Annual Report 2025

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At the UMC Utrecht, we strive to improve people's health and shape the healthcare of tomorrow. Being at the forefront is not enough; we aim to take the lead, ensuring that healthcare in the Netherlands continues to advance and evolves. To achieve this, we strongly believe in the added value of our public–private collaborations, which enables us to be a valuable research partner both now and in the future.

The Changing Trial Landscape

We observe a rapidly changing international clinical trial landscape. Although we in the Netherlands continue to deliver both high-quality scientific and -academic output, the time when our participation in every clinical trial could be taken for granted has regrettably passed. The number of trials offered to the Netherlands has dropped by almost 25% over the past five years, which is in line with trends seen across Europe.
At the UMC Utrecht, we continue to invest in our hospital clinical trial infrastructure, to remain an attractive research site for sponsored trials. By standardizing and streamlining our clinical trial processes, professionalizing our budget proposals, and maintaining close connections with our external commercial research partners, we are confident that we will remain a valuable trial site and academic research partner.

Development of the UMC Utrecht Services Site Profile

We are developing a UMC Utrecht Services Site Profile based on structured input from sponsor feasibility questionnaires. This profile presents our research and operational capabilities to sponsors in a consistent and professional manner. This document aims to speed-up the start-up timelines and will now be further refined internally, to ensure that this document is broadly applicable, future-proof, and effectively reflects the full scope of services offered by the UMC Utrecht.

Workshop: Partnership in Clinical Trials – UMC Utrecht and Pharma

At the 27th November, ten pharmaceutical companies met at UMC Utrecht to discuss two burning topics: Development and trends in the clinical research landscape (Netherlands vs. EU vs. Global), and: What makes a clinical research site the best research partner?
The workshop was a unique opportunity to open discuss and constructively identify opportunities and challenges in both initiation and execution of clinical trials.
It became clear that only together we can shape our research collaborations in the best possible way for the future. To ensure that, not only the UMC Utrecht, but that the Netherlands remains an attractive country for clinical research.

Project Patient inclusion

In 2025, U-TRIAL mapped the full patient inclusion process for sponsored clinical trials. Through interviews and focus groups, we identified the key challenges and developed a visual roadmap outlining every step: from study notification to first patient inclusion. This roadmap highlights critical processes, stakeholder roles, and areas of collaboration. This includes initial interest, the feasibility, contracting, and inclusion.
This approach aims to improve efficiency and strengthen our partnerships, ensuring faster study start-up and a broader patient access to innovative treatments.

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Optimization of Clinical Processes

To further improve start-up timelines, we have established several new master CDAs with external commercial research partners (e.g., CROs and pharmaceutical companies), bringing the total number of mCDAs this year to 14.
Moreover, we have significantly updated the Budget Tool to better align with your budget proposals and invoice requests. The tool now provides clearer insight into internal expenses for each assessment. This also harmonizes different budgets across different divisions. Two outcomes that significantly speed up the budget negotiation process and simultaneously reduces the associated workload for all stakeholders.
We continuously update the Budget Tool to meet evolving needs, ensuring that the tool remains future-proof for 2026 and beyond.

Document Working Together: Guideline to collaborate with UMC Utrecht

In the Guideline to Collaborate Working Group, we are developing a hospital-wide document that provides clear, uniform guidance for both internal- and external collaborations. The document aims to offer our partners a transparent and consistent overview of UMC Utrecht's study procedures, which can be expected to be finalized soon. Our objective is to provide a clear and transparent overview of our clinical study process. To ensure that the initiation of new collaborations proceeds smoothly. Procedures outlined in this document are established and standardized within the UMC Utrecht. Adherence to these procedures ensures efficient processing and alignment with national guidelines, as also set out by www.ccmo.nl.

Methodological Center of Excellence

In the second half of 2025, U-TRIAL and the Julius Center jointly initiated a pilot project that enabled the provision of more extensive methodological and statistical expertise to principal investigators, when preparing for their grant applications in clinical trials. Since the launch of the pilot, expert input has already been provided for 14 applications. We continue this pilot in 2026.

U-TRIAL Clinical Research Facility

U-TRIAL has established a clinical research facility within the walls of UMC Utrecht for the conduct of patient-oriented research, with a particular focus on our industry-sponsored phase I–III studies. This facility is equipped to support both our outpatient studies and studies requiring overnight stays.
In addition to providing physical space, the U-TRIAL clinical research facility now also offers access to a flexible pool of clinical research staff to support ongoing studies. This now includes project management expertise, as well as medical and nursing personnel.

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Closing remarks and future perspectives

Looking to the future, UMC Utrecht will devote significant time and energy in optimizing processes, enabling us to open our clinical trials faster and to provide patients with earlier access to innovative therapeutic solutions, within a controlled clinical trial environment. However, this will require a concerted effort from all partners across the research chain. The use of mCDAs and the DCRF CTA template represents an important first step, but everything begins with a genuine willingness to understand one another and to learn from each other. Only by working together can we ensure that the Netherlands remains a valued and attractive country for the conduct of clinical trials.