCCSH (Kiel or Lübeck) and UCC Hamburg scientists.

Team up with partners (teams from two to four researchers are eligible) from the respective other center (UCCSH or UCC Hamburg) and hand in your joint proposal (one joint proposal by all partners) until **September 1st, 2026**.

Here is everything you need to know:

Team Project	The project must be executed by a **team**, with at least one partner based at the UCC Hamburg and one at the UCCSH (Kiel or Lübeck).
Topic in Oncology	The applicants need to work on an **oncology-related topic** that ideally fits into the core focus areas of UCC Hamburg and UCCSH (research programs and focus areas can be found on the respective websites- see below).
Position	Eligible are teams of up to four **Medical & Clinician Scientists***. Minimum requirement: completed Master degree or completed medical studies. **W2/W3 professors are not eligible**. **At least one of the applicants** has to fulfil all of the following criteria: • M. Sc., doctoral students, Post doctorate applicants (up to 6 years after completion of their doctoral thesis (MD or PhD)) ** • Not habilitated
Publication	Minimum: per applicant **1 publication** as (shared) **first or last author**, at least manuscript submitted.

* A Medical Scientist is a researcher in (bio)science, technology, engineering, mathematics, a Clinician Scientist (CS) is a clinician who is also doing research (either clinical, translational or basic).

** Parental leave: up to two additional years per child will be recognized.

What to hand in and how to submit your work?

CONNECT Grant Proposal	Please use the CONNECT Grant Proposal Template [word file]. The application should be written in **English**, font **Calibri 11 pt., 1.15 lines spacing**, and should not exceed **4 pages** excluding references and appendices.
CVs (appendix)	Please provide a short CV from each partner (one page per person).
Letters of Support & Appendix	Please provide a letter of support for each applicant by their respective Department Head. **For CS, a written confirmation of clinical release times by the Department Head should be provided. All necessary permits (animal experiments, ethics etc.) should be approved by the start of the project at the latest.**
Submission	Please email your CONNECT grant proposal to ucch.science.info@uke.de

What's the timeline?

Announcement	June 1st, 2026
Deadline	September 1st, 2026
Decision Announcement	Early November, 2026
Submission	Please email your CONNECT grant proposal to ucch.science.info@uke.de
Funding Period	January 1st – December 31st, 2027
Project Presentation - *Results*	In 2028 (NORD Seminar 2028 or Research Retreat)

What are the criteria for evaluation? (The strongest criterion is "added value"/strategic implementation within the NORD consortium.)

Added Value	How well do the partner sites complement each other/make use of shared resources (biobank, technologies etc.)? Will there be an overall strategic benefit for the NORD consortium?
Potential	How strong is the potential of the project for follow-up studies and funding?
Innovation	Does the project represent a new and innovative idea that was not already followed before?
Quality	What´s the degree of excellence of the proposed research project?
Feasibility	How realistic is the implementation of the proposed project in the given time?

In case of questions do not hesitate to contact us at:

E-mail: ucch.science.info@uke.de or science.uccsh@uksh.de

Background:

Currently, 15 Comprehensive Cancer Centers (CCCs) in Germany are funded by the German Cancer Aid. Hamburg holds a pioneering position as the only CCC in Northern Germany. The CCC initiative aims to establish a nationwide network of leading oncology centers that combine excellent research with outstanding patient care, ensuring that all patients in Germany have access to state-of-the-art prevention, diagnostics, and treatment, regardless of their place of residence.

All centers or consortia undergo a competitive re-evaluation every four years. As the number of funded centers has increased only marginally in recent years, many university cancer centers are now forming consortia to strengthen their applications. In this context, ***the University Cancer Center Hamburg (UCCH) and the University Cancer Center Schleswig-Holstein (UCCSH)*** *have jointly applied for funding as a* ***Northern German consortium ("NORD"),*** *with a* ***funding decision expected in 2026 and a potential start of the consortium in 2027****.*

The CONNECT funding scheme has proven to be a highly successful instrument to initiate collaborative projects across sites—this call marks the ***5th round****. Numerous joint initiatives have already emerged from previous CONNECT grants and contributed to strengthening cross-site collaboration.*

To further foster integration between Hamburg, Kiel, and Lübeck, and to actively involve early career researchers in shaping the future NORD consortium, the working group "Early Career Researcher Support" within the task force "Translational Research" has developed the CONNECT grants. These grants are specifically designed to empower Clinician Scientists and Medical Scientists to initiate their own collaborative, cross-site research projects.

The goal of CONNECT is to provide seed funding for innovative joint ideas that can evolve into larger collaborative projects and attract substantial third-party funding in the future. At the same time, the program aims to strengthen scientific exchange between the participating sites and to encourage researchers to identify and connect with suitable collaborators across locations.

We therefore invite you to participate in this call for proposals and submit your joint project ideas by September 1st, 2026 using the attached template. Funding of up to €50,000 for a period of 12 months can be requested, to be equally distributed between two sites (Hamburg–Kiel or Hamburg–Lübeck).

*To identify potential collaboration partners, please visit our websites (*Cancer Research at UCCSH; UKE - UCC Hamburg - Research Programs; UKE - UCC Hamburg - Mildred Scheel Cancer Career Center Hamburg*) or contact us directly for guidance and matchmaking support.*

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