2019

HEALTH+MEDICAL RESEARCH

Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants

GUIDELINES

NSW GOVERNMENT

NSW Health

100 Christie Street

St Leonards NSW 2065

(02) 9391 9228

www.health.nsw.gov.au

www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au

Further copies of this document can be downloaded from the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program webpage:
www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/cardiovascular/

Call for applications

NSW Health invites eligible individuals to apply for the NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants. Funding for these Grants will be provided for three years from 2019-20 to 2021-22. Clinician researchers, researchers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and primary carers who have experienced career disruptions are encouraged to apply.

For the purpose of this Grant, an early-mid career researcher is defined as a researcher who is less than 15 years post-doctoral and has not reached professorial level.

Objectives

Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants aim to:

- fund talented researchers in the early-mid stages of their career, to undertake research that improves wellbeing and health outcomes for patients
- embed high-quality, innovative cardiovascular research in the NSW health system
- encourage the development of research skills in a supportive environment
- support early-mid career researchers to gain research grants and fellowships from bodies such as the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), Australian Research Council (ARC) and Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)
- bridge the gap between research, policy and practice to increase research impact and translation.

Indicative Grants timeline

Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants 2019-22	
Stage	**Date**
Call for applications opens	30 Sep 2019
Nominations for early-mid career workshop due	15 Oct 2019
Applications close	29 Nov 2019
Announcement of successful applicants and commencement of funding	Feb-Mar 2020

Note that for this round of Grants, there is no expression of interest stage.

Pre-application peer review

Intending Early Mid-Career Researcher Grant applicants will have the opportunity to attend a grant writing and peer review workshop offered by the NSW Cardiovascular Research Network. This face-to-face workshop will include presentations and interactive sessions with senior researchers, previous grant recipients, consumers and peers. The workshop will be held in Sydney with options available to enable researchers outside of Sydney to participate. Participation in this program is optional. To participate in this workshop, you must register your interest by 15 October 2019 by emailing your name, contact details, host organisation, and field of research to cvrn@heartfoundation.org.au.

Further information, including submission deadlines for peer review is available at www.heartfoundation.org.au/research/research-networks/nsw-cardiovascular-research-network.

All applications are expected to have undergone a peer review process before being submitted to NSW Health. If you choose not to participate in the Cardiovascular Research Network process, please arrange an informal peer review.

Scope of cardiovascular research

The term cardiovascular research is used to encompass all diseases and conditions of the heart and blood vessels, including but not limited to:

- coronary heart disease
- stroke
- heart failure
- vascular disease and vascular health
- cardiovascular complications of diabetes and obesity
- major independent risk factors for cardiovascular disease
- rheumatic heart disease
- congenital heart disease.

Eligible areas of research

Funding will support researchers working in cardiovascular research across biomedical, clinical, health services and population health research. Grants also support research towards the development of novel therapeutics, including:

- fragment-based and/or high-throughput lead discovery
- lead optimisation
- pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics (including absorption, distribution, metabolism and excretion)

- medicinal chemistry
- chemistry and antibody design
- manufacturing
- formulation and the development of drug delivery platforms
- efficacy and proof-of-concept
- acute toxicology
- gene vector design and manufacture
- therapeutic applications of macromolecules
- pre-clinical models, including cell and animal trials.

Australian Cardiovascular Alliance (ACvA) Flagships

Applicants are encouraged to consider emerging opportunities with national strategic collaborations. The Directors of each of the Australian Cardiovascular Alliance (ACvA) strategic flagships are willing to provide advice on alignment of research with flagship strategic directions and the opportunities for enhancing collaborative networks, as well as cross-disciplinary mentorship and career development opportunities.

Further information on the ACvA is available at www.ozheart.org. Directors can be contacted directly or via acva@yoursecretariat.com.au. Please mark your email for the attention of the appropriate Director and include 'NSW Cardiovascular Research Grants' in the subject line.

Clinician researchers

Clinicians, both medical and non-medical, are encouraged to apply. Clinical experience will be taken into consideration during the review process.

Clinicians may use up to 50% of the grant to backfill their clinical role, with appropriate justification. If the grant is to be used for this purpose the application must be signed by the appropriate department head in the local health district. The salary limits are as follows:

- **Clinician – medical:** Salary limit – up to 0.6 FTE Staff Specialist. A similar arrangement is also available for Visiting Medical Officers.
- **Clinician – non-medical:** Salary limit – up to 0.6 FTE as per Allied Health (including Pharmacist and radiographers) and Nursing awards.

Applicants currently completing a PhD

Applicants who are currently enrolled in a PhD may apply, if they expected to complete their PhD before February 2020. Evidence of completed PhD must be provided to NSW Health prior to the announcement of funding. Announcement dates will be advertised on the OHMR website. Note that evidence of submission of a PhD is not sufficient.

Funding amounts

Approximately 60% of the total funding pool will be allocated to biomedical discovery research and 40% to clinical, health services and population health research.

Early-mid career grants of **up to $150,000 per year for the 3-year duration of the grant (maximum total grant amount $450,000)** will be awarded. A proportion of these $150,000 per annum grants will be awarded to applicants who have completed their PhD within the past 2 years.

A small number of applicants may be awarded an additional $100,000 per year for the 3-year duration of the grant to enhance the proposed project. Applicants wishing to be considered for this additional $100,000 per year are required to provide a separate additional budget and justification for this. The research project proposed should be structured to ensure that the main $450,000 component of the research is able to be completed as a standalone project without the requested additional funding, as requests for additional funding will be considered separately based on merit and the availability of funds.

Grants are for research projects or programs and can cover a combination of salaries of the research team (clinical and/or non-clinical), backfill for clinicians to quarantine research time, consumables, equipment and other research infrastructure.

Funding conditions and exclusions

1. Research funded through an Early-Mid Career Researcher Grant must be conducted in the NSW health system or affiliated organisation (university, medical research institute, industry partners).
2. Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants must not be spent on capital works, general maintenance costs, organisational infrastructure or overheads, telephone/communication systems, basic office equipment, such as desks and chairs, rent and the cost of utilities.

3. Applicants are required to declare the source, duration and level of funding already held for research in the subject area of the application.
4. Funding is conditional on the early-mid career researcher and the Chief Executive of the host organisation signing the declaration on the application form, which outlines the host organisation's obligations to the early-mid career researcher.
5. One application will be accepted per applicant.
6. Under the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program, applicants may only apply for either an Early-Mid Career Researcher Grant or a Senior Researcher Grant. The grant applied for is determined by the number of years post PhD at the time of application.
7. Grants provided under the NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program are one-line grants, not fellowships.
8. Grants may be applied for regardless of other funding currently held or applied for, including NHMRC fellowships. The one exception to this is that researchers who received funding in the first round (2018-19) of the NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program (Clinician Scientist or Senior Scientist) are not eligible for Early Mid-Career or Senior Researcher Grant funding in this round.

Submission of applications

Applicants must use the Early-Mid Career Researcher Grants 2019 Application Form and attach any supporting evidence. The form is available at: www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/cardiovascular/. All applications should be submitted by email to MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au.

Answers to frequently asked questions and updates on the grants program are available on the Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program webpage.

Any queries regarding NSW Cardiovascular Research Capacity Program may be directed by email to MOH-OHMRGrants@health.nsw.gov.au.

Program logic

Applicants are required to submit a program logic diagram with their application, including project aim, inputs, activities, outputs, and short and long term outcomes.

All research projects should have potential to lead to changes in clinical practice or policy in the short or long term. The expected pathway for this to occur should be clearly described in the application.

Outputs and outcomes of research

Examples of **outputs** include:

- new treatments, diagnostics or drug targets
- new clinical or medical prototypes
- award of national or international grants and fellowships
- peer-reviewed publications and presentations at conferences
- media coverage and other non-peer-reviewed publications
- patent applications.

Examples of **outcomes** include:

- changes in clinical practice that lead to better patient outcomes
- new models of care for patients with cardiovascular disease
- changes in clinical or public health policy
- reduced costs to the health system.

Priority populations

It is important that all research projects consider and respond to the distribution of the burden of disease within the population and the needs of under-represented, higher risk and priority populations where appropriate. These may include women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from a non-English speaking background, socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, and people living in regional and remote areas.

Relevant partners should be engaged early to ensure that the research design and conduct will be effective and appropriate for these population groups.

Research projects with a primary focus on Aboriginal health or involving Aboriginal people as participants should attach a completed Aboriginal Health Impact Statement to their application, available at www1.health.nsw.gov.au/pds/ActivePDSDocuments/PD2017_034.pdf.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property (IP) arrangements should be agreed between all research partners and organisations, according to local policy. IP arrangements must cover both background IP and IP that is developed during the project. IP arrangements should consider the contributions of all parties. The arrangements should be detailed in the application.

Eligibility criteria

Applications must meet all eligibility criteria.

Early-mid career researcher

Based in NSW

The early-mid career researcher must reside in or plan to move to NSW and must be employed by a NSW based medical research institute, university, or non-government organisation.

Cardiovascular research

The early-mid career researcher must satisfy the requirement that their research is in the field of cardiovascular health.

Submit a complete application

The early-mid career researcher must fully complete the Application Form, attach all relevant and required documentation; sign the declaration on the form and include certification from the host organisation.

Australian citizen, permanent residency status or appropriate visa

The researcher must be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident of Australia or have an appropriate working visa for the full term of the Grant. Researchers who are neither Australian citizens nor permanent residents must provide evidence of residency status and the right to remain in Australia for the duration of the funding period, certified by a Justice of the Peace (JP) or equivalent. Note that for electronic documents, an official VEVO statement is sufficient, JP certification is not required. Australian Citizens and Permanent Residents are not required to provide evidence.

Classified as an early-mid career researcher

The early-mid career researcher must be less than 15 years postdoctoral and not have reached professorial level.

Host organisation

The host organisation must conduct health and medical research and be located in NSW. The host organisation employs the researcher for the duration of the grant and is where the early-mid career researcher undertakes research. Grant funds must be paid to a host organisation that is a university, medical research institute, or non-government organisation, that has capacity to administer the funds for the three year period of the Grant. Funds will not be paid directly to a local health district.

The early-mid career researcher's host organisation must provide appropriate infrastructure support for the research project, such as wet/dry lab space, computer equipment, and desk space.

An authorised representative of the host organisation is required to sign the application form indicating support from the Research Director and Chief Executive for the application and to certify that the organisation complies with the requirements of the grant.

Selection criteria

All applications for funding that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following selection criteria. In addressing the selection criteria, applicants should specifically highlight the relevance to cardiovascular disease. Applications should be written in plain English, as applications may be reviewed by a panel member with expertise in a different area to that of the application.

Applicant

Applicants will be assessed on:

- academic and relevant clinical qualifications
- research, clinical and industry experience, including demonstrated capacity to work in multidisciplinary teams
- skills and experience directly related to the topic area(s) and methodology of the research project
- track record in research, relative to opportunity
- responsibilities that could reasonably be considered to have had a negative impact on research track record over the previous ten years.

Research project

A clear and detailed description and justification for the project is required, including aims, methodology, and expected outputs and outcomes. The research project will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- how the proposed project will advance existing knowledge and why this is important
- the extent to which the proposed research is innovative and novel
- strength, rigour and appropriateness of the research methodology
- potential outputs and outcomes of the research and how the research will improve clinical practice and/or patient outcomes in the short or long term
- ability to deliver the research outputs, outcomes and/or objectives within the grant period
- scalability and generalisability of results
- the skills of the proposed research team that are relevant to the project, and each team member's ability to contribute meaningfully to the research
- relationship to existing research undertaken by the host organisation and the research team
- proposed translation pathway, including consideration of commercialisation and intellectual property where appropriate
- consideration of priority population groups if relevant.

Budget

Full details of the budget should be clear in the application. The budget will be assessed on:

- appropriateness of the funding amount and purpose
- existing funding for the research, and how this relates to the additional funding requested
- other contributions and support for the project.

Skill development

The application will be assessed on skill development activities undertaken to date, and proposed skill development during the period of the grant. Activities undertaken should align with the researcher's vision for their career in research.

Examples of skill development activities that may be undertaken include:

- applications for national grant funding
- leading or participation in clinical quality assurance activities
- receiving regular formal mentoring
- attending training, for example in research skills or research leadership
- taking on leadership roles
- mentoring junior researchers
- involvement in collaborations, for example with other research groups or policy agencies
- active roles in relevant networks, advisory committees or governance groups
- collaboration with clinicians and others involved in translation of research findings.

Selection process

Step 1: Eligibility check

Following the closing date for applications, NSW Health will make an appraisal as to whether or not each Application has satisfied ALL of the eligibility criteria.

Step 2: Review by independent expert panel

An independent selection panel of expert reviewers, chaired by the Executive Director of the Office for Health and Medical Research, will assess each application against the selection criteria.

Step 3: Funding recommendation

The independent selection panel will agree on the final ranking of all eligible applications, and will make a recommendation for funding to NSW Health.

Step 4: Decision and notification

NSW Health will make a determination on grant recipients and amounts. Applicants will be notified.

Step 5: Grant Agreements

NSW Health will make contact with successful early-mid career researchers to develop and enter into funding agreements with the host organisation.

Reporting requirements

The host organisation will enter into a funding agreement with NSW Health that sets out obligations. A schedule for reporting will be outlined in the funding agreement and will include a requirement to provide:

- annual progress reports
- annual financial reports
- a final report following conclusion of the Grant term.

Implementation assessment and evaluation

The Grants program will periodically be assessed to ensure it is meeting its objectives. This will be done in collaboration with the host organisations and Grant recipients.

Grant recipients may be asked to meet with staff from the Ministry of Health from time to time during the funding period. Meetings with recipients will facilitate feedback and inform the future direction of the Grant program.