HFSP RESEARCH GRANTS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A LETTER OF INTENT

IN PROPOSAL CENTRAL

At the Letter of Intent stage, no signatures are required (neither from the applicants nor from their administration). Please also note that no budget proposal is required.

Some instructions for completing the online form also appear as blue boxes in each submenu.

DEADLINES
Two-step process:
- Compulsory initiation of a Letter of Intent by saving the webform (which creates a 7-digit proposal identifier/LOI ID): **17 March 2026, 9:00 AM (U.S. Eastern Time)**
- Submission of a Letter of Intent: **26 March 2026, 9:00 AM (U.S. Eastern Time)**

Please make sure that all team members have registered and completed the mandatory fields in their Professional Profile at least 48 hours before this deadline.
- Submission of Full Proposals: mid-September 2026, on invitation only

Link to create an account: https://proposalcentral.com/

You can contact HFSP at grant@hfsp.org for any general question related to the grant program. For technical support, you can contact ProposalCentral at pcsupport@altum.com or by calling toll-free 800-875-2562 (U.S. and Canada) or +1-703-964-5840 (international direct dial). Technical Support hours for ProposalCentral are 8:30 am ET to 5:00 pm ET Monday - Friday.

STEPS FOR THE INITIATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE LETTER OF INTENT

All sections of the application must be completed directly in the online form - please make sure that you save as often as possible, and before moving to the next submenu. To be on the safe side, you are advised to prepare all texts on the project offline before pasting them into the system. Please note that ProposalCentral will require you to log in again if you have been inactive in the system for more than 20 minutes.

You can use the submenu "Validate" to check for missing REQUIRED information at any time. Missing required elements of information are listed, you can complete any missing information before proceeding to the next step. However, please note that the validation check does not detect if a team member's publications are missing.

You may also print a PDF of your application via submenu "Print LOI". However, please note that the PDF is for reference only, the layout is different for the reviewers.

- ## Create your account and complete your Professional Profile

Principal Applicants must initiate Letters of Intent in ProposalCentral (PC). They will first have to set up an account if they are not already registered in the PC database - detailed instructions can be consulted in the ProposalCentral help section, these are not specific to HFSP applicants. Please note that links to activate an account or retrieve login details expire after 24 hours.

Once logged in, navigate to your Professional Profile and complete only the following sections (other information, e.g. CV, has to be entered in the application itself):


- Section 1. Institution & Contact Info: To add your Institution affiliation(s) use the search engine available in the system (left navigation menu "**Add institution**") and select the name of your institution in the proposed list (preferably with a "confirmed" status). If the status of your institution appears as "unconfirmed", this has no consequences for your application.
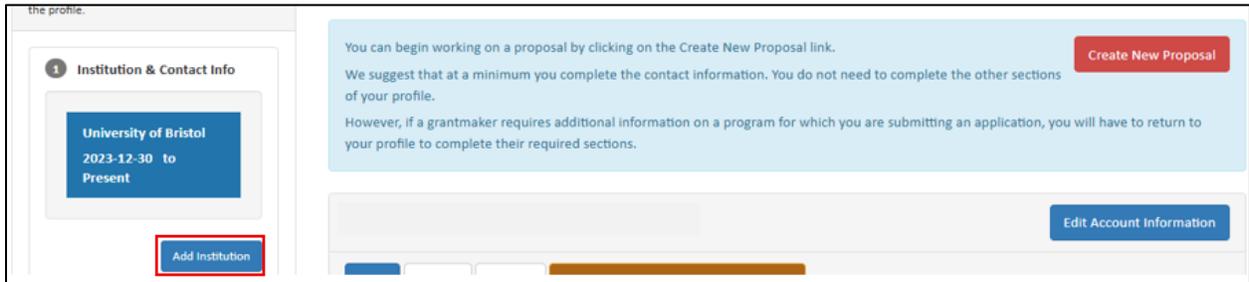
In the unlikely case that the system finds "no Matching Institution", please use the "**Request a new institution profile**" button and enter the name of the University (not the Department or Faculty/School). You will have to provide the name of a person in the central administration of your institution who can confirm that the information is correct. ProposalCentral will check the information and add the institute. Please contact ProposalCentral (pcsupport@altum.com) if you encounter difficulties.

Once you have selected the right institution, please tick "**This is my Current/Primary Institution**" in your Professional profile. For further instructions please consult the help available online.
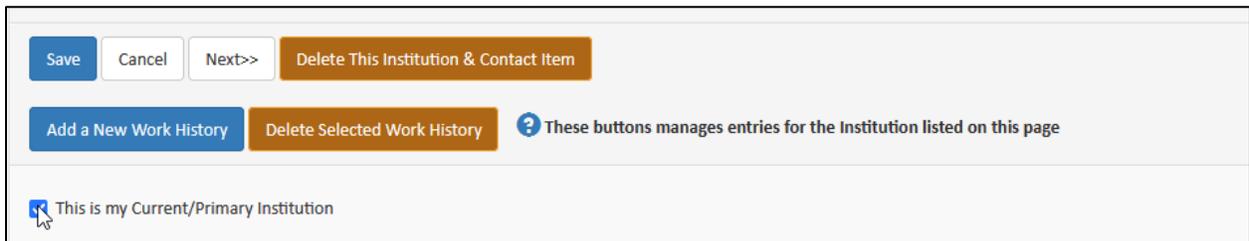
Please make sure to complete the "**Position Title**" in your professional profile as this is a mandatory field in the application (it corresponds to "Current Position" in the application form).

- Section 2. Degrees: "Highest Degree(s)", "Other Degree(s)" and "Pos Baccalaureate degree(s)" need to be completed.

- Section 7 Publications: You can import your publications from your ORCID account, see Submenu "Publications".

- Section 10. Account Information: to update your email address, password and security questions as needed.

You will also have to connect your ProposalCentral account to your ORCID ID, using the button "Create or Connect your ORCID ID" in the upper menu of the Professional profile. Please note that an ORCID ID is mandatory for the application.

If you have several PC accounts associated with several email addresses, you can use the option "Combine Profiles" (upper menu of the Professional profile). Please follow instructions on the page or contact pcsupport@altum.com if needed.

- **Initiate and submit a Letter of Intent**

After completing the Professional Profile, the Principal Applicant should navigate to "Grant Opportunities" and filter by Grant Maker or search HFSP to access the "apply now" button – be sure to apply for the right category (Early Career or Program) – see the screen shot below for more details.

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- ## Submenu "Title Page"

Please enter the title of your application and answer the remaining questions. To validate the initiation of the letter of intent, the PI just needs to save the "title page". A seven-digit **LOI ID** will appear in **Proposal identifier**, below the left-hand menu, this is the reference number of the application.

- ## Submenu "Principal Applicant"

Most of the information for the Principal Applicant will be automatically prefilled with the data registered in the Professional profile, if mandatory fields are still empty, please add the required information (in your Professional Profile or directly in the application form depending on the fields). If the name of the institute has not been completed in the Professional Profile this will have to be entered twice in the application (submenus "Principal applicant" and "Principal applicant institution").

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For the "Prefix", indicate the title you would like us to use for correspondence (Dr., Prof.) – to be completed in your Professional Profile (in section 11 "Account information").

To update the degree information, please select the "Edit Professional Profile" button available on this page and navigate to Section 2 – Degrees.

For the CV, please provide the following information for each position held in the last 10 years (in chronological order starting with the most recent): the period, institution with department, city and country, the position held and area of research. Please do not list editorial or review committee positions.

For the number of publications, please only consider peer-reviewed papers including preprints on public servers (with DOI) but not manuscripts in preparation or submitted.

For the other sections, please follow the instructions available in the online form.

- **Submenu "Principal Applicant Institution"**

Primary affiliation: contact details of the Principal Applicant will be automatically prefilled with the data registered in the Professional profile if you are already in the system (new users will have to add their institution again), if some mandatory fields are still empty, please add the required information. You can also use the button "Change Institution" if corrections are necessary. Please contact ProposalCentral if you encounter difficulties.

Secondary affiliation: please indicate if you have a secondary affiliation and give the contact information in the dedicated field. Please note that all affiliations are considered for eligibility checks and award level.

- **Submenu "Principal Applicant Confidential Data"** only visible for Principal Applicant

In this section we ask for the date of birth, gender and nationality of the Principal Applicant. This information is not visible to reviewers (nor to other applicants) and will only be used for statistical analyses.

- **Submenu "Co-Applicants"**
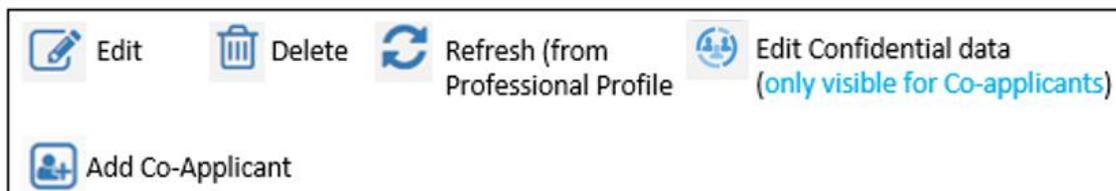
The Principal Applicant will have to add all team members (Co-PI1, Co-PI2…) via the submenu "Co-applicants". Co-Applicants should be given administrator access rights for modifying and submitting the proposal (edit access rights will only enable Co-Applicants to fill in but not submit the application). Access

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rights have to be determined in the submenu "**Enable other users to access this proposal**". Only users with administrator access can see this submenu.

To add Co-Applicants, please enter the e-mail address of the person you wish to invite. Click the "Add contact" icon (see above) to open the contact form. It is not necessary to complete all fields of the contact form, but just add the role, first and last names - the other mandatory fields can be completed by the Co-Applicant. If the person is already registered in ProposalCentral, some information will be pre-loaded into the contact form. Please note that an alert may appear indicating that the contact form is incomplete, but the information that you typed will be saved and the Co-Applicant added to the team. To delete a person from the table, click the "Delete" icon.
To visualize changes in the team composition, please use the browser's refresh button to update the page.

Once you have added Co-Applicants to the application, they receive an email with information on how to access the application. They need to be given administrator access to the application (via the submenu **Enable other users**) to be able to work on the application.

For Co-applicants: it is best to first complete their Professional Profile (see Principal applicant's sections above) and access the application via the section "Home" of their ProposalCentral account to complete the missing information on the "Contact Screen" using the "Edit" icon (in the far-left Action column) – for details see instructions for the **Principal Applicant** submenu.
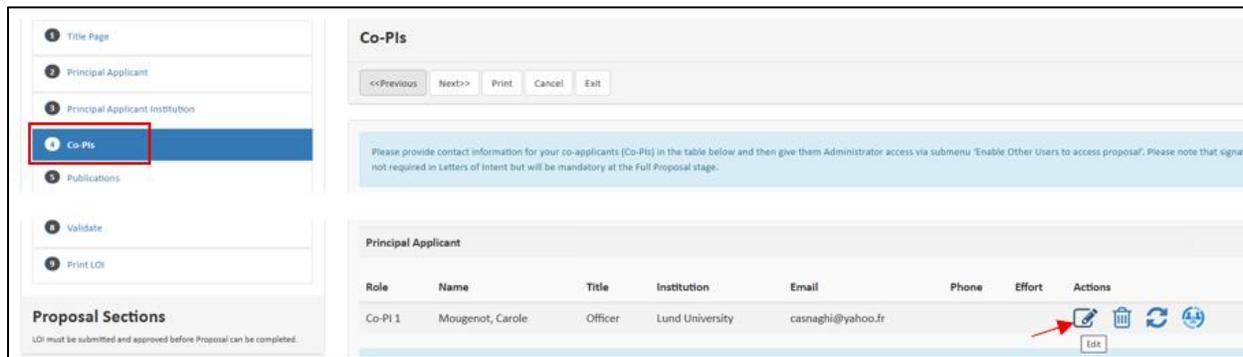
The ORCID is mandatory but it must be completed in the Professional Profile. It only appears in the application by refreshing the co-applicants profiles using the two circle arrow icon "refresh" (see above).

If the name of your affiliation is not pre-filled please use "Search Institution" and select the name of your institute. You can consult the Principal applicant's section for more details (Section 1. Institution & Contact Info).

Note: Changes made to the Co-Applicant's contact information that are not taken from the Professional Profile will be for this proposal only. Permanent changes must be made in the person's Professional Profile. If necessary, latest data from the Professional profile can be imported by using the icon "REFRESH" – see above. You reach the Professional profile easiest by returning to the tab in your browser, in which you logged in to ProposalCentral, do not use the "go back" arrow.

- **Submenu "Enable other users to access this proposal**" (only visible for users with administrator access)

Please enter the roles *(Co-PI 1,2,3)* and define access permissions here (preferably Administrator).

To give other people access to the application, type their email address in "Give User Proposal Access" and choose the correct permission right.

- **Submenu "Publications"**

Each team member needs to list up to 10 publications for the last five years (since January 2021). Publications can be added one by one using the "Edit" action button, but we advise you to import your published papers from your ORCID account into your Professional Profile and then choose them here. You may also enter preprints on public servers, accepted publications and publications in press, but these need to be added manually to your Professional Profile or the application, and they need to have a DOI.

To import your publications from ORCID to your professional profile in ProposalCentral please authorize ProposalCentral to access your ORCID account in your Professional Profile. Answer the question "would you like to copy select ORCID profile data directly into your ProposalCentral profile" with YES. You can then select all sections or just Works/Publications (Funding information, for instance, has to be entered in ProposalCentral directly, not via ORCID).

In the Publication submenu, please choose the 10 publications to add to your proposal (by using the "+" button). Joint publications among team members need to be listed separately on the "Title page".
If in your discipline, peer-reviewed conference proceedings are considered archival publications (i.e. they are reviewed based on the full manuscript and are considered as prestigious as journals and have a DOI) you may list peer-reviewed conference publications that are particularly relevant to the application (this is often the case for non-biological disciplines).

Please note that the validation check does not detect if a team member's publications are missing.

HFSP is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA), which we consider to be an incentive to evaluate research proposals on the basis of their content and not by the criterion of Journal Impact Factors (JIF). Reviewers at all stages of the HFSP grant application process are advised that they should consider the quality of the research published and/or proposed in an application. While productivity may be an important factor, the assessment will be based on the content of articles and not the JIF.

- **Submenu "Keywords/Disciplines"**

Disciplines: Select disciplines represented among the members of your team (up to 10).

Keywords: select keywords for 1. Biological function, 2. Biological material, 3. Methods and instruments (up to 10 in total).

For keywords and disciplines, if you select more than 10 in each list, you will not be able to submit the application (this will be indicated in "Validate" where you can check whether everything is correctly completed).

Additional Keywords: you should first select keywords from the list provided in the online form. If important keywords are missing in this list, you may add them in the free text zone

- ## Submenu "Research Project"

All elements have to be typed (or pasted) directly in text fields of the online form. It is not possible to add any other material. Please consult the Application guidelines and "[Writing a Letter of Intent](#)".

-Abstract: summarize the objectives, hypotheses, approaches and research plan - limit 1,200 characters (including spaces and punctuation).

-Subprojects: There are 4 boxes, please use as many boxes as your team has members starting with the Principal Applicant of the team*. If there are 5 members in the team, Co-Applicants number 3 and 4 will share the same Subproject field using only 1,200 characters each to describe their own contribution to the project.*
All team members should each first indicate their Name and Research Discipline and then describe their subproject (1,200 characters, including spaces and punctuation), with a clear indication of the role played in achieving the goal of the team as a whole. Use this space for the scientific contribution, do not repeat details that are given in the CV.

For each of the following fields please consult the instructions online for more information:
-Frontier Science (to emphasize the frontier character of your proposal - 1,200 characters)
-Interdisciplinary (600 characters) **and**
-Collaborative aspects (600 characters)
-5 key references (1200 characters)
Key references should represent important papers on the topic of the proposal. As the project is new to all team members, most of them will be publications by other scientists, indicating the state of the field.

- ## Submenu "Validate"

Click the "Validate" button to check for any missing REQUIRED information or files. All missing required information will be listed on the screen. Please correct any missing information before proceeding to the next step.
Please make sure that all team members have filled in all mandatory information before the deadline – else the application cannot be submitted.

- ## Submenu "Print LOI"

The PDF is for reference only, the layout of the pdf for reviewer is different.

- ## Submenu "Submit"

Once the application is submitted, the Principal Applicant will receive an email of confirmation.