



Nacionalinis
vėžio centras

VILNIAUS
UNIVERSITETO LIGONINĖS
SANTAROS KLINIKŲ FILIALAS

Summer School Program: VIOS – Vilnius International Oncology Summer School

Organized by: Vilnius University Faculty of Medicine, National Cancer Centre, affiliate of Vilnius University Hospital Santaros Klinikos (VUH SK)

Location: Medical Science Centre, Žaliųjų ežerų g. 2, Vilnius, Lithuania

Dates: 28 July – 1 August 2025

Program Overview

Target Audience: First- and second-year PhD students or those planning to pursue a PhD in oncology or related fields

Duration: 5 Days (Monday to Friday)

ECTS: 5 credits (recommended, based on participation, assignments, and project work)

Each day will consist of:

- **2 Theoretical Sessions:** Key topics in oncology and research methodologies.
 - **1 Experience Session:** Hospital visits or hands-on activities related to oncology practice.
 - **1 Teamwork Session:** Collaborative work on PhD research ideas, with feedback from peers and mentors.
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Day-by-Day Program

Day 1: Monday, 28 July - Introduction to Oncology & Research Methodologies

Morning:

- **9:00 – 9:30:** *Registration & Welcome Coffee*
- **9:30 – 10:00:** *Opening Ceremony*
 - Welcome by the organisers from Vilnius University, the National Cancer Centre and VUH Santaros Klinikos
 - Overview of the week's objectives, goals, and project expectations
- **10:00 – 11:45:** *Session 1: Introduction to Oncology Research: Challenges and Opportunities*
 - *Key advances in palliative care and oncology, current research gaps, and trends in the field*
Speaker: Prof. Stein Kaasa, University of Oslo, Norway (online)
 - *Research Focus in Palliative Care*
Speaker: Prof. Maria Grazia De Marinis, Campus Bio Medico University of Rome, Italy
 - *Bridging Bench to Bedside: Integration of Clinical Care and Research in Comprehensive Cancer Centres*
Speaker: Dr Valdas Pečeliūnas, the National Cancer Centre, Lithuania

Lunch Break

- **11:45 – 12:30:** Lunch (at the venue or local restaurants)

Afternoon:

- **12:30 – 13:15:** Session 2: *Research Methodologies in Oncology*
 - Speaker: Dr. Kasandra Musovič, University of Maribor, Slovenia
 - Topic: Advanced approaches to literature reviews in evidence-based research: utilising PICOT frameworks for systematic inquiry
- **13:15 – 14:00** *Critical Appraisal of Evidence in Clinical Research*
 - Speaker: Assoc. Professor Dr Karolis Ažukaitis, Vilnius University, Lithuania
 - Topics: Evidence-informed medicine, interpreting scientific evidence, research waste, and predatory journals
- **14:00 – 15:00:** Experience session: *Hospital Tour at VUH Santaros Klinikos and the National Cancer Centre (cell therapy, biobank)*
 - Overview of oncology departments and research labs at the National Cancer Centre/ VUH Santaros Klinikos
 - Opportunity to observe clinical practices and ongoing research in oncology
- **15:00 – 16:30:** Teamwork Session: *Introduction to group project*
 - Divide into teams. Each team will brainstorm ideas for their PhD research project based on the topics discussed
 - Teams will begin outlining their research questions and methodologies

Evening

- **17:00 – 19:00:** *Meet & Greet Dinner*
 - Networking dinner for all participants and faculty. Informal discussions about research interests and collaboration opportunities
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Day 2: Tuesday, 29 July – Molecular Oncology & Cancer Genomics

Morning:

- **9:00 – 10:30:** Session 1: *Molecular Mechanisms in Cancer: Understanding Tumour Biology*
 - Speaker: Prof. Sonata Jarmalaitė, National Cancer Centre, Lithuania
 - Topics: Genetic mutations, signalling pathways, tumour microenvironment, and resistance mechanisms
- **10:30 – 11:15:** Session 2: *Cancer Genomics: Big Data in Cancer Research*
 - Speaker: Dr Tadas Žvirblis, Vilnius University, Lithuania
 - Topic: Next-generation sequencing, bioinformatics tools, and personalised medicine
- **11:15 – 12:00** *Qualitative and quantitative approaches*
 - Speaker: Dr Giorgia Petrucci, Campus Bio Medico University of Rome, Italy
 - Topic: Distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative research: philosophical foundations, methodological approaches, and research integrity

Lunch Break

- **12:00 – 13:00:** Lunch

Afternoon:

- **13:00 – 14:30:** Experience session: *Genomics Lab Tour and Hands-On Activity*
 - Visit a lab working with genomic data, followed by a hands-on demonstration using bioinformatics tools for cancer mutation analysis
- **14:30 – 16:00:** *Teamwork Session*
 - Continue working on a research project. Begin refining research questions and discuss how genomic data might apply to their projects

Evening

- Free evening for participants to explore Vilnius
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Day 3: Wednesday, 30 July – Immunotherapy & Clinical Trials

Morning:

- **9:00 – 10:30:** Session 1: *Phylogenetics to the rescue, the RNA virus perspective*
 - Speaker: Dr Gytis Dūdas, Vilnius University Life Sciences Centre, Lithuania
- **10:30 – 12:00:** Session 2: *Clinical Immunotherapy: Transforming Cancer Treatment*
 - Speaker: Dr Skirmantė Černauskienė, Vilnius University, Lithuania
 - Topic: CAR-T Therapy
 - Speaker: Dr Adomas Bukauskas, VUH Santaros Klinikos, Lithuania
 - Topic: Mesenchymal Stromal Cell and Virus-Specific T Cell Therapies
 - Speaker: Assist. Professor Dr Andrius Žučenka, Vilnius University, Lithuania
 - Topic: Acute Myeloid Leukaemia and Bone Marrow Transplantation

Lunch Break

- **12:00 – 13:00:** Lunch

Afternoon:

- **13:00 – 14:30:** Experience session: *Clinical Oncology Experience at VUH Santaros Klinikos*
 - Meet oncology specialists and observe patient care in action, focusing on immunotherapy treatments and clinical trial implementation
- **14:30 -15:00** *How to Present and Publish Your Results? Introduction to Academic Writing and Presenting*
 - Speaker: Assoc. Professor Dr Karolis Ažukaitis, Vilnius University, Lithuania
- **15:00 – 17:00** *Teamwork Session*
 - Continue working on the research project. Discuss the incorporation of immunotherapy strategies into research ideas
 - Finalise research project proposals. Prepare for presentations and feedback sessions
 - Practice your research project pitches with Dr Karolis Ažukaitis

Evening

- Free evening for students to explore Vilnius
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Day 4: Thursday, 31 July – Cancer Prevention & Early Detection

Morning:

- **9:00 – 10:30:** Session 1: *Environmental Exposure and Risk of Oncological Diseases*
 - Speaker: Dr Aušvydas Patašius, National Cancer Centre, Lithuania
 - Topics: Prevention strategies, screening programs, and global cancer burden
- **10:30 – 12:00:** Session 2: *Digital Pathology*
 - Speaker: Prof. Dr Arvydas Laurinavičius, Vilnius University, Lithuania
 - Topics: Biomarkers, imaging technologies, and diagnostic innovations

Lunch Break

- **12:00 – 13:00:** Lunch

Afternoon:

- **13:00 – 14:00:** Experience session: *Visit to National Centre of Pathology*
 - Observe early detection techniques, diagnostic tools, and screening programs at VUH Santaros Klinikos or National Cancer Centre
 - **14:00 – 16:00:** *Project Presentations & Voting*
 - Each team presents their project to the group
 - Voting by participants to choose the most innovative or promising research idea
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Day 5: Friday, 1 August – Final Presentations & Closing Ceremony

Morning:

- **9:30 - 10:15:** Session 1: *Long-Term Survivorship in Paediatric Onco-Haematology: Clinical Outcomes, Biomarkers, and Quality of Life in Healed Children*
 - Speaker: Prof. Dr Jelena Rascon, Vilnius University, Lithuania
 - Topics: Survival Statistics & Prognostic Indicators; Psychosocial Recovery & Quality of Life; Future Directions; Management of Late Effects
- **10:30 - 12:00:** Session 2: *From Primary Findings to Product in Action: Translating from Bench to Bedside in Oncology*
 - Speaker: Prof. Jukka Westermarck, University of Turku, Finland
 - Topic: How to move research from the laboratory to clinical applications

Lunch Break

- **12:00 – 13:00:** Lunch

Afternoon:

- **13:00 – 14:00:** *Closing Ceremony*
 - Announcing the winning project. Awards and certificates of participation.
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ECTS Credits & Evaluation

- **5 ECTS credits:** Based on full attendance, participation in discussions, practical sessions, team project, and final presentation.
 - Students will be evaluated on:
 - Active participation in sessions
 - Contribution to team project
 - Quality and feasibility of research ideas presented.
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