

Announcement NORD CONNECT Grants 2026

- 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** according to your plans for innovative & trend-setting team projects between UCCSH (Kiel or Lübeck) and UCC Hamburg scientists.

Team up with partners (teams from two-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 15th, 2025**.

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 at the UCC Hamburg or UCCSH 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).
Position	Eligible are teams of up to four early-career Medical & Clinician Scientists* . MD/PhD students, scientists with completed medical studies or STEM Master degree are included. W2/W3 professors are not eligible . At least one of the applicants has to fulfil all of the following criteria**: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before or 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 biosciences (e.g. Biology, Life Sciences etc.), a Clinician Scientist (CS) is a clinician who is also doing research (either clinical, translational or basic).

** Parental leave: up to two additional years/child may be recognized.

In case of uncertainty, please contact the CONNECT team at ucch.science.info@uke.de or science.uccsh@uksh.de.

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 12 pt. , and should not exceed 4 pages excluding references and appendices.
CV	Please provide a short CV from each partner (one page per person).
Letter of Support	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.
Submission	Please email your CONNECT grant proposal to ucch.science.info@uke.de

What's the timeline?

Announcement	June 5 th , 2025
Deadline	September 15 th , 2025
Decision Announcement	November 3 rd , 2025
Submission	Please email your CONNECT grant proposal to ucch.science.info@uke.de
Funding Period	January 1 st – December 31 st , 2026
Project Presentation - Results	NORD Seminar 2027

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?

Funding for the CONNECT initiative is kindly provided by the medical faculties of the Universities of Kiel and Lübeck and the Mildred Scheel Cancer Career Center Hamburg (MSNZ HH) which is funded by the German Cancer Aid.

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

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

Background:

*Currently, there are 15 CCCs in Germany which are funded by the German Cancer Aid; Hamburg is in a pioneering position as the only CCC in Northern Germany. The aim of the CCC initiative of the German Cancer Aid is to establish a nationwide network of oncology centers with excellent research and, above all, patient care, so that everyone in Germany has access to the best possible preventive and screening measures and, in addition, people suffering from cancer in Germany have access to the best possible medical treatment based on the latest research findings, regardless of where they live. Every center or consortium must take part in the competition every four years and re-apply for the award. Since the number of funded centers or consortia has increased only minimally in recent years, more and more university cancer centers are currently applying for the award in consortia, i.e. jointly. Such an application is planned for **autumn this year** by the UCC Hamburg together with the University Cancer Center Schleswig-Holstein (UCCSH).*

*In order to connect our centers in advance in the best possible way and to launch joint initiatives, numerous activities are already ongoing within several working groups. To ensure that young scientists - our Clinician and Medical Scientists at all three sites (Hamburg, Lübeck and Kiel) - can also participate and contribute to the success of the joint application in 2025, the working group "Early Career Researchers-Support" within the task force "Translational Research" has developed the CONNECT grants. These grants are intended to give a boost to joint projects which are conceived by you, the young scientists. The aim is that larger projects can emerge from these initiatives, which may then be able to attract further funding from larger funding bodies. In addition, we would like to strengthen the scientific exchange between the two locations (UCC Hamburg and UCCSH) and motivate you to look around at the other location for suitable partners who may be pursuing similar research goals as you. In the end, this will not only benefit us, but also you and your further networking and career planning. For this reason, we invite you to participate in this call for proposals and send us your best joint project ideas by **September 15th, 2025** using the attached template. You can apply for up to **50,000 € for one year distributed over two locations** (HH-Kiel or HH-Lübeck). To find suitable partners, please check our websites: [UKE - University Cancer Center Hamburg - Hubertus Wald Tumor Center - Research programs](#), www.uke.de/msnz and [Grundlagenforschung und Translationale Forschung](#) or contact us for counseling.*