



Medical Research
Future Fund



Investigator Grants: Medical Research Future Fund Priority Round

Opening date:	Forecast 6 September 2019, opening 02 October 2019
Closing date and time:	17.00 AEDT on 27 November 2019
Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Health
Administering entity	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)
Enquiries:	<p>Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer. Research Administration Officers can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice:</p> <p>Phone: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers) Email: help@nhmrc.gov.au</p> <p>NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries submitted after 13.00 AEDT on 27 November 2019.</p> <p>Note: NHMRC's Research Help Centre aims to provide a reply to all requests for general assistance within two working days. This timeframe may be delayed during peak periods or for more detailed requests for assistance.</p>
Date guidelines released:	02 October 2019
Type of grant opportunity:	Targeted competitive

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1 Investigator Grants: MRFF Priority Round processes

The Investigator Grants Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Priority Round is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

The grant opportunity is a component of the Portfolio Budget Statement Program 1.1: Health and Medical Research, which contributes to Outcome 1: Improved health and medical knowledge.



The grant opportunity opens

NHMRC designs the grant opportunity in consultation with the Department of Health according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines*. NHMRC publishes the grant guidelines on GrantConnect.



Applicants complete and submit a grant application

Applicants must complete the application form and address all of the eligibility criteria to be considered for a grant.



Applications verified and assessed

Applications are verified against eligibility criteria and applicants are notified if not eligible. Peer reviewers assess applications against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with money.



Grant decisions are made

NHMRC provides a list of applications recommended for funding to the Department of Health. The Minister or their delegate decides which grant applications are funded, based on the availability of funding.



NHMRC notifies applicants of the outcome



NHMRC makes a grant offer on behalf of the Department of Health

Applicant's Administering Institution accepts the Department of Health Grant Schedule(s) setting out the research activity



Delivery of grant

Grantees undertake the grant activity as set out in the schedule to the grant funding agreement. NHMRC manages the grant through the relevant Administering Institution.



Evaluation of the Investigator Grant program

NHMRC undertakes periodic evaluations of the performance and administration of its funding schemes to determine strengths and to identify where improvements can be made.



1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Investigator Grants: MRFF Priority Round.

Applicants must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

GrantConnect (www.grants.gov.au) is the authoritative source of information on this grant opportunity. Any alterations or addenda to these Guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

This grant opportunity will be undertaken according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017* (CGRGs), available from the [Department of Finance website](#).

This grant opportunity is funded from the Medical Research Future Fund. NHMRC is administering the grant opportunity.

2 About the grant opportunity

This grant opportunity is part of the MRFF Next Generation Clinical Researchers program, announced in the context of the 2017-18 Budget. The MRFF, established under the *Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015* (MRFF Act), provides grants of financial assistance to support health and medical research and innovation in improving the health and wellbeing of Australians. It operates as an endowment fund with the capital preserved in perpetuity. At maturity, the MRFF will reach \$20 billion. The MRFF provides a long term sustainable source of funding for endeavours that aim to improve health outcomes, quality of life and health system sustainability.

The MRFF also has a focus on research translation, which is the process of moving research from bench to bedside and beyond, ensuring new health and medical discoveries are realised in clinics and hospitals and integrated into the practices of health professionals. Research translation further encompasses the use of research findings to inform and underpin government health policy or improve health systems.

The MRFF investments are guided by the Australian Medical Research and Innovation Strategy 2016–2021 (the Strategy) and related set of Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2018–2020 (the Priorities), developed by the independent and expert Australian Medical Research Advisory Board following extensive public consultation.

Funding for this program is being administered by the NHMRC as part of its Investigator Grant 2020 scheme and is restricted to the Emerging Leadership (EL) category only. Applicants must read these guidelines in conjunction with the *NHMRC Investigator Grant 2020 Guidelines*.



2.1 Relationship between this grant opportunity and NHMRC's Investigator Grant 2020 program

This grant opportunity is for funding commencing in 2020 and in 2021. Applicants who wish to apply for funding via this Investigator Grant: MRFF Priority Round will do so using the NHMRC Investigator Grant 2020 application form. Applicants must indicate on the application form that they are applying for funding from the MRFF as part of their application (see section 7). As such, all applicants applying to this grant opportunity are automatically considered under NHMRC's investigator Grant 2020 scheme (for funding commencing in 2021). Therefore, applicants must ensure their application meets all requirements set out in the *Investigator Grant 2020 Guidelines*. Failure to do so will result in the application being deemed ineligible and withdrawn from further consideration.

2.2 Objectives of the grant opportunity

This grant opportunity aims to ensure the next generation of talented Australians have the capacity to make and progress great medical discoveries and promotes opportunities for clinical researchers to work in partnership with professional colleges and industry.

The objective of this grant opportunity is to support the research program of outstanding early- to mid-career clinical researchers that contribute to the following MRFF priority research areas:

1. Australian Brain Cancer Mission
2. Million Minds Mission
3. Genomics Health Futures Mission
4. Ageing, Aged Care and Dementia Mission
5. Indigenous Health Research Fund
6. Stem Cell Therapies Mission
7. Mission for Cardiovascular Health
8. Traumatic Brain Injury Mission
9. Preventative and Public Health Research
10. Primary Health Care Research
11. Global Health – Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance and Drug Resistant Tuberculosis

In line with the MRFF supporting and funding research translation, applicants will also need to demonstrate how the grant will influence one or more of the following:

- i. best practice clinical care;
- ii. commercial health or medical research product/technology development;
- iii. health policy;
- iv. health system improvement.

It consolidates salary and research support into a single grant scheme by offering a salary component (if required) and a Research Support Package (RSP).

To support its objective, this grant opportunity will only support applicants at the EL category of the NHMRC Investigator Grant scheme.

The EL Category is restricted to researchers who are ≤10 years post-PhD or equivalent and comprises two salary levels (EL1 and EL2) with corresponding RSPs.



Each Level of the EL Category (EL1 and EL2) can only be held once.

Table 1. Structure of the NHMRC Investigator Grant scheme

	Salary	RSP	
Category	Levels	Tiers	Title
Leadership	L3	LT4	NHMRC Leadership Fellow
	L2	LT3	
		LT2	
	L1	LT1	
Emerging Leadership	EL2	ELT2	MRFF/NHMRC Emerging Leadership Fellow
	EL1	ELT1	

2.3 Outcomes of the grant opportunity

The intended outcomes of the Investigator Grants: MRFF Priority Round are:

- flexibility for investigators to pursue important new research directions as they arise and to form collaborations as needed
- innovative and creative research
- opportunities for early- and mid-career researchers to establish their own research programs
- reduced application and peer review burden on researchers.

2.4 Priority Research Areas

2.4.1 Australian Brain Cancer Mission

The Australian Brain Cancer Mission aims to achieve increased patient survival, quality of life and care experiences, increased and equitable access and participation in clinical trials, expanded research platforms and technologies, and increased researcher capacity and excellence. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should primarily involve one or more of the following:

- basic and clinical research excellence in paediatric and adult brain cancer
- innovative research capable of supporting international collaborations, and
- identification of drugs of potential, and ensure access to new drugs by adults and children.

This Priority Research Area does not support clinical trials undertaken outside of Australia, however applicants undertaking Australian-based research as part of a multinational clinical trial may apply for an MRFF Investigator Grant.



2.4.2 Million Minds Mission

The Mission aims to assist an additional one million people who might not benefit from mental health research and trials to be part of solutions and new approaches to prevention, detection, diagnosis treatment and recovery. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should involve one or more of the following:

- Causes of mental illness
- Prevention of mental illness
- Early intervention in mental health
- Treatment of mental illness
- Improvements to wellbeing

Research under this Priority Research Area must involve Australian subjects or patients.

2.4.3 Genomics Health Futures Mission

The Genomics Health Futures Mission will help save or transform the lives of Australians through genomics research into better testing, diagnosis and treatment. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should involve one or more of the following:

- Improving the evidence base demonstrating clinical utility and cost effectiveness of genomics
- Improving clinical and translational capability in genomics
- Expanding capacity in gene discovery and functional genomics
- Expanding and improving understanding of the ethical, legal, and social issues related to the use of genomic information in health care
- Developing genomics applications related to rare cancers and diseases
- Improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Pathogen genomics and/or infectious diseases
- Strengthening bioinformatics capacity and capability.

Research under this Priority Research Area must involve Australian subjects or patients.

2.4.4 Ageing, Aged Care and Dementia Mission

The Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Research Mission aims to improve the quality of life for people as they age through health and medical research. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should involve one or more of the following:

- prevention and risk reduction (lifestyle prevention strategies, falls prevention and avoidable hospitalisations)
- slowing cognitive decline and specifically dementia (timely diagnosis)
- prolonging quality of life (assistive technology to support independence and caring, ageing in place and maximising functional independence)
- developing innovative care models and technologies to improve health outcomes, and
- compressing the period of intense morbidity in later years.

Research under this Priority Research Area must involve Australian subjects or patients.



2.4.5 Indigenous Health Research Fund

The Indigenous Health Research Fund will support ground-breaking, participatory research into the best approaches to prevention, early intervention and treatment of health conditions of greatest concern to Indigenous communities. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area must aim to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and must directly relate to one or more of the following three flagship priorities:

- ending avoidable blindness
- ending avoidable deafness, and
- ending rheumatic heart disease.

2.4.6 Stem Cell Therapies Mission

The Stem Cell Therapies Mission will support Australian stem cell and regenerative medicine research and deliver new discoveries and therapies. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should involve basic or applied stem cell research. Research under this Priority Research Area must involve Australian subjects or patients.

2.4.7 Mission for Cardiovascular Health

The Mission for Cardiovascular Health will support breakthrough cardiovascular research characterised by collaboration, innovation and commercialisation across all ages, ethnicities and genders. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should involve one or more of the following:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Vascular disease.

Research under this Priority Research Area must involve Australian subjects or patients.

2.4.8 Traumatic Brain Injury Mission

The Traumatic Brain Injury Mission will support research that facilitates better prediction of recovery outcomes following a traumatic brain injury and identify the most effective care and treatments. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should primarily involve one or more of the following:

- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Spinal Cord Injury.

Research under this Priority Research Area must involve Australian subjects or patients.

2.4.9 Preventive and Public Health Research

The Preventive and Public Health Research initiative supports targeted research that generates low-cost, translatable and scalable solutions that promote the adoption of good health practices, prevent disease and keep people out of hospital. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should focus on research in one of the following areas:

- maternity health and the first 2000 days
- early childhood, and



- exercise and nutrition

and may involve one or more of the following:

- fostering new discoveries with practical applications in community and clinical settings
- increasing collaboration across academic disciplines and health services to better understand the social, cognitive and emotional aspects of people's health choices
- developing effective guidance, tools and interventions to support Australians to live active and healthy lives.

Research under this Priority Research Area must involve Australian subjects or patients.

2.4.10 Primary Health Care Research

The Primary Health Care Research initiative will support research that improves primary health care translation and implementation. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should address the capacity and production gap in primary care research with an emphasis on multi-disciplinary, adaptive research methodologies and clinician capability support. Research under this Priority Research Area must involve Australian subjects or populations.

2.4.11 Global Health: Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance and Drug Resistance

The Global Health – Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance and Drug Resistance initiative will develop understanding and tools to combat threats to national health security posed by the regional and global challenges of anti-microbial resistance and drug resistant tuberculosis. Research undertaken in this Priority Research Area should primarily involve one or more of the following:

- Clinical trials involving Australian patients with drug-resistant infections, including drug-resistant tuberculosis
- Collaborations with the biopharmaceutical industry on drug discovery and trials of pharmaceutical treatments
- Developing and implementing fit-for-purpose preventive, diagnostic and treatment solutions.
- Boosting understanding of threats that microbial resistance poses to Australian and global health security
- Increasing preparedness for health emergencies and pandemics.

Research under this Priority Research Area must involve Australian subjects or populations. This Priority Research Area does not support clinical trials that are primarily conducted outside of Australia, however applicants undertaking Australian-based research as part of a multinational clinical trial may apply for an MRFF Investigator Grant.

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The provisional funding allocation for these MRFF Investigator Grants is \$15.3 million in 2019-20 and \$17 million in 2020-21, to be paid from the Medical Research Future Fund Health Special Account.



Investigator Grants comprise an RSP and a salary component (see **Table 2**). The salary component of Investigator Grants is provided as a contribution to assist Administering Institutions with employing the successful applicant to conduct the research. However, an Investigator Grant recipient's total salary is agreed through negotiation between the researcher and their Administering Institution. NHMRC expects that researchers who receive a salary from their institution will not apply for a salary from this grant opportunity. This maximises the number of applications that can be funded.

The RSP component of Investigator Grants is tiered and the RSP for EL grants is set¹, as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Investigator Grant salary and RSP components

	Salary		RSP	
Emerging Leadership	EL2	\$110,897	ELT2	\$200,000
	EL1	\$77,950	ELT1	\$50,000

Note: Amounts noted in **Table 2** are current at the time of application, and may be indexed and provided on a pro rata basis for part-time awardees as applicable.

The Category, Level and RSP of the grant will apply for the duration of the grant.

3.2 Grant period

An MRFF Investigator Grant awarded under this grant opportunity is for a five year term, irrespective of:

- the Category or Level of grant awarded, and
- whether the grant is awarded as a full-time or part-time grant (section 3.3).

3.3 Time commitment

An Investigator Grant may be awarded as either a full-time grant or a part-time grant.

3.3.1 Full-time Investigator Grants

Full-time Investigator Grants are intended to support researchers to conduct research on a full-time basis (i.e. as 1.0 full-time equivalent FTE). Researchers receiving a full-time salary must devote at least 80% of their time to research, including to achieving the outcomes of the Investigator Grant.

Academics who spend **≥80% FTE on research** may apply for a full-time Investigator Grant salary.

Academics who spend **>20% FTE on teaching/administration** may apply for a full-time salaried Investigator Grant if they transfer to a full-time research role (≥80% FTE on research) by 1 January of the year the grant is to commence, or a part-time (professional) Investigator Grant salary to cover the proportion of FTE spent on research.

¹ For example, a EL1 grant receives an RSP at Tier "ELT1".



3.3.2 Part-time Investigator Grants (Professional)

Investigator Grants awarded on a part-time basis for professional reasons ('Professional Part-Time Grants') are intended to allow researchers to conduct research while maintaining other professional activities. These grants are available for 0.2 to 0.8 FTE over five years. The salary component of the grant will be adjusted pro rata.

Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant applicants must hold, or have been offered, another funded position (e.g. in policy, industry, clinical, public health or equivalent practice, teaching) and their employer must guarantee to release the Investigator Grant recipient for the time specified in their grant application to conduct research. Similarly, self-employed applicants must confirm that they are able to conduct the research.

Continuation of the Investigator Grant will depend on continued financial support by the employer for the balance of the applicant's work time and for the duration of the grant.

Administering Institutions must retain evidence:

- of the Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant applicant's alternative funded position
- that the alternative employer will release the applicant to conduct the research proposed in their Investigator Grant application
- that the alternative employer will continue to provide salary to support the applicant's non-research time.

This evidence must be made available to NHMRC if requested. Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant recipients may retain 100% of their RSP. Researchers may select this option at the time of application or convert it during the course of the grant (see section 10.8.4). At application or upon request for conversion, the researcher must indicate whether they wish to receive 100% of their Investigator Grant RSP or reduce it in proportion to their part-time status².

The combined time spent on research and on other professional activities by Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant recipients must equate to 1.0 FTE, except where there is a career disruption. In this case, the 1.0 FTE requirement towards research and professional activities is reduced in proportion to the time component of the career disruption. For the research component of a Professional Part-Time Investigator Grant, 80% of that time must be devoted to research, including to achieving the outcomes of the Investigator Grant³.

Professional Part-Time Investigator Grants are to be held part-time, at the indicated FTE, for the duration of the grant. They cannot be converted to a full-time grant.

3.3.3 Part-time Investigator Grants (Personal)

In circumstances defined as career disruptions (see [Appendix A](#)), researchers may receive part-time support to allow them to divide their time between their personal situation and conducting research. These grants are available for 0.2 to 0.8 FTE over five years and fund the amount of time

² For example, if an applicant chooses to receive a Part-Time Investigator Grant at 0.2 FTE and to reduce their RSP in proportion to their FTE, they would receive 20% of the RSP.

³ For example, if the research component of a Part-Time Investigator Grant is 0.6 FTE, then 80% (0.48 FTE) of the research component of the grant recipient's time must be directed towards research.



allocated to research. The value of the salary will be adjusted pro rata. Applications for personal part-time FTE must be supported by their employer. Administering Institutions must retain evidence to confirm that the Investigator Grant recipient's requested FTE is for circumstances defined as a career disruption(s) and provide this evidence to NHMRC if requested.

The non-research time is intended to be dedicated to serving the needs of a researcher's personal circumstances and cannot be spent on other paid employment, research, teaching or administrative roles, or clinical or practitioner responsibilities.

Researchers may select this option at the time of application, or convert to it (see section 10.8.4) during the course of the grant. At application, or upon request for conversion, the researcher must indicate whether they wish to retain 100% of the Investigator Grant RSP or reduce it to the part-time FTE level (e.g. 0.2 FTE and 20% of RSP).

When the personal part-time option is taken, the researcher must devote at least 80% of their part-time commitment to research, including to achieving the outcomes of the grant⁴.

Recipients of a part-time (personal) Investigator Grant may request to increase their time commitment and convert to full-time salary for personal reasons, such as changes in carer responsibility or recovery from an illness or major injury. Requests to convert to full-time will be considered by NHMRC on a case-by-case basis and must have the support of the Investigator Grant recipient's Administering Institution.

Where a request to convert or return to full-time is approved, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will be increased to the full-time amount for the remaining duration of the grant; however, the value of the RSP will be unchanged. For example, if 80% RSP is requested at the time of the Investigator Grant application, then the RSP amount will remain at 80%.

3.3.4 Other appointments

The Investigator Grant scheme must not pay or subsidise the salary of grantees with additional institutional leadership/administrative appointments related to research. Such appointments may include academic and institutional leadership/administrative salaried appointments. Funding of these roles is the responsibility of the institution. NHMRC reserves the right to suspend or cease any Investigator Grant if, in its judgement, this policy intent is being compromised.

Applicants may apply for an Investigator Grant, but are not eligible for salary support if, on 1 January of the year an Investigator Grant is to commence, they hold:

- roles where the overarching responsibility is leadership of an independent Medical Research Institute (e.g. Director or Chief Executive Officer (CEO))
- roles where the overarching responsibility is leadership of an institute or centre under university or hospital governance (e.g. Director or CEO), or
- academic administrative roles such as Dean, Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellor.

The salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid if, through the life of the grant, a grantee holds any of the positions (or similar) listed above. Grantees who hold any of these

⁴ For example, if the research component is 0.6 FTE then 0.48 FTE (i.e. 80% of the research component) must be directed towards research.



positions will not be required to resign permanently from their position; the appointment can be retained, but the salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid. The RSP component of the grant will not be affected.

If an Investigator Grant recipient temporarily holds any of the positions (or similar) listed above, the grantee may suspend the grant as outlined in section 10.8.2.

Any appointments held by an Investigator Grant recipient are subject to review by NHMRC at any time throughout the duration of the grant.

3.3.5 Time spent overseas

Investigator Grant recipients may spend a proportion of their time pursuing research overseas.

3.3.5.1 Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants

To allow flexibility and support early and mid-career researchers to conduct a proportion of research overseas, EL1 and EL2 Investigator Grant recipients may spend up to 50% of their grant's duration overseas. However, the final year of the Investigator Grant must be undertaken in Australia. Administering Institutions must retain evidence that the Investigator Grant recipient is in Australia for the final year of the grant and provide this to NHMRC if requested.

4 Eligibility criteria

Applications will only be accepted from NHMRC-approved Administering Institutions. A list of NHMRC-approved Administering Institutions is available on [NHMRC's website](#).

In addition to being an Administering Institution, to be eligible for a grant under the MRFF Act an organisation must be one of the following bodies:

- a medical research institute
- a university
- a corporate Commonwealth entity
- a corporation
- a state or territory government, or
- a state or territory government entity.

Eligibility assessment for MRFF-funded Investigator Grants is undertaken by NHMRC.

The Chief Investigator A (CIA) and Administering Institution must ensure applications meet all eligibility requirements, as set out in these guidelines, at the time of submission and for the duration of peer review. Applications that do not meet these eligibility requirements may be ineligible and may be excluded from further consideration.

An eligibility ruling may be made by NHMRC at any stage following the close of applications, including during peer review. Where an eligibility ruling is being considered, NHMRC may request further information in order to assess whether the eligibility requirement has been met.

Decisions are made based on current policies and considerations specific to this grant opportunity. Decisions made in relation to previous grant opportunities or other NHMRC funding schemes will



not be regarded as precedents and will not be considered when assessing compliance with the requirements of this grant opportunity.

Administering Institutions will be notified in writing of ineligible applications and are responsible for advising applicants.

Grant offers may be withdrawn if eligibility criteria to accept a grant are not met. Action may also be taken over the life of a grant if eligibility criteria to continue holding a grant are not met.

NHMRC staff will not make eligibility rulings before an application is submitted.

MRFF Investigator Grant recipients are considered equivalent to NHMRC Investigator Grant recipients. All conditions and policies relevant to Investigator Grant recipients are applicable to MRFF-funded Investigator Grants.

4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Eligibility to apply for an MRFF Investigator Grant should be determined by applicants and their RAOs based on a 1 January 2021 commencement date, irrespective of whether the funding commences in 2020 or 2021.

4.1.1 Chief Investigator

The maximum number of Chief Investigators (CIs) allowed on an MRFF Investigator Grant application is one (the CIA).

Chief Investigator 'A' (CIA)

To be eligible for funding under this Investigator Grants: MRFF Priority Round, the CIA must be an clinical researcher who is ≤ 10 years post-PhD or equivalent.

At the time of acceptance and for the duration of a grant the CIA must be an Australian or New Zealand citizen, or a permanent resident of Australia. The CIA must also be based in Australia for at least 50% of the funding period and must be in Australia for the final year of the Investigator Grant (see section 3.3.5.1).

The CIA must:

- only submit one application for an Investigator Grant in a given funding round
- select only one Category (EL1 or EL2) and one Level of Investigator Grant.

The CIA should consider the *Statement of Expectations* ([Appendix B](#)). It is the responsibility of the CIA to determine the most appropriate EL Level to apply for and submit an application at a level commensurate with their research experience and profile to be considered eligible for funding.

The assessment of applications does not include the determination or appropriateness of the EL level applied for. The level applied for by an applicant will not be changed during peer review.

4.2 Qualifications

NHMRC expects (but does not mandate) that Emerging Leadership applicants will hold a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD), or a research qualification equivalent to the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013, or equivalent research experience.



If the CIA holds a research higher degree which is not a PhD or has equivalent research experience, the applicant's Administering Institution must confirm that, in its judgement, the applicant's qualification or research experience meets the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013 and must provide evidence of that judgement, if requested by NHMRC. NHMRC reserves the right, at any time during the application or peer review process, to exclude applicants who, in its judgement, do not have appropriate qualifications or experience.

4.3 Multiple applications/grants

Limits apply to the number of NHMRC grants that a CI may concurrently hold and/or apply for, including those funded by the MRFF.

It is the responsibility of the CIA to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements for concurrent research applications and/or grants prior to the submission of an application and that they maintain their eligibility for the duration of the peer review period.

4.3.1 Information for Investigator, Ideas and Synergy Grant schemes

Eligibility to apply for, and hold, an MRFF or NHMRC Investigator Grant is linked to numbers of grants applied for or held from the Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes, as well as other NHMRC grants held, including the Investigator Grant scheme itself.

CIs may submit a total of two applications across the Investigator (including MRFF), Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes in any given funding round⁵. See specific rules relating to Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes.

CIs may hold a maximum of two grants concurrently from the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grant schemes, with the following exceptions:

- CIs who hold two Ideas Grants may concurrently hold a Synergy Grant
- CIs who hold one or two Ideas Grants may apply for and hold an Investigator Grant, but their Research Support Package (RSP) will be reduced by 50% for one Ideas Grant and by 100% for two Ideas Grants adjusting accordingly as the Ideas Grant/s end.
- Investigator Grant holders cannot apply for an Ideas or Investigator Grant, unless they are in the final year of the Investigator Grant at the time of application.

Detailed information on how eligibility for Investigator Grants is affected by a CI's grant applications and/or currently held grants is available using the eligibility tool on NHMRC's website.

If an Investigator Grant CIA submits an MRFF or NHMRC Investigator Grant, or is a CI on any other Synergy or Ideas Grant application(s) in excess of the maximum for which they are eligible to apply or hold, all Investigator, Synergy or Ideas Grant applications on which that CI is named may be ineligible and excluded from consideration, irrespective of:

- the scheme to which they have applied
- that CI's position or role on the application.

⁵ For example, in the 2020 funding round for funding commencing in 2021 (subject to other scheme-specific eligibility requirements), CIs may submit 1x Synergy Grant application + 1x Ideas Grant application = 2 applications in total.



If an Investigator Grant application is awarded, then application and grant capping eligibility rules will be applicable concurrently to the round they applied in and across the current Synergy and Ideas schemes.

Refer to the [NHMRC web eligibility tool for the new grant program](#).

4.3.2 Ideas Grants affect Investigator Grant applications

If a CI (CIA-CIJ) concurrently (in the same funding round) applies for an Investigator Grant and an Ideas Grant and both applications are successful, only the Investigator Grant will be offered. As a consequence, the Ideas Grant will not be eligible for funding.

If CIs who hold one or two Ideas Grants are awarded an Investigator Grant, the RSP will be reduced by 50% for each Ideas Grant held. Each reduction to the RSP will cease as each grant(s) that led to the reduction expires.

Investigator Grant holders cannot apply for an Ideas Grant, unless they are in the final year of the Investigator Grant at the time of application.

RSP reductions for Ideas Grants held under the new grant program will be in addition to any RSP reductions applied for Project and Program Grants held under the old grant program. Grants held under the old grant program and new grant program are considered together when determining RSP reductions for Investigator Grants.

Refer to the [NHMRC web eligibility tool for the new grant program](#).

4.3.3 Reductions in the Investigator Grants Research Support Package (RSP) for concurrently held Project, Ideas or Program Grants

If an Investigator Grant application is successful, the value of the RSP will be reduced for concurrently held NHMRC Ideas and/or Project and/or Program Grants in a compounding manner. The census date on which the RSP reductions will be calculated is 3 February 2020 based on the anticipated portfolio of grants held at the date the MRFF Investigator Grant commences.

Combinations of applicable grant types held will compound RSP reductions but not exceed 100% as follows:

- 25% for each concurrent NHMRC Project Grant held, to a maximum of 50%⁶
- 50% for each concurrent NHMRC Ideas Grant held, to a maximum of 100%⁷
- 100% for a concurrent NHMRC Program Grant.⁸

⁶ An Investigator Grant RSP will be reduced by 50% if the grantee concurrently holds two Project Grants. Of this, 25% of the Investigator Grant RSP value will be provided after the first Project Grant expires and the remaining 25% of the Investigator Grant RSP will be provided on expiry of the second Project Grant.

⁷ An Investigator Grant RSP will be reduced by 100% if the grantee concurrently holds two Ideas Grants. 50% of the Investigator Grant RSP starting value will be provided after the first Ideas Grant expires and the remaining 50% of the Investigator Grant RSP will be provided on expiry of the second Ideas Grant.

⁸ An Investigator Grant RSP will be reduced by 100% if the grantee concurrently holds a Program Grant with any further combination of Ideas or Project Grant/s. The Investigator Grant RSP value will return to the compounded value of any remaining Project or Ideas Grant/s combination after the expiration of the Program Grant.



Each reduction to the RSP will cease as each grant(s) that led to the reduction expires. Refer to the [NHMRC web eligibility tool for the new grant program](#).

RSP reductions for concurrently held Project or Program Grants under the old grant program will be in addition to any RSP reductions applied for Ideas Grants held under the new grant program when determining RSP reductions for Investigator Grants.

4.4 Current and/or former NHMRC [Fellowship](#) recipients

Current NHMRC Fellows may apply for an MRFF Investigator Grant if, at the time of application, their NHMRC Fellowship will end before, or be in its final year on, 1 January 2021, irrespective of the year the MRFF Investigator Grant is to commence. Refer to the [NHMRC web eligibility tool for the new grant program](#).

If at 1 January 2021 the first year of the MRFF Investigator Grant overlaps with the final year of a NHMRC fellowship, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid during the overlap (i.e. the period that both grants are held). During this overlap, the Investigator Grant will run concurrently with the NHMRC fellowship and the overall salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced accordingly (i.e. the salary will not be back-paid). The RSP component of the Investigator Grant will not be affected.

Current NHMRC Fellowship holders do not need to indicate within their Investigator Grant application that they currently hold a Fellowship.

Existing NHMRC data on current grant holders will be used to determine an Investigator Grant applicant's eligibility to apply, as well as any required reductions to their salary component.

Current or previous NHMRC Fellowship recipients cannot apply for an Investigator Grant at a Level lower than the applicant's most recently held NHMRC Fellowship ([Appendix C](#)). Previously held NHMRC Fellowships will not count towards the number of terms an Investigator Grant can be held (see section 2).

For the purposes of eligibility, an NHMRC Fellowship is considered held if the offer of funding was accepted and any grant funding expended.

Recipients of MRFF Clinical Researchers Program Fellowships and NHMRC Honorary Research Fellowships will be considered equivalent to NHMRC Fellowship recipients. All conditions and policies outlined in these Guidelines will be applicable to MRFF Clinical Researchers Program Fellowships.

A summary of the Investigator Grant Category and Level for which NHMRC Fellowship recipients (previous and current) are eligible to apply is at [Appendix C](#).

4.4.1 Current NHMRC grantees (other than Fellows) seeking an Investigator Grant

Recipients of an Investigator Grant are not entitled to concurrently receive salary from other NHMRC grants.

Current NHMRC grantees (other than Fellows) who are drawing salary support via a Personnel Support Package (PSP) may apply for an Investigator Grant. Successful applicants will be required



to cease drawing this salary support from the existing NHMRC grant/s by the date of commencement of the MRFF Investigator Grant.

Once an Investigator Grant recipient has ceased drawing salary support from their existing NHMRC grant/s, those funds may be used for other direct research costs (DRCs) associated with the existing research activities.

All DRC expenditure for NHMRC funded research activities must align with NHMRC's DRC principles and guidelines.

Recipients of an Investigator Grant cannot vary off these existing NHMRC grant/s unless requests comply with the NHMRC Grantee Variation Policy (see section 12.1).

Reductions in the RSP for concurrently held Project or Program Grants will apply (see section 4.3.3).

For the purposes of eligibility, recipients of MRFF research support grants are considered equivalent to NHMRC research support grants.

4.5 Australian Government Grants that are not funded by NHMRC

Recipients of a NHMRC or MRFF Investigator Grant salary are not entitled to concurrently receive salary from any other Australian Government funded grant (e.g. Australian Research Council Fellowship, Medical Research Future Fund Fellowship).

The term "Australian Government Grants" covers competitive funding including MRFF, received from the Australian Government (other than NHMRC) for both research and people support.

When considering research support grants, any Investigator Grant applicant receiving a salary from an Australian Government research support grant (either a named Chief Investigator or an unnamed postdoctoral position) would fall under this section.

4.5.1 Other Australian Government grantees seeking an Investigator Grant

A CIA who receives a salary from an Australian Government funded grant can hold or apply for an Investigator Grant if, on 1 January 2021, the other Australian Government grant salary will have ended or be in its final year.

If there is any period of overlap between an MRFF Investigator Grant and the final year of the other Australian Government grant salary, the salary component of the MRFF Investigator Grant will not be paid during the period of the overlap (i.e. **only** the period when both grants are held concurrently). Once the salary from the other Australian Government grant has ended, the CIA will be eligible to draw a salary from their Investigator Grant. During this overlap, the Investigator Grant will run concurrently with the Australian Government grant salary and the overall salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced accordingly (i.e. the salary will not be back-paid). The RSP component of the Investigator Grant will not be affected.

NHMRC expects that a CIA who receives a salary from another Australian Government grant will not apply for a salary from NHMRC until the period of overlap has concluded. Should an Investigator Grant be awarded, and the other Australian Government grant be relinquished, responsibility for salary will not be transferred to NHMRC. All salary declarations must be correct at



the time of application and representative of the full lifespan of the active other Australian Government grant, not based upon prospective conditions if an applicant is awarded an Investigator Grant.

4.5.2 Investigator grantees seeking other Australian Government grants

A CIA who receives an Investigator Grant salary and who is subsequently awarded another Australian Government grant that includes a salary component cannot receive both salary components. Such grant recipients must notify NHMRC if they are successful in obtaining an Australian Government grant that includes a salary for a determination to be made of appropriate distribution of Commonwealth funds.

CIA's may not suspend an Investigator Grant for the purposes of taking up another Australian Government grant.

4.6 Grants that are not funded by NHMRC or the Australian Government

Recipients of grants that are not funded by NHMRC or the Australian Government ("non-Australian Government grants") and that include a salary component (e.g. Viertel Charitable Foundation Senior Medical Research Fellowship, Cancer Council Victoria Postdoctoral Fellowship) may apply for a NHMRC Investigator Grant in any year during the term of this non-Australian Government grant. If successful, and the total value of the salary from the non-Australian Government grant is greater than 20% of the total value of the salary component of the awarded Investigator Grant, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will not be paid. During the period of overlap, the Investigator Grant will run concurrently with the non-Australian Government grant and the overall salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced accordingly (i.e. the salary will not be back-paid). The RSP component of the Investigator Grant will not be affected and the recipient may continue to receive any research support their non-Australian Government grant provides.

CIA's who receive a salary from a non-Australian Government grant greater than 20% of the value of the awarded Investigator Grant salary are not expected to apply for a salary from NHMRC until the period of overlap has concluded. Should an Investigator Grant be awarded, and the non-Australian Government grant be relinquished, responsibility for salary will not be transferred to NHMRC. All salary declarations must be correct at the time of application and representative of the full lifespan of the active non-Australian Government grant, not based upon prospective conditions if an applicant is awarded an Investigator Grant.

A CIA who receives an Investigator Grant salary and who is subsequently awarded a non-Australian Government grant that includes a salary component that is greater than 20% of the total value of the Investigator Grant salary cannot receive both salary components. Such grant recipients must notify NHMRC if they are successful in obtaining a non-Australian Government grant of this type for a determination to be made of appropriate distribution of Commonwealth funds.

If the total salary from the non-Australian Government grant is less than or equal to 20% of the total salary component of the Investigator Grant, the grant recipient may retain both the salary and RSP components of the Investigator Grant.



CIA's may not suspend an Investigator Grant for the purpose of taking up another non-Australian Government grant.

4.7 Current and/or former NHMRC or MRFF Investigator Grant recipients

If an Investigator Grant CIA holds or has previously held an Investigator Grant(s), they will be eligible to apply to a restricted number of Categories and Levels of Investigator Grant.

Eligibility to apply for an Investigator Grant at a given Category and Level will be determined by the number of times the highest Level has been held.

Current or previous Investigator Grant recipients cannot apply for an Investigator Grant at a Level lower than the applicant's most recently held Investigator Grant.

An Investigator Grant CIA is eligible to apply for a new Investigator Grant if, at the time of application, their existing Investigator Grant will end before, or be in its final year on, 1 January of the year the new Investigator Grant is to commence.

If the grant application is successful, the CIA will complete the final year of their existing Investigator Grant before commencing their new Investigator Grant. If an applicant is unsuccessful, they may re-apply in their final year to the next Investigator Grant opportunity.

A summary of the Categories and Levels of Investigator Grants for which current or previous Investigator Grant recipients may apply is at [Appendix C](#).

4.8 Emerging Leadership applicants – PhD census date

As at 1 March 2020, an EL applicant must have held their PhD, or equivalent (see section 4.2), for no more than 10 years from the date that their PhD thesis was passed (not the date of conferral), unless they have had a career disruption (see [Appendix A](#)).

Each period of career disruption (see [Appendix A](#)) claimed in the application must:

- not be counted twice if there is overlap with another career disruption
- only include periods before the close date (any career disruptions beyond the application close date will not be applicable/considered in this funding round)
- involve a continuous absence from work of 90 calendar days or more, or continuous part-time employment (with defined % full-time equivalent, FTE) due to circumstances defined as a career disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 90 calendar days or more⁹.

Consecutive changes to %FTE, resulting from a single career disruption event may be considered cumulatively (for example, a researcher returning from Maternity Leave at reduced %FTE due to Carer responsibilities may claim both the period of Maternity Leave and the absence due to reduced %FTE).

⁹ For example, an applicant who has childcare responsibilities at 0.2 FTE (i.e. employed at 0.8 FTE) would need to maintain this level of employment for at least 450 consecutive calendar days to achieve a career disruption of 90 continuous calendar days.



Administering Institutions must retain evidence that applicants to the EL Category have met the 10 year time restriction (pass date of PhD or other equivalent qualification/research experience), including any career disruption claims, if applicable. This evidence must be an official document from the relevant institution(s) and must be available to NHMRC if requested.

Note: Neither the submission date of the PhD thesis nor the date of degree conferral will be accepted.

4.9 Exclusion of applications

An application may be excluded from further consideration if:

- it contravenes an eligibility rule or other requirement as set out in the Grant Guidelines
- it, or any CI named on the application, contravenes an applicable law or code
- it is inconsistent with the objectives of the NHMRC Act and/or the purposes of the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA), and
- the CIA named on the application is the subject of a decision by NHMRC's CEO or delegate that any application they make to NHMRC, for specified funding schemes, will be excluded from consideration for a period of time, whether or not they otherwise meet the eligibility requirements. Such decisions will generally reflect consequential action taken by NHMRC in response to a finding of research misconduct or a breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), or a Probity Event. See the Code for a definition of 'research misconduct' and the *NHMRC Policy on Misconduct related to NHMRC Funding* available from [NHMRC's website](#).

Such exclusion may take place at any time following CIA and Administering Institution certification of the application.

If a decision to exclude an application from further consideration is made, NHMRC will provide its decision and the reason(s) for the decision to the Administering Institution's Research Administration Officer (RAO) in writing. The Administering Institution's RAO is responsible for advising applicants of the decision in writing. Decisions to exclude an application may be reviewable by NHMRC's Commissioner of Complaints.

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities and expenditure

Funding provided by NHMRC for a Research Activity must be spent on costs directly incurred in that Research Activity that satisfy the principles and requirements outlined in the *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the [NHMRC website](#).

5.1.1 Salary support

The salary component of an Investigator Grant is provided to assist employing the Investigator grantee. The actual amount of remuneration is agreed through negotiation between the Investigator and the Administering Institution.



The Research Support Package component of an Investigator Grant can only be spent on direct costs of research. It must not be used to supplement the salary of the Investigator Grant recipient, but may be used for Personnel Support Packages (PSPs) outlined on the [NHMRC website](#) to employ research staff.

Applicants can receive up to 100% salary across NHMRC grants. Multiple partial salaries can be drawn up to 100%, if allowed in the grant guidelines for the respective grant opportunity.

5.2 Funding to support overseas grant activities and researchers

Investigator Grant funds are for research cost expenditure in Australia. Funding may be used to support specific grant activities to be undertaken overseas, including salary support for overseas-based research support staff, if the overseas grant activity is critical to the successful completion of the project, and the equipment/resources required for the grant activity are not available in Australia.

See *Direct Research Costs Guidelines* on the [NHMRC website](#) for further guidance on the expenditure of funding for a Research Activity.

5.3 Duplicate funding

NHMRC and the Department of Health may compare the research proposed in grant applications with grants previously funded, currently funded, and funded by other agencies (e.g. Australian Research Council or Department of Health) and published research. NHMRC and the Department of Health will not fund research that it considers duplicates research previously or currently being funded.

Where NHMRC believes that an applicant has submitted similar research proposals to NHMRC and has been successful with more than one application, the applicant may be required to provide NHMRC with a written report clearly identifying the difference between the research aims of the research activities. If NHMRC subsequently does not consider the research activities to be sufficiently different, the applicant will be required to decline or relinquish one of the grants.

NHMRC may disclose applicants' personal information to overseas entities, Australian, State/Territory or local government agencies, organisations or individuals where necessary to assess an application or to administer a grant. See NHMRC's Privacy Policy and the *Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information* section of these guidelines for further information.

6 The assessment criteria

All Investigator Grant applications are assessed by peers on the extent to which they address the assessment criteria.

The assessment criteria for all Investigator Grant applications are:

- Track record, relative to opportunity (70%)
- Knowledge Gain (30%).

Applications will be assessed against the category descriptors at [Appendix D](#).



Track Record - NHMRC defines 'Track Record' for the Investigator Grant scheme as the value of an individual's past research achievements, relative to opportunity, not prospective achievements, using evidence. Assessment of Track Record comprises peer reviewers' consideration of:

- Publications (35%)
- Research Impact (20%)
- Leadership (15%).

Knowledge Gain - NHMRC defines 'Knowledge Gain' for the Investigator Grant scheme as the quality of the proposed research and significance of the knowledge gained. It incorporates theoretical concepts, hypothesis, research design, robustness and the extent to which the research findings will contribute to the research area and health outcomes (by advancing knowledge, practice or policy).

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions, where applicable (see [Appendix A](#)).

It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants often make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions will be considered when assessing research output and track record.

6.1 Translational Outcomes of MRFF Investigator Grant Research

Applicants applying under this MRFF grant opportunity are also required to demonstrate how their proposed research aligns with the MRFF's overarching objective to support research translation. Applicants must address the following criteria:

- *Potential to influence health policy and practice* – how the proposed research will translate into outcomes that influence health policy, raise the standard of clinical care and practice, lead to the development of commercial health or medical research products and/or technologies, and/or result in a health system improvement.
- *Plan for research translation* – to what extent the proposed plan for research translation will influence the priority area through rapid translation of research outcomes.
- *Engagement with the health delivery sector* – how the proposed research will engage with the health delivery sector (e.g. education, community, industry and/or healthcare) to ensure a successful uptake of research outcomes, ensuring health system benefits beyond the life of the research.
- *End-user involvement* – how the proposed research will include meaningful consumer, community, and/or end-user involvement through co-design in all stages of the research program.

Responses to these criteria will be assessed by scientific experts who will consider how well the proposed research will support research translation against the following scale:



Rating	Rank
Highly Suitable – responses to the criteria demonstrate an outstanding commitment to research translation with outcomes highly likely to translate into fundamental outcomes that influence policy and/or health system improvement.	2
Suitable – responses to the criteria demonstrate an excellent commitment to research translation with outcomes likely to translate into fundamental outcomes that influence policy and/or health system improvement.	1
Not Suitable – responses to the criteria are lacking in sufficient detail to determine whether outcomes will translate into outcomes that may influence policy and/or health system improvement.	0

This assessment will be taken into consideration when developing a ranked list against the Investigator Grants Assessment Criteria for MRFF funding.

Responses to these criteria will not be considered for NHMRC Investigator Grants.

6.2 Health research involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Applicants proposing to undertake research which specifically relates to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, or which includes distinct Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations, biological samples or data, should be aware of, and must refer to, the following documents in formulating their proposal:

- *NHMRC Roadmap 3: A strategic framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research*
- [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#), and
- [Keeping Research on Track II](#) (a companion document on how the values and principles outlined in the [Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders](#) can be put into practice in research).

To qualify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, at least 20% of the research effort and/or capacity-building must relate to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Qualifying applications must address NHMRC's *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* as follows:

- Community engagement - the proposal demonstrates how the research and potential outcomes are a priority for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities with relevant community engagement by individuals, communities and/or organisations in conceptualisation, development and approval, data collection and management, analysis, report writing and dissemination of results.



- Benefit - the potential health benefit of the project is demonstrated by addressing an important health issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This benefit can have a single focus or affect several areas, such as knowledge, finance and policy or quality of life. The benefit may be direct and immediate, or it can be indirect, gradual and considered.
- Sustainability and transferability - the proposal demonstrates how the results of the project have the potential to lead to achievable and effective contributions to health gain for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, beyond the life of the project. This may be through sustainability in the project setting and/or transferability to other settings such as evidence-based practice and/or policy. In considering this issue the proposal should address the relationship between costs and benefits.
- Building capability - the proposal demonstrates how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities and researchers will develop relevant capabilities through partnerships and participation in the project.

These applications will be assigned to peer reviewers with specific expertise in Indigenous health research. The peer reviewer(s) will consider how well the application addresses the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*, which will be taken into consideration when scoring against the assessment criteria outlined in section 6 (as relevant).

7 How to apply

Before applying, applicants must read these guidelines and understand the relationship between them and the *NHMRC Investigator Grant 2020 Guidelines*. Any addenda relating to this grant opportunity will be published on GrantConnect as addenda to the *NHMRC Investigator Grant 2020 Guidelines*.

To apply, applicants must:

- Complete the NHMRC Investigator Grant online application form using the advice provided in the NHMRC Investigator Grant 2020 Guidelines
- Indicate on the application form that they are applying for MRFF funding by selecting the MRFF 'tick box' at part *B-FP: Funding Partners and MRFF*
- Provide details, using the free text field available at part *B-FP: Funding Partners and MRFF*, of:
 - Their clinical duties (if any)
 - The priority area that is aligned to their research program
 - How their research program meets the scope of their selected priority area
- Upload a two-page PDF response to the Translational Outcomes Criteria (section 6.1)
- Meet all other requirements of these guidelines and the Investigator Grant 2020 Guidelines.



7.1 Overview and timing of grant opportunity processes

06 September 2019	Grant Opportunity forecast on GrantConnect
02 October 2019	Applications open in RGMS
17.00 AEDT, 31 October 2019	Minimum data due in RGMS
17.00 AEDT, 27 November 2019	Applications close in RGMS
17.00 AEDT 3 February 2020	Grant variation census date
February - March 2020	Anticipated peer review period
June 2020	Anticipated notification of outcomes

Applications must be submitted electronically using NHMRC's Research Grants Management System (RGMS) unless otherwise advised by NHMRC. The census date on which salary and RSP reductions will be calculated for Investigator Grant applications will be 17.00 AEDT on 3 February 2020.

Electronic submission requires Administering Institutions and the CIA to register for an account in RGMS. Applicants who are not registered can submit a new user request via the login page of RGMS.

Applicants should refer to the RGMS Training Program on [NHMRC's website](#) for detailed user instructions, or contact their RAO or NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further assistance.

Late applications will not be accepted.

7.2 Application Extensions

Requests for application extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and must be submitted by email to help@nhmrc.gov.au on or before the scheme close date and time. Requests will only be considered for:

- unforeseen circumstances, e.g. natural calamities such as bushfires, floods or hurricanes, or
- exceptional circumstances that affect multiple researchers, e.g. power and/or internet network outages, or
- where an applicant, or a member of their immediate family¹⁰, is incapacitated due to an unforeseen medical emergency, such as life-threatening injury, accident or death.

¹⁰ Immediate family comprises a spouse, child, parent or sibling. It includes de facto, step and adoptive relations (e.g. de facto, step or adopted children).



Extensions, if granted, will be for a maximum of seven calendar days. This is to ensure that subsequent peer review processes and approval of funding recommendations are not delayed, especially as eligibility decisions for some NHMRC schemes depend on an applicant's success with other schemes. Requests for extension submitted after the scheme close date and time will not be considered.

7.3 Minimum data requirements

Minimum data must be entered in RGMS by the specified due date to allow NHMRC to start identifying suitable peer reviewers. Applications that fail to satisfy this requirement will not be accepted. Applicants must complete the required fields with correct information. Using placeholder text such as “text”, “synopsis” or “xx” etc. is not acceptable as minimum data.

For minimum data fields for MRFF Investigator Grant applications, refer to the Guide to Applicants in the *NHMRC Investigator Grant 2020 Guidelines*.

Failure to meet this deadline will result in the application not proceeding.

RAOs are not required to certify applications for the purpose of minimum data. Applications should only be certified once complete and ready for submission.

7.4 Application requirements

The application should contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation or reference to additional documentation. Further information on what can and cannot be included in the application is provided in the Guide to Applicants in the *NHMRC Investigator Grant 2020 Guidelines*.

All details including salary declarations must be current at the time of submission, as this information is relied on during assessment.

Reference to additional documentation should be taken to include, but not be limited to, links to external websites, apart from references to journal articles, guidelines, government reports, datasets and other outputs that are only available online. Where links are included, provide the URL in full (e.g. the NHMRC website <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au>).

NHMRC is a signatory of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment. As such, it is not appropriate to use journal-based metrics such as Journal Impact Factors or the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) Ranked Journal List in any part of your application.

Applications must comply with all content and formatting requirements. Incomplete or non-compliant applications may be assessed as ineligible.

Additional requirements and guidance in relation to each component of the application are outlined in the Guide to Applicants in the *NHMRC Investigator Grant 2020 Guidelines*.

7.5 Consumer and community involvement

The *Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research* (the Statement) has been developed because of the important contribution consumers make to health and medical research. The Consumers Health Forum of Australia Ltd and NHMRC worked in partnership with consumers and researchers to develop the Statement.



Researchers are encouraged to consider the benefits of actively engaging consumers in their proposed research. Further information on the Consumer Health Forum and the Statement is available on [NHMRC's website](#).

7.6 Certification and submission

Once complete, applications must be electronically certified and then submitted to NHMRC through the RAO of an NHMRC-approved Administering Institution using RGMS.

Certification is required firstly by the CIA and then by the Administering Institution RAO by the specified due date or the application will be ineligible and excluded from further consideration.

Once submitted to NHMRC, the application is considered final and no changes can be made.

7.6.1 CIA certification

The CIA must provide the RAO with evidence that the application is complete i.e. through written evidence such as email. Such written evidence should be retained by the Administering Institution and must be provided to NHMRC if requested.

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the CIA prior to submitting an application:

- All required information has been provided and is complete, current and correct, and all eligibility and other application requirements have been met.
- All personnel contributing to the Research Activity have familiarised themselves with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes* and other relevant NHMRC policies concerning the conduct of research, and agree to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies.
- CIA has provided written agreement to be named on the application, to participate in the manner described in the application and to the use of their personal information as described in the *NHMRC Privacy Policy*.
- CIA has provided written agreement for the final application to be certified.
- The application may be excluded from consideration if found to be in breach of any requirements.

And if funded,

- The research will be carried out in strict accordance with the conditions governing NHMRC grants at the time of award. Conditions may change during the course of the grant, for example, reporting obligations may change. CIA will need to meet new/changed conditions.
- The reported outcomes of the research may be used for internal NHMRC quality evaluations/reviews.
- Grant offers may be withdrawn and action taken over the life of the grant, if eligibility criteria to accept and/or continue holding a grant are not met.



7.6.2 Administering Institution certification

The following assurances, acknowledgements and undertakings are required of the Administering Institution prior to submitting an application:

- Reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the application is complete and correct and complies with all eligibility and other application requirements.
- CIA is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or permanent resident at the time of accepting the successful grant.
- CIA will be based in Australia for at least 50% of the Funding Period if CIA is an NHMRC or MRFF Emerging Leader Fellow.
- The appropriate facilities and salary support will be available for the Funding Period.
- Approval of the Research Activity by relevant institutional committees and approval bodies, particularly for ethics and biosafety, will be sought and obtained prior to the commencement of the research, or the parts of the research that require their approval.
- Arrangements for the management of the grant have been agreed between all institutions associated with the application.
- The application is being submitted with the full authority of, and on behalf of, the Administering Institution, noting that under section 136.1 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*, it is an offence to provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth body in an application for a benefit. This includes submission of an application by those not authorised by the Institution to submit applications for funding to NHMRC.

Administering Institutions must ensure that the RAO role is authorised to certify and submit applications.

7.7 Retracted publications

If a publication relevant to an application is retracted after the application has been submitted, the applicant must promptly notify their RAO. The RAO must advise NHMRC at the earliest opportunity of the retraction by email (help@nhmrc.gov.au) with an explanation of the reasons for the retraction.

In addition, where the publication forms part of the applicant's track record, the applicant must immediately record that information in their Profile & CV in RGMS.

If an application is largely dependent on the results of a retracted publication, the applicant should also consider withdrawing the application. If, under these circumstances, an applicant chooses not to withdraw the application, the RAO must advise NHMRC in writing to help@nhmrc.gov.au, clearly outlining the reasons for not withdrawing the application.

7.8 Withdrawal of applications

Applications may be withdrawn at any time by written notice from the Administering Institution's RAO to NHMRC.



An application may be 'marked for deletion' by the applicant in RGMS before the close of the round. This authorises NHMRC to delete the application once the round has closed. The application will not be deleted while the funding round remains open for application submission.

7.9 Questions during the application process

Applicants requiring further assistance should direct enquiries to their Administering Institution's RAO. RAOs can contact NHMRC's Research Help Centre for further advice.

All policy enquiries must be submitted in writing to NHMRC's Research Help Centre.

Applicants must refer to the NHMRC Investigator Grants 2020 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document on GrantConnect.

The final addenda/FAQ will be released **21 November 2019**. All policy enquiries should be submitted by **CoB 19 November 2019**.

NHMRC will not respond to any enquiries submitted after 13.00 AEDT on 27 November 2019.

NHMRC's Research Help Centre will continue to provide technical assistance to both applicants and RAOs.

NHMRC's Research Help Centre

P: 1800 500 983 (+61 2 6217 9451 for international callers)

E: help@nhmrc.gov.au

Refer to the [Research Help Centre webpage](#) for opening hours.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

NHMRC considers applications through a targeted competitive grant process. Applications are required to meet eligibility requirements as set out in these guidelines and are assessed against the assessment criteria (see Section 6) by independent peer reviewers.

8.1.1 Who will assess applications?

Applications will be assessed as part of the NHMRC Investigator Grant assessment process. NHMRC's peer review process is designed to provide a rigorous, fair, transparent and consistent assessment of the merits of each application to ensure that only the highest quality, value with money research is recommended for funding.

Applicants must not seek to identify or make contact about their application with anyone who is directly engaged with its assessment, in keeping with NHMRC's principles of impartial and independent peer review. Seeking to influence the process or outcomes of peer review constitutes a breach of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#) and may result in the application being excluded from consideration.

8.1.2 Investigator Grant assessment process

NHMRC will conduct peer review for this funding round in accordance with the following principles:



- Fairness. Peer review processes are fair and seen to be fair by all involved.
- Transparency. All stages of peer review are transparent.
- Independence. Peer reviewers provide independent advice. There is also independent oversight of peer review processes by independent Chairs and Observers.
- Appropriateness and balance. The experience, expertise and operation of peer reviewers are appropriate to the goals and scale of the funding vehicle.
- Research community participation. Persons holding taxpayer-funded grants should willingly make themselves available to participate in peer review processes, including mentoring of junior researchers, whenever possible.
- Confidentiality. Participants respect that confidentiality is important to the fairness and robustness of peer review.
- Impartiality. Peer review is objective and impartial, with appropriate processes in place to manage real and perceived conflicts of interest (CoI).
- Quality and excellence. NHMRC will continue to introduce evidence-based improvements into its processes to achieve the highest quality decision-making through peer review.

Peer reviewers will independently undertake an assessment of applications against the assessment criteria (see Section 6). All information contained within *A-RC: Research Classification* of an application will be used to assist with its allocation to the most suitable peer reviewers. The overall scores from assessments will be used to produce a rank ordered list of applications, on which funding recommendations will be based.

Further information on the assessment process is on the [NHMRC website](#).

8.2 Who will approve grants?

NHMRC will provide the outcomes of the assessment process to the Department of Health in the form of a ranked list based on the overall score of each application. In accordance with the MRFF Act, either the Minister or the Chief Executive Officer of Health and Medical Research Office, Department of Health, will approve grants drawing on the outcomes of NHMRC's assessment of application.

The Commonwealth's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

9 Notification of application outcomes

NHMRC will advise applicants and their nominated Administering Institution's RAO of the outcome of the application as early as possible, following the approval of grants. This could be sooner if an application has been assessed as uncompetitive or excluded for other reasons.

NHMRC may advise applicants and their Administering Institution's RAO of the outcome under embargo. An embargo is the prohibition of publicising information or news provided by NHMRC until a certain date or until certain conditions have been met. [NHMRC's website](#) provides further information on what can and cannot happen where information on a grant is released under embargo.



10 Successful grant applications

CIA's whose applications are approved for funding will have access to a letter of offer through RGMS. Administering Institutions responsible for administering approved applications will also have access to the letter of offer and to the Schedule to the relevant Funding Agreement. The Administering Institution is responsible for accepting the Schedule through the online signing/acceptance process within RGMS.

The Department of Health may withdraw or vary an offer of an MRFF Investigator Grant if they consider that it is reasonably necessary to protect Commonwealth revenue.

10.1 Information required from grantees

Grantees may be required to supply additional information about their Research Activity before payments commence. This will be stated in the letter of offer.

10.2 Approvals and licences

Where relevant, particularly in relation to ethics and biosafety, NHMRC-funded Research Activities must be referred for approval to the relevant institutional committees and approval bodies. For further information see [NHMRC's website](#).

10.3 Funding Agreement

All MRFF Investigator Grants are offered in accordance with the relevant Funding Agreement (with any conditions specified in Schedules and these Grant Guidelines), which is a legal agreement between the Department of Health and the Administering Institution. In accepting the Schedules, the Administering Institution is agreeing to the conditions contained in the relevant Funding Agreement and the Schedule.

A grant will not commence, nor grant funds be paid, until:

- the Funding Agreement between the Department of Health and the Administering Institution is in place, and
- the appropriate Schedule to the relevant Funding Agreement is accepted and executed by the Department of Health.

10.3.1 Responsible and ethical conduct of research

The Department of Health expects the highest levels of research conduct and integrity to be observed in the research that it funds. Administering Institutions and CIA's are bound by the conditions of the relevant Funding Agreement. MRFF funded research must be conducted in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*. Further information about the Code can be found on [NHMRC's website](#).

10.4 NHMRC policies

Administering Institutions and CIA's are bound by the conditions of the relevant Funding Agreement. It is the responsibility of Administering Institutions and CIs to be aware of, and comply with, all relevant legislation and policies relating to the conduct of the Research Activity.



For further information on the expectations of Administering Institutions and CIs, see [NHMRC's website](#).

10.5 Payments

Payments will commence once all outstanding obligations (e.g. conditions, eligibility rules or data requirements specified in the Schedule to the relevant Funding Agreement, relevant grant guidelines or letter of offer) have been met by the CIA and the Administering Institution.

10.6 Suspension of grants

Funding may be suspended for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, requests made by the CIA. Variations will generally only be granted if allowed in the grant guidelines and the NHMRC *Grantee Variation Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Funding may also be suspended by NHMRC when it is reasonable to consider there has been a failure to comply with a Policy or Guideline, or on the basis of a Probity Event or an investigation of alleged research misconduct, as set out in the relevant Funding Agreement.

10.7 Tax implications

All amounts referred to in these Grant Guidelines are exclusive of GST, unless stated otherwise.

Administering Institutions are responsible for all financial and taxation matters associated with the grant.

10.8 Processes specific to an Investigator Grant

Additional administrative obligations and processes specific to Investigator Grant grantees are outlined in the following sections. Unless otherwise stated, these are in addition to the general requirements set out in these guidelines, the relevant Funding Agreement and on the [NHMRC website](#).

Where an Investigator Grant recipient is unable to meet the general and/or Investigator Grant specific requirements, the Administering Institution must submit a variation to defer the commencement date (section 12.1).

If an applicant's employment circumstances change following submission of an application for an Investigator Grant or during the course of an Investigator Grant, for example, a change of employer or additional employment responsibilities being undertaken, a period spent overseas and receipt of a non-Commonwealth Fellowship that impacts Investigator Grant salary, NHMRC must be notified.

Requests to vary the terms of a Grant should be made to NHMRC via the Grantee Variation portal in RGMS.

10.8.1 Acceptance and commencement of an MRFF Investigator Grant

Investigator Grants awarded under this MRFF Priority Round are expected to commence immediately after the Minister or their delegate approves funding. As such, grant recipients should note that accepting an offer under this grant opportunity will cause asynchrony with the NHMRC Investigator Grant scheme and potentially affect eligibility for subsequent funding rounds.



10.8.2 Suspension of an Investigator Grant

NHMRC will consider a request to suspend an Investigator Grant, on a case-by-case basis, under the following circumstances:

- career disruption (see [Appendix A](#))
- temporary other appointments (see section 3.3.4)
- time overseas as an EL.

Grant recipients should note that suspensions that are not 12 month multiples will cause asynchrony with subsequent Investigator Grant funding opportunities and may affect eligibility for subsequent funding rounds.

A suspended Investigator Grant will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the period of the suspension. Requests to suspend a grant must be supported by the Administering Institution.

10.8.2.1 Suspension of Investigator Grant for career disruptions

Investigator Grant recipients may:

- request to suspend their grant (salary and RSP) for a period(s) of defined career disruption (see section 10.8.2), or
- cease the salary component of the grant while their Administering Institution continues to receive the RSP during the period of the career disruption so the program of research can continue in the Investigator's absence.

If the Administering Institution continues to receive the RSP during the researcher's career disruption period, then:

- the grant's duration still remains at five years, i.e. the grant duration will not be extended
- the salary component of the grant will be reduced by a time and an amount commensurate with the period of the career disruption.

10.8.2.2 Suspension of Investigator Grant for time overseas as an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant recipient

EL grant recipients who are overseas for the purposes of their EL grant (see section 3.3.5) may apply to suspend their grant (salary and RSP) for up to two years, to complete their overseas research, but not for non-research vocational reasons or pursuits unrelated to the Investigator Grant. Such grant recipients must have the support of both their overseas and Australian Administering Institution.

10.8.3 Parental leave

Parental leave provided for under State and Territory legislation is the responsibility of the Administering Institution.

NHMRC and MRFF Investigator Grants do not make available additional funds to those provided in the original Investigator Grant to cover conditions of employment including parental leave.



10.8.4 Adjustments to time commitment

Requests to adjust a grant recipient's time commitment will be considered by NHMRC on a case-by-case basis and must have the support of the Administering Institution. If the request is approved, then the Investigator Grant duration will remain at five years.

10.8.4.1 Requests to reduce time commitment

Full-time Investigator Grant recipients may apply to undertake a period of their grant on a part-time basis for a period(s) of defined career disruption ([Appendix A](#)) or to enable recipients to conduct research while maintaining other professional activity (see section 3.3.2).

If a request to reduce to a part-time commitment is approved by NHMRC, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will be reduced pro rata. The researcher may retain 100% of their RSP or reduce it in proportion to the requested part-time rate.

10.8.4.2 Requests to increase time commitment

Part-time Personal Investigator Grants are intended to be part-time at the requested FTE for the duration of the grant. Recipients may request to increase their time commitment and convert to full-time salary for personal reasons, such as changes in carer responsibility or recovery from an illness or major injury. Requests to convert to full-time will be considered by NHMRC on a case-by-case basis and must have the support of the Investigator Grant recipient's Administering Institution.

Where a request to convert or return to full-time is approved, the salary component of the Investigator Grant will be increased to the full-time amount for the remaining duration of the grant however, the value of the RSP will be unchanged¹¹.

10.8.5 Changes in circumstance

Investigator Grant recipients are required to inform NHMRC of changes to their circumstances that may affect their eligibility to receive the salary component of an Investigator Grant. If this happens, the salary component of their grant will cease from the date the change occurred.

11 Announcement of grants

Grant outcomes are publicly listed on [GrantConnect](#) within 21 calendar days of the date of effect, as required by the CGRGs.

12 How NHMRC monitors grant activity

12.1 Variations

A variation is a change (including a delay) to a grant. There are specific circumstances under which grantees should report and seek approval of a variation to an NHMRC grant (including the Research Activity) relative to the peer reviewed application. Requests must comply with the grant guidelines and the NHMRC *Grantee Variation Policy*. Requests to vary the terms of a grant should

¹¹For example, if 80% RSP is requested at time of the Investigator Grant application, then the RSP amount will remain at 80%.



be made to NHMRC via the Grantee Variation portal in RGMS. For information on grant variations see NHMRC's *Grantee Variation Policy* available on the [NHMRC website](#).

Grant variations cannot be used as a means to meet NHMRC eligibility requirements or to remove any budget reductions as detailed in section 4.3.2.

The census date on which salary and RSP reductions will be calculated for Investigator Grant applications will be 17.00 AEDT on 3 February 2020.

12.2 Reporting

Administering Institutions are required to report to NHMRC on the progress of the grant and the use of grant funds. Where an institution fails to submit reports (financial or otherwise) as required, NHMRC may take action under the provisions of the relevant Funding Agreement. Failure to report within timeframes may affect eligibility to receive future funding.

12.2.1 Financial reports

Annual financial reports are required in a form prescribed by NHMRC. At the completion of the grant or upon transfer to a new Administering Institution, a financial acquittal is also required. Refer to [NHMRC's website](#) for details of format and timing.

12.2.2 Non-financial reports

The relevant Funding Agreement requires the CIA to prepare reports for each Research Activity. Scientific reporting requirements can be found on [NHMRC's website](#). While having outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants does not disqualify applicants from applying for other NHMRC grants, it is a condition of funding that outstanding obligations from previous NHMRC grants, including submission of a Final Report, have been met prior to acceptance of a new grant.

Information included in the Final Report may be publicly released. Use of this information may include publication on [NHMRC's website](#), publicity (including release to the media) and the promotion of research achievements.

All information provided to NHMRC in reports may be used for internal reporting and reporting to government. This information may also be used by NHMRC when reviewing or evaluating funded research projects or funding schemes, or designing future schemes.

12.2.3 NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research

Grantees undertaking research related to dementia must contribute their expertise to the NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research, which is responsible for strategically expanding, coordinating and translating the national dementia research effort. The NHMRC National Institute for Dementia Research is drawing on the expertise of researchers and other dementia stakeholders via a membership model to drive Australia's dementia research and translation effort, and work together to maximise the impact of research.

Additional reporting on NHMRC funded dementia research will also be sought from Administering Institutions as required to inform the Institute's work plan and subsequent research activities.



12.3 Evaluation of the Investigator Grant scheme

NHMRC undertakes periodic evaluations of the performance and administration of its grant opportunities to determine their effectiveness and to identify where improvements can be made.

12.4 Open Access Policy

NHMRC supports the sharing of outputs from NHMRC funded research including publications and data. The aims of NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* are to mandate the open access sharing of publications and encourage innovative open access to research data. This policy also requires that patents resulting from NHMRC funding be made findable through listing in SourceIP. NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* is available on [NHMRC's website](#).

Combined, these approaches will help to increase reuse of data, improve research integrity and contribute to a stronger knowledge economy. Open access will also assist with reporting and demonstration of research achievement, improve track record assessment processes for the long term and contribute to better collaborations.

All recipients of grants under this grant opportunity must comply with all elements of NHMRC's *Open Access Policy* as a condition of funding.

13 Probity

13.1 Complaints process

Applicants or Grantees seeking to lodge a formal complaint about NHMRC's assessment process should do so via the Administering Institution's RAO, in writing, within 28 days of the relevant decision or action.

Each complaint should be directed to the Complaints Team at: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au.

NHMRC will not review the merits of a funding decision, but it will investigate complaints about the administrative process followed to reach a funding decision. NHMRC will provide a written response to all complaints.

If an applicant or grantee does not agree with the way NHMRC has handled their complaint, they may complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with NHMRC.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

NHMRC treats applicants' personal information in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles, and the *Privacy Act 1988*. The [NHMRC Privacy Policy](#) details the types of personal or sensitive information that may be collected by NHMRC and how it will be handled. Applicants should familiarise themselves with the NHMRC Privacy Policy before providing personal information to NHMRC.



Information which may properly be regarded as confidential information is to be specifically identified as such by applicants and grantees and will be received by NHMRC on the basis of a mutual understanding of confidentiality.

NHMRC may reveal confidential information to:

- the peer review committee and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help NHMRC manage the grant scheme effectively
- employees and contractors of NHMRC to research, assess, monitor and analyse schemes and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in reports and consultations
- NHMRC approved Administering Institutions' Research Administration Offices
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, and
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

13.3 Freedom of information

NHMRC as a Commonwealth agency is subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* and is committed to meeting the Australian Government's transparency and accountability requirements. Freedom of Information laws facilitate the general public's access to documents held by national government agencies, including application and funding documentation relating to NHMRC researchers. This right of access is limited where documents, or parts of documents, are exempt under the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

Researchers should familiarise themselves with NHMRC's Freedom of Information procedures before submitting an application. Further information on the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, NHMRC's Freedom of Information application process and relevant contacts can be found on the [NHMRC website](#).

14 Glossary

Term	Definition
assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive granting opportunity, to determine applicant rankings.



Term	Definition
<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)</i>	The CGRGs establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration.
date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date the schedule to a grant agreement is executed or the announcement of the grant, whichever is later.
eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant.
final year	The final 12 calendar months of a grant.
Funding Agreement	For NHMRC MREA grants, the grant agreement is the NHMRC Funding Agreement and the Schedule to the Funding Agreement. For MRFF grants, the grant agreement is the MRFF Head Funding Agreement and the Schedule to the Funding Agreement.
funding round	Collectively refers to the Investigator, Synergy and Ideas Grants opportunities commencing funding in the same year.
grant	A grant is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under which relevant money, or other consolidated revenue funds, is to be paid to a recipient other than the Commonwealth • which is intended to assist the recipient achieve its goals • which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy objectives under which the recipient may be required to act in accordance with specified terms or conditions.
grant activity	Is the project /tasks /services that the grantee is required to undertake with the grant money. It is described in the schedule to the relevant Funding Agreement.



Term	Definition
GrantConnect	<p>GrantConnect is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs. It is available at www.grants.gov.au.</p> <p>Non-corporate Commonwealth entities must publish on GrantConnect to meet the grant publishing requirements under the CGRGs.</p> <p>Where information is published in more than one location, and there are inconsistencies, GrantConnect is the authoritative, auditable information source.</p>
grant opportunity	A notice published on GrantConnect advertising the availability of Commonwealth grants.
grant program	Is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single entity Portfolio Budget Statement Program. This is referred to as a scheme in this document.
Grantee	An individual/organisation that has been awarded a grant.
Independent Peer reviewers	Individuals (peers) with appropriate knowledge and expertise who review grant applications.
Investigator Grants	The collective term used to describe both NHMRC Investigator Grants and MRFF Investigator Grants.
Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA)	The purpose of the MREA is to provide assistance to Federal and State Government Departments, institutions, universities and/or persons engaged in medical research.
Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)	The MRFF was established on 26 August 2015 by the <i>Medical Research Future Fund Act 2015</i> (MRFF Act). Refer to the Department of Health website: https://beta.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/medical-research-future-fund .
MRFF Investigator Grant	An Investigator Grant funded by the Department of Health from the MRFF.
NHMRC Investigator Grant	An Investigator Grant funded by NHMRC from the MREA.



Term	Definition
Portfolio Budget Statement (PBS) Program	Described within the entity's PBS, PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs (schemes). A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program (scheme) associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.
Probity Event	<p>Any event or occurrence which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a material adverse effect on the integrity, character or honesty of the Administering Institution, a Participating Institution or Personnel involved in a Research Activity; or • relates to the Administering Institution, a Participating Institution or Personnel involved in a Research Activity and has a material adverse effect on the public interest or public confidence in the Administering Institution, Participating Institution or Research Activity.
Research Grants Management System (RGMS)	NHMRC's Electronic Research Grants Management System for grant application, assessment and administration.
schedule	The contract template used to form part of the relevant Funding Agreement. The schedule sets out the research activity and is signed by NHMRC and the CIA's Administering Institution.
value with money	<p>Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a term used in the CGRGs and is a judgement that the grant proposal represents an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, as determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the project proposal and activities • fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee's and government's outcomes being achieved • the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.



Appendix A. NHMRC Relative to Opportunity policy

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline NHMRC's Relative to Opportunity Policy with respect to:

- NHMRC peer review, and
- eligibility to apply for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants.

NHMRC's objective is to support the best Australian health and medical research and the best researchers, at all career stages. NHMRC seeks to ensure that researchers with a variety of career experiences and those who have experienced pregnancy or a major illness/injury or have caring responsibilities, are not disadvantaged in applying for NHMRC grants.

Policy approach

NHMRC considers Relative to Opportunity to mean that assessment processes should accurately assess an applicant's track record and associated productivity relative to stage of career, including considering whether productivity and contribution are commensurate with the opportunities available to the applicant. It also means that applicants with career disruptions should not be disadvantaged (in terms of years since they received their PhD) when determining their eligibility for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants and that their Career Disruptions should be considered when their applications are being peer reviewed.

In alignment with *NHMRC's Principles of Peer Review*, particularly the principles of fairness and transparency, the following additional principles further support this objective:

- **Research opportunity:** Researchers' outputs and outcomes should reflect their opportunities to advance their career and the research they conduct.
- **Fair access:** Researchers should have access to funding support available through NHMRC grant schemes consistent with their experience and career stage.
- **Career diversity:** Researchers with career paths that include time spent outside of academia should not be disadvantaged. NHMRC recognises that time spent in sectors such as industry may enhance research outcomes for both individuals and teams.

The above principles frame NHMRC's approach to the assessment of a researcher's track record during expert review of grant applications and eligibility of applicants applying for Emerging Leadership Investigator Grants. NHMRC expects that those who provide expert assessment during peer review will give clear and explicit attention to these principles to identify the highest quality research and researchers to be funded. NHMRC recognises that life circumstances can be very varied and therefore it is not possible to implement a formulaic approach to applying Relative to Opportunity and Career Disruption considerations during peer review.

Relative to Opportunity considerations during peer review of applications for funding



During peer review of applications, circumstances considered under the Relative to Opportunity Policy are:

- amount of time spent as an active researcher
- available resources, including situations where research is being conducted in remote or isolated communities
- building relationships of trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities over long periods that can impact on track record and productivity
- clinical, administrative or teaching workload
- relocation of an applicant and his/her research laboratory or clinical practice setting or other similar circumstances that impact on research productivity
- for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants, community obligations including 'sorry business'
- the typical performance of researchers in the research field in question
- research outputs and productivity noting time employed in other sectors; for example there might be a reduction in publications when employed in sectors such as industry
- carer responsibilities (that do not come under the Career Disruption policy below).

Career Disruption considerations during peer review and eligibility to apply for an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant

A Career Disruption is defined as a prolonged interruption to an applicant's capacity to work, due to:

- pregnancy
- major illness/injury
- carer responsibilities.

NHMRC does not require details of the nature of the Career Disruption. Applicants should only include details of the impact upon career, noting this information will be provided to peer reviewers.

The period of career disruption may be used:

- to determine an applicant's eligibility for an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant
- to allow for the inclusion of additional track record information for assessment of an application
- for consideration by peer reviewers.

To be considered for the purposes of eligibility and peer review, a period of Career Disruption is defined as:

- a continuous absence from work for 90 calendar days or more, and/or



- continuous, long-term, part-time employment (with defined %FTE) due to circumstances classified as Career Disruption, with the absence amounting to a total of 90 calendar days or more.¹

Consecutive changes to %FTE, resulting from a single career disruption event may be considered cumulatively².

Example of an acceptable career disruption entry:

CD Entry	Date From	Date to	FTE	Days Disrupted
1. Maternity Leave	01/01/2017	30/04/2017	0.0	120
2. Carer Responsibility	01/05/2017	31/08/2017	0.4	49.2
3. Carer Responsibility	01/09/2017	31/12/2017	0.6	73.2
Total Disruption				242.4

Career Disruption and eligibility to apply for an Investigator Grant

A Career Disruption can affect an applicant's eligibility to apply for an Emerging Leadership Investigator Grant. For such grants, the 10-year time limit on the number of years post-PhD may be extended commensurate with the period of the Career Disruption.

¹ For example, an applicant who is employed at 0.8 FTE due to childcare responsibilities would need to continue this for at least 450 calendar days to achieve a Career Disruption of 90 calendar days.

² for example, a researcher returning from Maternity Leave at reduced %FTE due to Carer responsibilities.



Appendix B. Statement of Expectations

The *Statement of Expectations* outlines the baseline expectations of applicants within each level of Investigator Grant eligible under this grant opportunity. Applicants who have never received an NHMRC Fellowship or Investigator Grant should refer to these expectations and apply at a level commensurate with their experience and profile.

The descriptors provide a broad benchmark and it is not essential that all elements be met.

Emerging Leadership Level 2 (EL2)

EL2 Investigator Grant recipients will be ≤ 10 years post-PhD (or equivalent, see section 4.8) and recognised for their expertise in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contributions of influence in their field of expertise
- ability to contribute to the conception and direction of research projects, while developing independence
- experience in supervising a small research team
- national contributions to their scientific discipline (e.g. public advocacy, community leadership, peer review and professional societies)
- contributions within their department, centre, institution or organisation e.g. organising journal clubs, seminar series etc.

Emerging Leadership Level 1 (EL1)

EL1 Investigator Grant recipients will be ≤ 10 years post-PhD (or equivalent, see section 4.8) and will be beginning to gain recognition in their research area with demonstrated:

- original contribution(s) in their field of expertise
- ability to contribute to the conception of research projects
- scientific contributions within their region, state or territory (e.g. community leadership, state level contribution to a professional society)
- limited but developing supervision of research staff and students
- contributions within their department, centre, institution or organisation e.g. organising journal clubs, seminar series etc.

Guidance on relationships between NHMRC Fellowship schemes and the Investigator Grant Levels is outlined in **Table 1** below. Eligibility for Investigator Grants based on previous or currently held Fellowships is at [Appendix C](#).



Table 1. Guidance on relationships between NHMRC Fellowship schemes and Investigator Grant Levels

Current NHMRC Fellowship	Corresponding Investigator Grant Level
Senior Principal Research Fellowship Australia Fellowship	Leadership Level 3
Principal Research Fellowship Practitioner Fellowship Level 2	Leadership Level 2
Practitioner Fellowship Level 1 Senior Research Fellowship Levels A and B Career Development Fellowship Level 2	Leadership Level 1
Career Development Fellowships Levels 1 and 2 Translation of Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship	Emerging Leadership Level 2
Early Career Fellowship Translation of Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship	Emerging Leadership Level 1

FOREFUTURE



Appendix C. Eligibility of current or previous NHMRC Fellows for an Investigator Grant

Investigator Grant Salary Level

Highest NHMRC Fellowship level previously or currently held ^d	<i>Emerging Leadership Level 1</i> (EL1)	<i>Emerging Leadership Level 2</i> (EL2)	<i>Leadership Level 1</i> (L1)	<i>Leadership Level 2</i> (L2)	<i>Leadership Level 3</i> (L3)
<i>No previous NHMRC Fellowship</i>	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD ^a	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD ^a	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Early Career Fellowship^b</i>	Not eligible	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD ^a	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Translation of Research into Practice (TRIP) Fellowship</i>	Not eligible	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD ^a	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Career Development Fellowship Level 1</i>	Not eligible	Eligible if ≤10 years post-PhD ^a	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Career Development Fellowship Level 2^c</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Practitioner Fellowship Level 1</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Senior Research Fellowship Level A</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Senior Research Fellowship Level B</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Practitioner Fellowship Level 2</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Principal Research Fellowship</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible	Eligible
<i>Senior Principal Research Fellowship</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible
<i>Australia Fellowship</i>	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Not eligible	Eligible



^a Or equivalent

^b Including NHMRC-ARC Dementia Research Development Fellowships

^c Including Boosting Dementia Research Leadership Fellowship Scheme

^d Including MRFF Next Generation Clinical Researchers program Fellowships funded via the NHMRC Practitioner, Career Development and Translating Research Into Practice Fellowship schemes.

Case studies

The following case studies provide illustrative examples of eligibility to apply for an Investigator Grant.

Dr A completed a PhD thirteen years ago and has never held a NHMRC fellowship. Under the new grant program s/he is eligible to apply for an Investigator Grant at Leadership Level 1, 2 or 3.

Dr B completed a PhD seven years ago and currently holds a NHMRC Early Career Fellowship. Under the new grant program s/he is eligible to apply for an Investigator Grant at Emerging Leadership Level 2 or at Leadership Level 1, 2 or 3.

Dr C has held a NHMRC Senior Research Fellowship Level A before taking a two-year career break. Under the new grant program s/he is eligible to apply for an Investigator Grant at Leadership Level 1, 2 or 3.

Forecast Opportunity



Appendix D. Investigator Grant 2020 Category Descriptors

The following category descriptors are used as a guide to scoring an application against each of the assessment criteria.

While the category descriptors provide peer reviewers with some benchmarks for appropriately scoring each application, **it is not essential that all descriptors relating to a given score are met.**

The category descriptors are a guide to a “best fit” outcome. Peer reviewers will consistently refer to these category descriptors to ensure thorough, equitable and transparent assessment of applications.

Assessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Contributions

It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions should be considered when assessing research output and track record.

Forecast Opportunity



Track Record, relative to opportunity (70%)

Publications (35%)

Table 1. Publications

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
7	Exceptional	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an exceptional record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
6	Outstanding	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an outstanding record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
5	Excellent	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an excellent record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
4	Very Good	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a very good record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
3	Good	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a good record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
2	Satisfactory	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a satisfactory record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science
1	Weak or limited	Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a weak or limited record of publications in terms of quality and contribution to science

Research Impact (20%)

Table 2. Reach and significance of the research impact (Emerging Leadership and Leadership) (7%) ¹

Emerging Leadership Score	Category Descriptors			Leadership Score
	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	<i>Note: Applicants do not need to demonstrate all types of research impact</i>	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	
7	an exceptional knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a paradigm changing development that has led to (a) new knowledge within the field that is recognised across multiple countries, (b) significant influence beyond the specific field of research or (c) the development of a new field(s) of research that has been recognised across multiple countries/beneficiaries <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a paradigm changing development that has improved health or health systems, services, policy, programs or clinical practice that (a) had a significant impact on health with an extensive reach, (b) had a profound impact on health with a modest reach, (c) profoundly improved the health of Australia's Indigenous people or (d) led to a significant, scalable and sustainable change in health systems and services in a large number of communities <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of a service delivery or system change, prevention program, intervention, device, therapeutic or change in clinical practice that led to (a) 	an exceptional knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	7
			an outstanding knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	6

¹ For the assessment of research impact, different seven point scales are used for Emerging Leadership and Leadership applicants. This is to recognise that early and mid-career researchers will have had less time to accumulate research impact.

Emerging Leadership Score	Category Descriptors			Leadership Score
	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	<i>Note: Applicants do not need to demonstrate all types of research impact</i>	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	
		<p>the generation of significant commercial income or (b) a profound reduction in healthcare costs</p> <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes in policy that have had (a) a significant impact on the social well-being, equality or social inclusion of very large numbers of people at a national level or across multiple countries or (b) a profound impact on the social well-being of the end-user, public and community of a smaller number of individuals at a national level or across multiple countries 		
7	an exceptional knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a major development that has led to (a) new knowledge within the field that is recognised nationally or across multiple countries, (b) a major influence beyond the specific field of research or (c) a major influence on the development of a new field(s) of research that has been recognised nationally or across multiple countries/beneficiaries <p>Health</p>	an excellent knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	5



Emerging Leadership Score	Category Descriptors			Leadership Score
	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	<i>Note: Applicants do not need to demonstrate all types of research impact</i>	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	
6	an outstanding knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> an important development that has improved health or health systems, services, policy, programs or clinical practice that (a) had a major impact on health with an extensive reach, (b) had a significant impact on health with a modest reach, (c) led to a significant improvement in the health of Australia's Indigenous people or (d) led to major scalable and sustainable change in health systems and services in a number of communities <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of a service delivery or system change, prevention program, intervention, device, therapeutic or change in clinical practice that led to (a) the generation of considerable commercial income or (b) a major reduction in healthcare costs <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes in policy that have either had (a) a major impact on the social well-being, equality or social inclusion of very large numbers of people at a local, state/territory or national level or (b) a significant impact on the social well-being of the end-user, public and community of a smaller number of individuals at a local, state/territory or national level 	a very good knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	4
5	an excellent knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a change that has led to (a) new knowledge within the field that is recognised nationally or across multiple countries, (b) had some influence beyond the specific field of research, or (c) some influence on the development of a new 	a good knowledge, health, economic	3



Emerging Leadership Score	Category Descriptors			Leadership Score
	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	<i>Note: Applicants do not need to demonstrate all types of research impact</i>	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	
4	a very good knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<p>field(s) of research that has been recognised nationally or across multiple countries/beneficiaries</p> <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a development that has improved health or health systems, services, policy, programs or clinical practice that (a) had some impact on health with an extensive reach, (b) had a major impact on health with a modest reach, (c) led to a major improvement in the health of Australia's Indigenous people, or (d) led to some scalable and sustainable change in health systems and services in a small number of communities 	and/or social impact	2
3	a good knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	<p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development of a service delivery or system change, prevention program, intervention, device, therapeutic or change in clinical practice that led to (a) the generation of some commercial income or (b) some reduction in healthcare costs <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> changes in policy that have had (a) some impact on the social well-being, equality or social inclusion of very large numbers of people at a local, state/territory or national level or (b) an impact on the social well-being of the end-user, public and community of a smaller number of individuals at a local, state/territory or national level 	a satisfactory knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact	
2	a satisfactory knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact			



Emerging Leadership Score	Category Descriptors			Leadership Score
	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	<i>Note: Applicants do not need to demonstrate all types of research impact</i>	<i>There is robust, verifiable evidence of:</i>	
1	a weak or limited knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact and/or the applicant has not supplied robust verifiable evidence	<p><i>There is limited or weak evidence of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of new knowledge • improved health systems and services • reductions in health care costs or economic growth • improvements in social well-being, equality or social inclusion. 	a weak or limited knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact and/or the applicant has not supplied robust verifiable evidence	1



Table 3. Research Program's contribution to the Research Impact (6%)

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
7	Exceptional	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant's research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an exceptional contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
6	Outstanding	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant's research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an outstanding contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
5	Excellent	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant's research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an excellent contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
4	Very good	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant's research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a very good contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
3	Good	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant's research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a good contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
2	Satisfactory	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant's research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a satisfactory contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact
1	Weak, Limited or No	Relative to opportunity and to their field of research, the applicant's research program made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a weak, limited or no contribution to the knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact and/or • the applicant has not supplied robust verifiable evidence

Table 4. Applicant's contribution to Research Program (7%)

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors	
7	Exceptional	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an exceptional contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	Leadership AND/OR instrumental role in a research program
6	Outstanding	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an outstanding contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	
5	Excellent	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an excellent contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	Leadership of a component AND/OR collaborative role (e.g. co-investigator) in a research program
4	Very Good	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a very good contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	
3	Good	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a good contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	Contribution to a research program
2	Satisfactory	Relative to opportunity and to their field, there is robust verifiable evidence that the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a satisfactory contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	
1	Weak, Limited or No	Relative to opportunity and to their field, the applicant made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a weak, limited or no contribution to the research program that led to a knowledge, health, economic and/or social impact 	Limited or no contribution to a research program

		and/or	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the applicant has not supplied robust verifiable evidence 	

Leadership (15%)

Table 5. Leadership

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
7	Exceptional	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates exceptional performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee conception and direction of a research project or program building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond institution.



6	Outstanding	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates outstanding performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.
5	Excellent	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates excellent performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.
4	Very Good	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates very good performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.
3	Good	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates good performance in:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.
2	Satisfactory	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates satisfactory performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.
1	Weak or limited	<p>Relative to opportunity (including career stage) and to their field of research, the applicant demonstrates weak or limited performance in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supervision, mentoring, training and/or career development of staff and/or students within and/or beyond their research group • experience and contribution to the peer review of publications and grant applications, nationally and/or internationally • contribution to community engagement, public advocacy, government advisory boards or committees, professional societies at a local, national and/or international level • non-research contribution(s) to department, centre, institute or organisation e.g. leadership or membership of committee • conception and direction of a research project or program • building and maintaining collaborative networks necessary to achieve research outcomes within and/or beyond their institution.

Knowledge Gain (30%)



Table 6. Knowledge Gain

Score	Performance Indicator	Category Descriptors
7	Exceptional	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is supported by an extremely well justified and reasoned hypothesis/rationale • has a scientific framework, design, methods and analyses that are flawless, highly developed and highly appropriate • demonstrates to an extremely high level that it addresses an issue of critical importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • has or has access to exceptional technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve proposed outcomes • will result in extremely significant and transformative changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues • will lead to extremely significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing) • would be extremely competitive with the best, similar research proposals internationally.
6	Outstanding	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is supported by a very well justified and reasoned hypothesis/rationale • has a scientific framework, design, methods and analyses that are well developed and highly appropriate with only a few minor weaknesses • demonstrates to a very high level that it addresses an issue that is very important to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • has or has access to outstanding technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve proposed outcomes • will result in very highly significant and substantial changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues • will lead to very highly significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing) • would be highly competitive with the best, similar research proposals internationally.



5	Excellent	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is supported by a well justified and reasoned hypothesis/rationale • has a scientific framework, design, methods and analyses that are well developed and highly appropriate with several minor weaknesses • demonstrates to a high level that it addresses an issue that is of considerable importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • has or has access to excellent technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve proposed outcomes • will result in highly significant and substantial changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues • will lead to highly significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing) • would be competitive with the best, similar research proposals internationally.
4	Very Good	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is supported by a well justified and reasoned hypothesis/rationale • has a scientific framework, design, methods and analyses that are well developed and highly appropriate with a few minor concerns • demonstrates that it addresses an issue that is of importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • has or has access to very good technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve proposed outcomes • is likely to result in significant and substantial changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issue • is likely to lead to significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing) • would likely be competitive with high quality, similar research proposals internationally.



3	Good	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is supported by a justified and sound hypothesis/rationale • has a scientific framework, design, methods and analyses that are developed and appropriate with several minor concerns • demonstrates that it is addressing an issue that is of some importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • has or has access to good technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve proposed outcomes • could result in significant and substantial changes/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues • could lead to significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing) • would be somewhat competitive with high quality, similar research proposals internationally.
2	Satisfactory	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is supported by a reasoned hypothesis/rationale • has a scientific framework, design, methods and analyses that are generally sound but may lack clarity in some aspects and/or may contain notable weaknesses/concerns • demonstrates that it is addressing an issue that is of marginal importance to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • has or has access to some/most but not all of the technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities, and if required, has access to additional expertise necessary to achieve proposed outcomes • could result in appreciable improvements/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues • could lead to moderately significant research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing) • would be marginally competitive with high quality, similar research proposals internationally.

1	Marginal to Poor	<p>The proposed research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a weak hypothesis/rationale • has a scientific framework, design, methods and analyses that have significant flaws and may contain major weaknesses • demonstrates that it is addressing an issue of some concern to advance the research or health area (not prevalence or magnitude of the issue) • does not have access to the technical resources, infrastructure, equipment and facilities or access to additional expertise necessary to achieve proposed outcomes (if required) • is unlikely to result in improvements/outcomes in the scientific knowledge, practice or policy underpinning human health issues of significance • is unlikely to lead to research outputs (e.g. intellectual property, publications, policy advice, products, services, teaching aids, consulting, contract research, spin-offs, licensing) of significance • is unlikely to be competitive with similar research proposals internationally.
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